

# MINUTES

## STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE, SP-12

**Date:** Tuesday 15 June 2021

**Time:** 1500

**Location:** Boardroom, University House/online Teams meeting

*Notes:*

1. *Items marked with an asterisk (starred items) were for information only or regarded as noncontentious. Starred items will not be discussed and will be assumed to have been noted or approved unless a request to unstar a named item is received from a Board member in advance, or at the commencement, of the meeting.*
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.*

<b>Members</b>		
Professor Liz Barnes	Vice Chancellor	P
Connor Bayliss	Student Governor (President, Students' Union)	P
Glenn Earlam (Deputy Chair)	External Member	P
Joanne Hannaford	External Member	L
Colin Hughes	External Member	P
Simon Smith	Staff Governor (academic staff)	P
Sara Williams (Chair)	External Member	P
<b>In attendance</b>		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Nuala Devlin	Executive Dean of Student Services ( <i>item 221 only</i> )	IA
Professor Martin Jones	Deputy Vice Chancellor	IA
Annabel Kiernan	Pro Vice Chancellor – Education	IA
Paul Marshall	Executive Director of Strategic & Academic Planning	IA
Sally McGill	Chief Financial Officer	IA
Andrew Proctor	Pro Vice Chancellor - Digital	IA
Lauren Rooke	Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (minutes)	A

*P = Present (via Teams); A = Apologies; Ab = Absent; L = Late; IA = In Attendance (via Teams)*

