Bangor University

**COUNCIL MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Council held on the 30th September, 2016.

**Present :**

The Rt. Hon Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM (Chair), Mrs Steph Barbaresi, Professor Andrew Edwards, Professor John Hughes, Professor Jerry Hunter, Mr. Ifan James, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Dr. Lorrie Murphy, Professor Richard Parry-Jones, Ms. Ellen Parry Williams, Mr. Marc Proudlove Jones, Dr Alwyn Roberts, Professor Jo Rycroft Malone, Mr Conor Savage, Professor David Shepherd, Professor Paul Spencer, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor Graham Upton, Mr. David Williams, University Secretary, Director of Estates, Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources.

**Apologies :**

Dr. Griff Jones, Dr. Karen Jones, Sir Paul Lambert, Professor Carol Tully and Dr. Olwen Williams.

**WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Mr Marc Proudlove Jones, Professor Graham Upton and the new Director of Human Resources to their first meeting of the Council.

**DEATHS**

The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

Mr J.O. Roberts, an Honorary Fellow

Mr Guto Pugh, a Student in the School of Music

Mr Tom Lloyd, a student in the School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography

Mrs Dihanna Camilleri, a Member of staff in the Library

and members stood in tribute to their memory.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

The Chair expressed the Council’s congratulations to the following who had been awarded a **Personal Chair** :

Steven Price, English Literature

Chris Collins, Music

Simon Creer, Biological Sciences

**On the award of a Readership:**

Ian McCarthy, Ocean Sciences

Fay Short, Psychology

**On the award of an Honorary Chair:**

William Lee

**Other successes were also highlighted:**

Nancy Edwards, Professor of Medieval Archaeology at Bangor University’s School of History, Welsh History & Archaeology has been made a Fellow of the British Academy, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to research in archaeology.

Bangor University’s students have given the University an overall satisfaction rating of 90%, placing the University among the UK’s top 15 non-specialist universities, in the independent National Student Survey ([NSS](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/nss/results/2016/)).

Bangor University has become the first organisation in Wales (and indeed the UK) to achieve Level 5 of the new, 2016 version of the Green Dragon Standard for Environmental Management.

**MINUTES**

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 8th July 2016 were confirmed and signed.
2. With reference to :

[1] **EU Referendum** (page 3); the University has added leaving the EU to its Risk Register and is managing the associated risks.

[2] **Pontio** (page 5); practical completion of Pontio is still outstanding and Galliford Try have initiated adjudication. It was ***agreed*** to postpone the Council-led review of the project until potential litigation is complete.

[3] **Nominations & Governance Committee** (page 8); following further interviews and recommedation from the panel, the Council ***agreed*** that the following be appointed as co-opted members of the Council from November 2016 for an initial term of 4 years:

* Julie Perkins

• Dr Tomos Dafydd

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

The Vice-Chancellor raised a number of issues with the Council.

[1] **Diamond Review**; the final report was published on 27 September 2016. Proposals include replacement of the tuition fee grant to provide increased student support, including an annual non-means tested grant of £1000 for all students and further income-related maintenance grant to cover full living costs for students from the lowest income households. Increased student support for part-time and postgraduate students is proposed to bring it more closely in line with the support for full-time undergraduates. The report also proposes HEFCW support for high cost subjects and the maintenance of QR funding at existing levels.

The Council expressed concern about how the proposals would be funded and about the SLC’s ability to deliver the support package proposed. It was noted that there will be no significant benefit to HEIs in the short term and Council ***resolved*** to lobby for changes that would increase funding for Universities in Wales, such as lifting the cap on fee inflation in Wales.

[2] **Initial Teacher Training**; a return visit from Estyn has been undertaken and verbal feedback indicated that satisfactory or strong progress has been made on each of the seven recommendations, and that the non-compliance issue would be withdrawn. Estyn were expected to return for a final visit in a further year.

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The Report of the meetings of the Executive held between July 2016 and September 2016 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was considered.
2. Following a recommendation from the Executive, it was ***agreed*** to change the name of the *School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology* to the *School of History and Archaeology*.
3. The Council noted the HEFCW Institutional Risk Review Letter. The University has been assessed as low risk in 2015/16 for the second year.

**ACHIEVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

1. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented a paper outlining the University’s first steps towards a more strategic and proactive approach to its finances that addresses known issues and aims to deliver sustainable long-term financial savings.
2. The Council noted:

[1] The establishment of a Financial Sustainability Board and a number of work-streams to oversee the plan. The Board has met on a number of occasions and each work-stream has met at least once.

[2] Deloitte have begun their work and are making progress in reviewing the key assumptions driving the business plan. Future priorities and actions will be informed by this review.

[3] A 10% reduction will be applied to all budgets, but some costs will already have been committed and immediate savings may not be achievable in year. Careful consideration also needs to be made to ensure that potential income generation is not put at risk.

[4] Further work is being undertaken to identify the level of savings that can be delivered by each action and work-stream alongside a more detailed action plan with timescales for delivery and the impact on performance and output. These would be circulated to Council members as soon as they were available.

[5] The need for greater ambition to go beyond sustainability to generate surpluses that allow the University to think boldly and remain competitive and allow it to invest in facilities.

[6] Engagement will take place with all staff across the University to generate further opportunities for income generation and cost savings.

1. After a full discussion, the Council welcomed the paper and the approach undertaken by the team over the summer and ***resolved*** to support the steps being taken towards delivering long term financial sustainability.

**ESTATES STRATEGY: PRESENTATION OF THE INTERIM REPORT**

1. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented a report on the current thinking with regard to the Estates Strategy, building on earlier discussions at the Council and drawing together all the themes of work.
2. The Council noted:

[1] The ‘major change’ scenario, which included: an overall reduction in space of 5000m2; the development of the Science & Technology Quarter (STQ) as previously outlined; withdrawal from the Normal Site and relocation of Sports Science, Healthcare Sciences and Education; a stock transfer of the University’s remaining residential estate; and making Main Arts wind and watertight.

[2] The strong fit between the major change option and the University’s Strategic Plan and the delivery of a number on non-financial benefits.

[3] The underlying assumptions and the findings from the economic appraisal of the major change option versus the do the minimum option, which shows a positive surplus and Net Present Value over 30 years.

1. After a full discussion, it was ***resolved*** that:

[1] Approval be given to the direction being taken in developing a new estate strategy for the University (the major change option).

[2] An initial financing plan should be developed for the next Council meeting in November, allowing the drawdown of the final tranche of EIB funding.

[3] Further investigation be undertaken regarding any covenants on the use of the estate, particularly elements for disposal, such as the Normal Site.

[4] Further consideration be given to the potential for commercial sponsorship.

[5] Approval be given to the progression of the Science and Technology Quarter project from Outline Business Case to Full Business Case, and that £100k be released for this purpose in advance of further approval.

**STUDENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

1. A paper was tabled providing the most up to date recruitment figures, including an estimation of students due to register.
2. The Council noted:

[1] There is likely to be an overall shortfall in tuition fee income of up to £750k, compared to the financial forecasts, which represents less than 1% of fee income.

[2] A small downturn in Home/EU undergraduate student recruitment of 90 was almost offset by an increase in undergraduate retention. Recruitment of Home/EU postgraduate students is forecast to exceed target by approximately 80 students.

[3] Overseas students are still arriving, but visa restrictions have continued to impact recruitment from overseas and taught postgraduate recruitment is 90 below target.

**NUCLEAR ENERGY**

1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact) presented a paper outlining the University’s involvement in building world class research and development capacity in and for the Nuclear Energy Sector in North Wales. Projects include a test facility on the Menai Science Park site, a research forum and network, establishing academic capacity through the Ser Cymru programme, and higher level skills for the nuclear supply chain. The proposal involves collaborating with Hitachi GE and Imperial College London to research the technology surrounding Advanced Boiling Water Reactors, a technology yet to be deployed in Europe.
2. The Council gave its strong support to the project and noted that:

[1] The projects will create a highly attractive environment for international businesses and a catalyst for attracting world-class academics to the region, delivering step change in STEM at Bangor University.

[2] A bid will be submitted to Ser Cymru for around £10m to support two ‘stars’ in predictive data modelling and ceramic materials, associated support personnel, equipment and facilities. There is a possibility of further investment in the region from both the Westminster and Welsh Governments.

