

MINUTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS, BG-121

Date: Wednesday 30 June 2021

Time: 1500

Location: T003/4, Beacon building (College Road campus)

Notes:

1. Items marked with an asterisk (starred items) were for information only or regarded as noncontentious.
2. Items classified as Confidential, and their subsequent minutes (highlighted here in blue), will be redacted before publication of the agenda and minutes on the University's public website.

Members		
Professor Liz Barnes	Vice Chancellor	P
Connor Bayliss	Student Governor (President, Students' Union)	P
Glenn Earlam	External Member	P
Tony Evans	External Member	P (T)
Tuesday Forrest	Student Governor (Vice-President, Students' Union)	P
Hannah Gibbard	Staff Governor (professional support staff)	P
Kevin Gould	External Member	P (T)
John Henderson (Deputy Chair)	External Member	P (T)
Dr Cathryn Hickey	External Member	A
Colin Hughes (Chair)	External Member	P
Baljinder Kuller	External Member	P
Dr Simon Smith	Staff Governor (academic staff)	P
Jonathan Vardon	External Member	P
Sara Williams	External Member	P
In attendance		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Hannah Blackburn	President, Students' Union, & incoming Student Governor 2021-22	IA
Jonathan Chapman	Co-opted Audit & Risk Committee member	IA
Mike Herbert	Co-opted Sustainability & Resources Committee member (item BG/121/20)	IA
Professor Martin Jones	Deputy Vice Chancellor	IA
Dr Annabel Kiernan	Pro Vice Chancellor - Education	IA
Sally McGill	Chief Financial Officer	IA
Andrew Proctor	Pro Vice Chancellor - Digital	IA
Lauren Rooke	Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (<i>minutes</i>)	IA
Anthony Wallace	Vice-President, Students' Union, & incoming Student Governor 2021-22	IA



P = Present; A = Apologies; Ab = Absent; L = Late; IA = In Attendance; T = via Teams

1 MEETING MANAGEMENT	
2744	Apologies for Absence were received from Cathryn Hickey. The Chair welcomed other invited observers, as detailed above.
2745	There were no new Declarations of Interest .
2746	The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board of Governors , 21 April 2021 BG/121/01 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.
2747	Matters arising: NONE
2 STRATEGIC OVERVIEW	
2748	The Board received a report on Strategic Developments and Organisational Performance BG/121/02 from the Vice Chancellor, which covered areas such as external context, University performance, University business and senior staff appointments.
3 SUB-COMMITTEE BRIEFING SHEETS AND REFERRED ITEMS	
2749	The BRIEFING SHEET – Remuneration Committee, 11 May 2021 BG/121/03 was introduced by the Committee Chair. There were no referrals to Board of Governors.
2750	<p>The BRIEFING SHEET – Nominations and Governance Committee, 11 May 2021 BG/121/04 was introduced by the Committee Chair, with it being noted that the since the meeting, the Committee had approved via email the proposal to use a search agency to appoint to the Board vacancy for 2021-22.</p> <p>Approval</p> <p>a. Minute 608 – Appointment of Deputy Chair of the Board of Governors BG/121/05 The recommendation to appoint Jonathan Vardon as Deputy Chair with effect from 1 August 2021 was approved.</p> <p>b. Minute 609 - Composition of the Board of Governors for 2021-22 BG/121/06 The proposed composition of the Board for 2021-22, and the recommendations within the paper, were approved.</p> <p>c. Minute 610 - Proposed membership of the sub-committees 2021-22 BG/121/07 The proposed membership of the sub-committees for 2021-22 was approved.</p> <p>Information</p> <p>d. Minute 611 - Governor Skills and Experience Matrix BG/121/08 The Skills and Experience Matrix was noted (with governors asked to complete and return this as soon as possible).</p>
2751	<p>The BRIEFING SHEET - Sustainability and Resources Committee, 18 May 2021 BG/121/09 was introduced by the Committee Chair.</p> <p>Information</p> <p>a. *Minute 383 - Management Accounts (to 31 May 2021)*, BG/121/10 The Management Accounts to 31 May 2021 were noted for information.</p>
2752	<p>The BRIEFING SHEET – Audit and Risk Committee, 9 June 2021 BG/121/11 was introduced by the Committee Chair.</p> <p>Information</p> <p>a. Minute 1795 – Risk Management Framework (diagram) BG/121/12 The updated diagram, slightly amended following changes within Executive portfolios, was noted.</p> <p>Approval</p> <p>b. Minute 1800 – External audit tender BG/121/13 The Board approved the proposal to appoint BDO as the external auditors from January 2022.</p> <p>c. Minute 1801 - Internal audit plan 2021-22 BG/121/14 The Board approved the internal audit plan 2021-22, with its supporting caveats, as proposed.</p>
2753	<p>The BRIEFING SHEET - Strategy and Performance Committee, 15 June 2021 BG/121/15 was introduced by the Committee Chair.</p> <p>Information</p> <p>a. Minute 216 - Update on Return to Campus BG/121/16 The update was noted.</p>

- b. **Minute 218 - Towards 2030 Strategy** BG/121/17
The paper, which drew on the outcomes of recent SLT and UEB awaydays, was noted.
 - c. **Minute 224 - League Table Performance Report** BG/121/18
The report on the University's current position in the CUG was noted, with the Committee Chair noting that an update report would be coming to the Committee's first meeting of 2021-22.
- Members and attendees commented as follows:
- Simon Smith asked about changes in league table focus and metrics and Liz Barnes clarified that this had been relatively static for years, but that we were now seeing a number of changes particularly with respect to employability and how this is presented.
 - Martin Jones noted that employability was heavily weighted, and a very volatile metric. Liz Barnes echoed this with examples of other comparator universities with a similar demographic to Staffordshire, such as Nottingham Trent and Hertfordshire, both of which had dropped in the CUG.
 - Hannah Blackburn asked for clarification around changes to league table metrics and members discussed the likely rationale, given the current external context. Liz Barnes highlighted that the University was lobbying the government on the emerging issues, through different channels.
- d. **Minute 277 - Update on HE Sector Consultations** BG/121/19
The report on the University's responses to the consultations launched since March 2021 was noted.