<b>1 MEETING MANAGEMENT</b>	
210	There were no <b>Apologies for absence</b> . Joanne Hannaford joined at 4.10pm.
211	There were no new <b>Declarations of interest</b> .
212	The <b>Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee</b> , 23 February 2021 SP/12/01 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.
213	<p><b>Matters arising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minute 169 (Matters arising) - Academic Quality and Standards Assurance</b> – it was noted that this would be considered at Academic Board on 16 June 2021 and then presented to Board of Governors on 30 June 2021.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minute 191 (Matters arising) – IoT wave two</b> – a verbal update from the Deputy Vice Chancellor was noted. A number of IoT were now progressing and the University was working as a supporting secondary partner with the Cheshire submission.</li> <li>• <b>Minute 197 – Staffordshire University: London phase two expansion</b> – it was noted that Board of Governors had approved the proposal at its extraordinary meeting on 5 March 2021.</li> </ul>
214	<p>The <b>*Overview of annual business 2020-21*</b> SP/12/02 was received for information. It was noted that it would be important to consider the role of educational partnerships and Further Education at the Autumn meeting, given the emergence of information around developing Government policy.</p>
<b>2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)</b>	
215	<p>The Committee received a presentation on <b>cybersecurity</b> from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital, which noted that many sectors, including HE, had experienced a heightened threat from cyber-attacks over the past 12 months, and that Staffordshire aligned its risks, controls and assessments with the National Cyber Security Centre.</p> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Proctor was thanked for his presentation on cybersecurity and the University’s commitment to this was noted.</li> <li>• It was agreed that cybersecurity would be added to the annual Committee business cycle, with a focus on governance and role of the governors.</li> </ul>
216	<p>The Committee received for discussion an update on the <b>Return to campus</b> SP/12/03, presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, who noted the following principal points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report outlined the latest position in relation to the return of students and staff to campus, providing details of the Government’s roadmap out of lockdown which had guided our return to on-campus activities, the delivery of learning and teaching and the resumption of the Blended Working Framework for staff from 17 May 2021. All students were now able to return to campus, access facilities and resume in-person teaching and learning, subject to the University’s Covid-secure arrangements.</li> <li>• To comply with Government guidance, all students and staff needed to be regularly tested for Covid-19 and the University encouraged twice weekly testing, available on-campus at Leek Rd.</li> <li>• The Executive was also considering the principles of Learning and Teaching pedagogy for the 2021-2022 academic year as part of the 2030 Academic Strategy. Flexible approaches to the delivery of learning and teaching, including lecture capture facilities and other technologies, would contribute to blended learning pedagogy and an innovative teaching and learning environment.</li> <li>• It was noted that the University had also operated a one-day vaccination centre for staff and students since the report had been written and that Ian Blachford had now joined a national group convened by the Department for Education on the plans for the Autumn term.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sara Williams asked about student involvement in the development of teaching and learning plans for the new academic year. Martin Jones noted that the students and Students’ Union had been involved in the teaching and learning developments over the last twelve months and that this would continue throughout the preparations for the new academic year. In addition it was widely reported that students were looking forward to returning to campus, a point echoed by Connor Bayliss.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed to refer the report to Board of Governors for information.</p>
217	<p>The Committee received for discussion a report on <b>Evaluating delivery of the University’s Strategic Plan – talented people</b> SP/12/04, presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main messages from the report were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 36% of academic staff had a PhD against the target of 50% by 2021</li> <li>○ 65% of academic staff had an HEA fellowship against a target of 100% by 2021</li> <li>○ Progression between levels by undergraduate were all below the 2021 KPI</li> <li>○ Timely completion for types of qualification were all below the 2021 KPI</li> <li>○ Good degrees were at 74.7%, above the 70% 2021 KPI.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Whilst the KPIs, in the main, had not been achieved, they remained important to the development of the University. The post-doctoral qualification remained important due to the ambitions to increase the University’s research profile. As a University with teaching and learning at its heart, the professional recognition and upskilling our academic staff was central. The KPIs on progression and timely completion were important indicators of the student academic experience and were gaining greater prominence publicly with the recent launch by the OfS of the PROCEED metric.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The paper outlined a summary of the main developments supporting the talented people theme.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simon Smith asked about staff not completing the HEA Fellowships. Ian Blachford explained that some new staff would be completing this as part of the Academic Professional Apprenticeship (APA), however, the larger group would be staff who had been employed with the University for a number of years and had not engaged with this agenda.</li> <li>Glenn Earlam asked about the timely completion KPI. Discussion ensued about the demographic of the undergraduate population which presented significant challenges regarding timely completion. However, there remained a challenge where completion was addressed in a timely way and looking at this on a specific course-by-course basis. Glenn expressed the importance of both historical trending and the simplicity of data presentation. Liz Barnes highlighted that a number of interventions were being undertaken, which were included in the retention report.</li> <li>Glenn Earlam asked that future reports include the base data from when the KPI had been originally was set, circa 2016, so that performance progress could be accurately tracked. This approach was agreed.</li> </ul>