[3] There would be significant benefits for the region, but that there would be a need to carefully handle the communications surrounding the project.

[4] A business plan would be developed to show the sustainability of the project beyond the initial funding period.

**SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATEMENT**

The University Secretary presented the University’s statement on Slavery and Human Trafficking. The Council ***approved*** the statement, subject to a minor change, which is to be appended to the University’s Accounts for 2015/16.

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

1. The reports of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on the 14th September 2016 (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) were approved.
2. With particular reference to **Minute 618 (*HEFCW 5-Year Forecasts Update*)**; the Council ***agreed*** that an appropriate set of financial KPIs be developed, given the confusing and volatile picture presented under new accounting standards (FRS102).
3. The Director of Property and Campus Services informed the Council that the original offer for the former Canonry in Bangor has been withdrawn. A new lower offer has been received and it was ***agreed*** that, in accordance with section 119(1)(c) of the Charities Act 2011, the members are satisfied that the terms on which the disposition is proposed to be made are the best that can reasonably be obtained for the University and that the sale can proceed, subject to finalisation of the contract.

D. The Council were informed, that following marketing of Pen Parc, the University has received a five offers for the property in excess of the valuation.

[1]     It was noted that the University is required to comply with the Charities Act 2011 in respect of the disposal of land.

[2]     A surveyor’s report has been obtained in accordance with section 119(1)(a) of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities (Qualified Surveyor’s Report) Regulations 1992.

[3]    It was ***agreed*** that, in accordance with section 119(1)(c) of the Charities Act 2011, the members are satisfied that the terms on which the disposition is proposed to be made are the best that can reasonably be obtained for the University and that the sale can proceed, subject to finalisation of the contract and subject to confirmation that there are no connected persons involved in the sale (in accordance with section 118 of the Charities Act 2011).

**AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on the 14th September 2016 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to **Minute 401 (*Annual Complaints Report*)**; the Council welcomed the reduction in the number of formal complaints to 36 in 2015/16, almost half the number received during the previous year, and well below sector benchmarks.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on the 18th July 2016 (attached as Appendix IV to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to :

[1] **Minute 491 (*Responsibilities and Arrangements***); the Council noted that the committee had considered and approved the revised Arrangements and Responsibilities section to accompany the recently approved Health and Safety Policy Statement. The revision aligns the document to a national standard and will enable a number of new KPIs to be developed, alongside new auditing arrangements.

[2] **Minute 492b (*New Policies*)**; a new Policy for the Control of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (Drones) and a revision of the Driver and Vehicle Policy had been agreed by the Committee.

[3] **Minute 490 (*Incident Report – Alun Roberts Tower*)**; the Council noted that all identified actions have been undertaken.

**REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE**

The Report of the meeting of the Redundancy Committee held on the 8th July 2016 (attached as Appendix V to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.

**HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

1. The Director of Human Resources presented a report on Human Resources matters.
2. The Council noted:

[1] A Voluntary Redundancy Scheme has been launched, with a closing date of the 10th October.

[2] The final pay offer of 1.1% has been implemented in the September payroll. Following ballots of staff, neither Unison nor Unite have decided to proceed with strike action.

1. A list of recent appointments was received.

**SENATE**

1. The minutes of the Senate Meeting held on the 13th June 2016 were noted.
2. With particular reference to :

[1] **Minute 12025 *(School of Mathematics)*** Constructive and positive discussions have been held regarding the reintroduction of Mathematics in September 2017.

[2] **Minute 12028 B(ii) *(Retention and Exam Boards)*** A multi-faceted approach to improving students retention is ongoing, including working with exam boards and introducing summer schools across the University, following a successful pilot in the School of Psychology.

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

1. The Council received a booklet providing full details of the results of the National Student Survey.
2. The Council received data concerning research grants and contracts awarded.

**UPDATE FROM THE STUDENTS’ UNION**

The Council received an update report from the Students’ Union for information.

**SEALING**

The Council ratified the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 15.

**FEE AND ACCESS PLAN 2017/18**

It was noted that the Fee and Access Plan had been approved by HEFCW and had been circulated to members for information.