4 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)

- 2754 The Board received for approval the proposal on **Student accommodation – stage 1 design plans** BG/121/20, introduced by the Chief Financial Officer. The following main points were noted:
- The paper presented the collated **RIBA Stage 1 Report for the Student Village Project**, including Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios' (FCB Studios) design report and contributions from the multidisciplinary design team, as well as both project and cost management sections from Mace.
 - FCBStudios had already conducted consultation events with the overall client representative group and groups of students. There would be further levels of consultation as the project progressed.
 - The designs as shown were to be seen as indicative only at this stage - in particular, the costs shown were as arrived at by MACE following a detailed costing exercise but would be subject to further rounds of interrogation.
 - At the heart of the project was a strong imperative to retain the proposed zero/low carbon, sustainability and biodiversity credentials of the village. MACE and FCBStudios would continue to work on the costings and QMPF (funding advisors) and JLL (student accommodation market expert advisors) would work on the overall funding model.
 - This overall model would be taken to Sustainability and Resources Committee and Board of Governors as part of the Stage 2 sign off, when the external funding, rent levels and costs of development would be clearer.
 - The CFO highlighted:
 - It was assumed in the current plans that the proposed student accommodation would replace existing student accommodation but not increase the scale of student accommodation.
 - The new accommodation would reinforce the principles of sustainability and inclusion and was fundamental to the wider student experience.
 - Feedback thus far from Sustainability and Resources Committee was regarding the issues of funding and affordability. Affordability was key to the project and it was crucial to balance this with the need to create a distinctive development that prioritised sustainability principles. Further work would need to be undertaken regarding the costings of the development.
 - QMPF, who were looking at the overall financial model, and JLL, who were advising on the market's likely response to the scheme, had been involved in all discussions with FCB and the multi-functional design team from the start. Once a concept was in place, QMPF would work with MACE and FCB Studios to identify potential investors in the project, through the production of sales/investment collateral. Further updates would be brought to Sustainability and Resources Committee.
 - MACE was fully engaged with the scheme and was looking at which costs could fall outside of the scheme, given that this was a 'brownfield site' without services to the perimeter. There may be costs which fall to the University in order to make the site accessible - the price of having developed initially in another (ultimately less suitable) location. (N.B. It had not yet been decided to what extent the existing Clarice Cliff blocks should be improved from a sustainability point of view.)
 - The appropriate pre-design works/surveys on the site would now be progressed.
- Members and attendees commented as follows:

	 <p>The Board of Governors approved the decision to proceed with the student village proposal, with a further update to be provided at the Sustainability and Resources Committee.</p>
2755	<p>The paper on the OfS sexual misconduct review BG/121/21 was received for discussion, with the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education noting the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper aimed to provide an assessment of the institutional position set against the recent set of expectations published by the Office for Students in relation to harassment and sexual misconduct within universities. • In addition, outlined were the actions and approach in development, overseen by a task and finish group comprised of both University and Students’ Union staff. • Included as Annex 1 was a Commitment statement that emphasised the shared commitment of the University and Students’ Union to this important and challenging societal issue. • It was proposed the statement be approved for publishing online as a means of demonstrating our ongoing commitment to this agenda and to the support of our student and staff community. <p>Members and attendees commented as follows: NONE</p>
2756	<p>The paper on Academic quality and standards assurance BG/121/22 was received for discussion, with the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education noting the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper included a one-page diagram presenting the key features of the Framework and how these worked together, as well as the Committee oversight of each element, thus providing assurance of the University QA and QE processes and procedures. • The text narrative provided further detail on the policy underpinning for each of the elements of the Framework, and how compliance was therefore assured with external regulatory requirements as well as maintaining standing within the sector through external assurance. • The new Pro Vice Chancellor Education (appointed May 2021) would continue to review the policies noted in the paper to ensure they remained current and provided the necessary scaffolding for continuous monitoring and enhancement, to underpin our performance in core Education metrics. <p>The Board of Governors approved the paper giving oversight of the University’s academic quality and standards and assurance on the appropriate practices and standards.</p>
2757	

6 ADDITIONAL MATTERS

2762	How have we made a positive impact on our students today? Colin Hughes underlined that keeping the University's strategy very tightly focused was crucial, noting that the day's strategy sessions had been very valuable, particularly in terms of the Estates masterplan discussions. Hannah Blackburn noted that it had been reassuring to see how student-focused decisions and discussions had been.
2763	Additional matters: a) The Chair thanked John Henderson, Cathryn Hickey (in absentia), Connor Bayliss and Tuesday Forrest for their commitment to the University during their time as governors, and wished them the best for the future.
2764	Next meeting: Weds 22 September 2021 (Boardroom, University House)