218	<p>The Committee received for discussion an <b>Update on the Towards 2030 Strategy</b> SP/12/05, presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee received an update on the University's KPIs at each meeting. As only two indicators had changed since the last meeting and both were detailed in a separate paper, an update on progress with work to develop the Towards 2030 strategy had been deemed more beneficial for the Committee.</li> <li>The report covered the main headlines arising from the UEB, SLT and Associate Dean awaydays held after Easter and initial thoughts on how we might change our KPIs to better reflect our ambitions and priorities beyond 2021.</li> <li>The Committee was invited to consider the paper and offer feedback on how the headlines and early thinking on reshaping our KPIs might influence and inform the BofG strategic event in June and the awayday in August.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Glenn Earlam asked about flexibility around revisiting the KPIs, if progress in attaining these was significantly off. Liz Barnes highlighted that whilst she understood the point being made, and that these targets were often longer term, many should be retained at the current level in order to be reflective of the standard to be achieved. On a course-by-course basis there was potentially some flexibility where performance was more nuanced depending on external circumstances, e.g. MoD courses, but overall the KPIs should stand as an important statement on the level of performance both required by the University and monitored by others such as the OfS.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed to refer the report to Board of Governors for information.</p>
219	<p>The Committee received for discussion a report on <b>Student recruitment/intakes</b> SP/12/06, with an update being provided in the meeting by the Chief Operating Officer. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The decline by default date had been passed on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and the target for FTUG on campus students was 3206. The current predicted outturn was 3142, a shortfall of 64 students against target.</li> <li>Of significance was a greater number of students who had been declined at the default date – 619 in the current year versus 449 in the previous year. These declined students would be re-engaged to understand if they wished to continue with their applications.</li> <li>More generally, focus was now upon early clearing and clearing activities to influence the remainder of the cycle.</li> <li>The target for the current recruitment year was 3206, compared to a target of 3348 the previous year. The number of new students in the previous year had been 3108, so the predicted outturn of 3142 would be an increase in actuals on the previous year.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colin Hughes asked if work was being undertaken on the risk of the award of higher grades and subsequent possible 'trading up' during clearing. It was agreed that this was an important area to understand and this would be followed up with the Executive Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Communications outside of the meeting.</li> </ul>
220	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper on <b>Student retention</b> SP/12/07, presented by the Chief Operating Officer, who noted the following main points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report provided Strategy and Performance Committee with context to understand the University's current withdrawal position and assurance that appropriate actions were being taken.</li> <li>Retention remained a strategic priority and took on added significance in light of the new experimental student outcome measure introduced by the OfS, called Proceed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee was asked to note that as part of the refresh of the University's KPIs we were reviewing the targets for the retention KPI. The new targets would take account of the different retention profile across the levels of the study with a particular focus on the significantly higher withdrawal rate at level 4, common to all universities.</li> <li>At a University-level, the following headlines could be observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undergraduate withdrawal rate of 5.3%. This was 0.8% lower than at the same point last year</li> <li>Overall Postgraduate withdrawal rate was 2.7% lower compared to the same time in the 2019/20 academic year and currently sat at 5.8%.</li> <li>Gaps in demographic withdrawals rates had remained static or marginally reduced.</li> <li>It was likely that the emergency regulations brought in to support students had had a positive impact on retention.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connor Bayliss asked about the fall in commuter student withdrawal rates and whether this linked to blended delivery of learning and teaching. Paul Marshall agreed that some of the interventions deployed in the current academic year had clearly had a positive impact and therefore would need to be retained. Sara Williams asked about communication with students on issues such as this and it was confirmed that the feedback gathered continued to inform developments.</li> <li>Martin Jones highlighted the importance of the portfolio review that would help the University to understand this issue further – this would be undertaken during the Summer on a course-by-course basis, with an update at the next meeting of the Committee.</li> </ul>
221	<p>The Committee received for discussion the <b>Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020-25 update SP/12/08</b>, presented by the Executive Dean of Student Services, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2020-2025 Access &amp; Participation Plan (APP) had been agreed with the Office for Students (OfS) in November 2019. The performance dashboard within the report had been released by OfS in March, showing negative movement across most metrics, but due to the lag in data (that used was from 18 months ago) it did not necessarily reflect the current position. Our recently launched in-house dashboard would allow detailed, ongoing, real-time analysis enabling swift movement to more quickly address shortfalls and learn what delivered success.</li> <li>Though a gap remained in the measures relating to our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students, we had a University-wide programme of activity to effect cultural change linked to detailed plans and analysis within each metric. (It should also be noted that, as an organisation, we were moving away from the term BAME to a more individualised approach.)</li> <li>In terms of reporting we understood that OfS would continue to want annual monitoring but focused on narrative and impacts.</li> <li>Governors were asked to note performance against metrics, key activities undertaken, update on programmes of action currently in train and future focus.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion focused upon the diversity of both the staff and student profile and to what extent this reflected the region. It was agreed that there was further work to be done on this, which was currently being addressed, particularly as part of the Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM) analysis and resulting workstreams.</li> <li>Simon Smith asked if this profile was distorted by non-disclosure of inclusion data. Nuala Devlin noted that where non-disclosure occurred, this was being addressed to ensure that barriers to reporting were overcome where possible. However, this did not negate the fact that neither the organisation's student nor staff profiles were reflective of the regional profile.</li> </ul>
222	<p>The Committee received for discussion the <b>Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) update SP/12/09</b>, presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following principal points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2020 Higher Education Providers (HEPs) saw a first iteration and submissions towards the newly established Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF). Driven by Research England (RE), KEF had 7 key areas where performance was driven by the past 3 years' submission of HEBCI return with a combination of HESA data.</li> <li>Using data previously submitted for the annual HEBCI return, which had then been turned into 7 comparative measures within the KEF, meant it was impossible to predict the University's potential performance in this first iteration of the exercise.</li> <li>Universities were also invited to provide 3 narratives that provide the context in which HEPs operate, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional Context</li> <li>Local Growth and Regeneration</li> <li>Public and Community Engagement</li> </ul> </li> <li>Our performance showed strengths, specifically being in the top half of the scored areas for Working with Business, Working with the Public and Third Sector, Skills, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship and Local Growth and Regeneration.</li> <li>On the other side, we had scored in the bottom half for the Research Partnerships, IP and Commercialisation and Public and Community Engagement.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Public and Community Engagement scoring was based on the self-assessment performed by the University and the 'footfall' relating to cultural and social engagement. Given the University's positioning around community engagement, the self-assessment may not have maximised the University's position. This would be reviewed for the next submission.</li> <li>• The weaker performance in Research Partnerships would be addressed by the Research Strategy, now that the REF exercise had been completed and was consistent with the level of research income when benchmarked against our competitors. The weaker performance relating to Intellectual Property was as expected as this was not currently a strategic priority.</li> <li>• At the moment, KEF's link to the funding of the University was through the HEBCI, which drove the allocation of the Higher Education Innovation Fund, from which the University received over £1million a year. In the longer-term, however, KEF could become the mechanism for KE/HEIF income.</li> <li>• The University had done significant work in areas such as 'Regeneration', engaging strategically with regional and national funds that set strong foundations for future knowledge exchange prospects.</li> </ul> <p>The paper was noted. (There were no comments from members or attendees.)</p>
223	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper on <b>Enterprise strategy</b> SP/12/10, presented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper set out the proposed approach to Enterprise, building on the emerging Research Strategy beyond 2021, following the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission, and the publication of the results of the first annual Knowledge Exchange Excellence (KEF) framework exercise (covering the period 2019-20).</li> <li>• All activities within the KEF could be defined as 'Enterprise and Innovation', either due to the provision of enterprising and innovative services (e.g. the creation of spin-offs), or the University's involvement in facilitating Enterprise and Innovation amongst other communities.</li> <li>• The University would create an 'Enterprise and Innovation Ecosystem' which looked beyond the narrow definition provided by the KEF and recognised that there were many other activities involving Enterprise and Innovation.</li> <li>• The University's vision for Innovation and Enterprise was threefold. To be a leading, nationally recognised hub for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Innovation and Enterprise skills development, benefitting students, staff, SMEs, other organisations and other members of the community.</li> <li>2. New venture creation, business incubation and support for emerging and growing enterprises, helping them to form, scale up and pivot.</li> <li>3. Applied research, consultancy and knowledge transfer.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• This would be achieved by creating an Innovation and Enterprise Ecosystem. The University had a number of part-externally funded programmes (mostly funded by ERDF and ESF), which could be seen as 'proofs of concept' and pilot projects for how the Innovation and Enterprise ecosystem could operate.</li> <li>• The Committee was asked to consider this paper, support the building up of the proofs of concept and pilot projects, to create an ecosystem 'at scale'. An annual delivery plan to highlight priorities, project and delivery specifics would be created, providing the on-the-ground connections between this paper and the revised Research Strategy (see Research and Innovation Report).</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colin Hughes supported the direction of the strategy and emphasised the need for clear delivery plans so that Governors could be assured of progress. Martin Jones agreed that this was a key aspect of the next stage, in order to provide clarity of focus, as well as clarity of impact both sought and delivered.</li> </ul>
224	<p>The Committee received for discussion the <b>League table performance report</b> SP/12/11, introduced by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffordshire University was ranked 98<sup>th</sup> in the latest Complete University Guide league table, dropping 23 places.</li> <li>• We had seen a nine-place rise in Student Satisfaction (based on 2019/20 NSS results)</li> <li>• There had been a large fall in Graduate Prospects (-63 places) and a 10-place fall in Degree Completion.</li> <li>• The Complete University Guide had removed the "Good Honours" measure and replaced it with "Graduate Outcomes-On Track", where the University was ranked 84<sup>th</sup> with a score of 67%.</li> <li>• Staffordshire University had no subjects in the top quartile of the sector and only four subjects within the upper quartile of their respective subject league tables.</li> <li>• Staffordshire University had dropped to 12<sup>th</sup> of 13 (from 8<sup>th</sup> of 13 in the CUG2021) institutions in its competitor set.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joanne Hannaford asked about the graduate outcomes survey. Paul Marshall noted his belief that the outcomes in this were not truly reflective of the level of actual graduate employment, and further work needed to be undertaken with students to ensure that they understood the need for meaningful survey responses. Plans were already underway to</li> </ul>

	<p>refresh this approach together with a broader piece of work on the employability agenda and embedding this within the curriculum. In addition, a greater focus upon the alumni relationship could enable a greater level of interaction with the graduate outcomes survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that the pandemic had not impacted upon the survey as this related to earlier data.</li> <li>• It was agreed that a paper on the University's response to the survey would be brought to the next Strategy and Performance Committee.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed to refer the report to Board of Governors for information.</p>
225	<p>The Committee received for discussion a report on <b>Apprenticeship Performance and Monitoring</b> SP/12/12, introduced by the Chief Financial Officer &amp; Deputy Chief Executive. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in apprenticeship income was part of the strategic plan to diversify the University's income in a financially sustainable manner. The £8m of HEFCE Catalyst capital funding had committed our University to achieve over 6,500 degree-apprenticeship starts by 2026. By April 2021, a total of 2,115 apprentices had been enrolled since 2015 with 1,924 since September 2017, contributing 29% towards OfS target. In March 2021, the monthly remittance paid by the EFSA (drawing down the levy to fund apprenticeship tuition fees) exceeded £850,000 for the first time, equating to annual income of £9.4 million this academic year.</li> <li>• The forecasted income for 20/21 reflected the up-to-date intake &amp; progression data and showed a shortfall of £0.1m against budget, resulting in a forecast of £9.4m against a budgeted £9.5m for the year. The 20/21 budget included a £1.6m provision against the income from the policing contracts and a further £0.5m provision against income from other apprenticeships held centrally in the University.</li> <li>• The University expected to meet its overall target for enrolments in 20/21 but not all courses would meet their individual targets.</li> <li>• Retention and overall progression on apprenticeships in 20/21 (including those who will complete later than 20/21) was high, with both significantly higher than the KPI of 85% (89.6%) in year retention and 92% yearly progression.</li> <li>• Despite all of the issues affecting delivery and end-point assessment (EPA), we could now report an achievement rate of 79% for apprentices completing in 19/20, which was 14% above the ESFA minimum level of performance. Although below the University's KPI of 85%, this achievement rate was testament to the dedication of our apprentices and the University staff who had supported them throughout a very challenging period.</li> <li>• Ofsted had announced that no graded inspections will take place before April 2021 and previously inspected institutions are unlikely to be visited before September. Activities and training continue to be rolled out to all areas with responsibility for apprenticeships and evidence is being gathered to demonstrate good practice for all areas of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF).</li> <li>• The rapid growth in apprenticeship numbers and income over the last few years suggested the University would be an early candidate for ESFA audit. From January 2021, the apprenticeship team is undertaking a check of all documentation and activities which would be subject to audit. Preparations were now in place for the annual audit in July 2021 by KPMG (a requirement of funding) to give assurance on the use of funding on subcontracted provision.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sara Williams asked whether the apprenticeship recruitment figures remained achievable given the current trajectory. Ian Blachford noted that the trajectory remained ambitious, however, there would be significant scaling up in the police apprenticeship activity (which had always been planned for the later years of the contract).</li> </ul>
<b>3 FOR INFORMATION</b>	
226	The <b>Research and innovation report</b> SP/12/13 was received for information.
227	The <b>Update on HE sector consultations</b> SP/12/14 was received for information. The Committee agreed to refer the report on to Board of Governors for information.
<b>4 ADDITIONAL MATTERS</b>	
228	<p><b>How have we made a positive impact on our students today?</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the discussions on cyber security, return to campus, timely completion, metrics and the recent league table performance together with the access and participation plan update and the retention report had all focused on making further positive interventions for the student academic and wider experience.</p>
229	There were no <b>additional matters</b> .
230	<p>Items to be referred to <b>Board of Governors:</b></p> <p>For information</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Minute 216</b> - Update on Return to Campus</li> <li>b) <b>Minute 218</b> - Towards 2030 Strategy</li> </ol>

	c) <b>Minute 224</b> - League Table Performance Report d) <b>Minute 277</b> - Update on HE Sector Consultations
231	<b>Next meeting:</b> 12 October 2021 (Boardroom, University House)