

# MINUTES

## STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE, SP-14

**Date:** Tuesday 15 February 2022

**Time:** 1500

**Location:** The Catalyst, Leek Road

### 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.

| Members                     |   |    |
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| Hannah Blackburn            | Student Governor (President, Students' Union)               | P  |
| Jonathan Chapman            | External Member   | P  |
| Glenn Earlam (Deputy Chair) | External Member   | A  |
| Colin Hughes                | External Member   | P  |
| Baljinder Kuller            | External Member   | P  |
| Professor Martin Jones      | Vice Chancellor   | P  |
| Simon Smith                 | Staff Governor (academic staff)                             | P  |
| Sara Williams (Chair)       | External Member   | P  |
|                             |   |    |
| In attendance               |   |    |
| Ian Blachford               | Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors | IA |
| Annabel Kiernan             | Pro Vice Chancellor – Education                             | IA |
| Sally McGill                | Chief Financial Officer                                     | IA |
| Lauren Rooke                | Assistant Clerk to the Board of Governors (minutes)         | IA |

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

| 1 MEETING MANAGEMENT |  |
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| 253                  | <b>Apologies for absence</b> were received from Glenn Earlam.  |
| 254                  | There were no new <b>Declarations of interest</b> .  |
| 255                  | The <b>Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee</b> , 12 October 2021 SP/14/01, were confirmed as a true and accurate record.  |
| 256                  | <b>Matters arising:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minute 241 - Evaluating delivery of the University's Strategic Plan (Innovative and Applied Learning)</b> – the Committee noted a brief verbal update from the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education on this.</li> <li>• <b>Minute 243 - Student progression report (outcomes and attainment)</b> – it was noted that a related item on student retention appeared elsewhere on the agenda.</li> </ul> |
| 257                  | The <b>*Overview of annual Committee business 2021-22*</b> SP/14/02 was received for information.  |

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| 258 | <p>An <b>Update on the Strategic Plan</b> SP/14/03 was received from the Vice Chancellor, who noted the following principal points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following discussions at the Governors' Strategic Event in August 2021, it had been agreed that the new Strategic Plan would reflect a significant continuity with the previous Plan and would also be built around the ambitions and priorities of the new Vice Chancellor with clear and relevant KPIs identified.</li> <li>• The report described the interlinkages between the development of the new Strategic Plan and the supporting Five-Year Business Plans for the 3 Schools and 2 Institutes (with current draft Business Plan template attached as Appendix One). For Services, a number of cross-cutting Enabling Strands had been identified to support the development of the Strategic Plan – these templates were being developed in parallel with the Five-Year Business Plans.</li> <li>• Staff engagement was key and engagement sessions were being held during February - feedback from these would be shared with Governors at the 6 April 2022 Board meeting.</li> <li>• The paper set out the priorities at the core of the new Strategic Plan, as framed by the Vision and Mission presented by the Vice Chancellor at interview of being consistently the best modern university in the UK.</li> <li>• The visual representation would be updated to reflect the new Strategic Plan and would move away from the "triangle". The current working draft of the visualisation, based on a "flywheel" concept, had been included in the report and an updated version was presented by the Vice Chancellor at the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that the first "Strategic Plan Staff Spotlight" session had taken place that morning and that engagement levels had been high, with a positive reaction from staff across the board.</li> <li>• Jonathan Chapman reiterated the importance of translating this positivity and momentum into tangible KPIs and milestones. Martin Jones noted that Executive had held a very fruitful session to move this forward.</li> <li>• Sara Williams commended the draft strategy and the flywheel concept, highlighting the importance of streamlining the strategy's priorities to ensure the required level of focus. It would also be crucial to put in place clear milestones to measure impact and in particular to assess the social good achieved. Sara further noted the need to learn lessons from previous strategies rather than repeating previous ambitions. Ian Blachford confirmed that the School 5-year business plans and enabling strategies would be key to this.</li> <li>• Colin Hughes also commended the strategy and its articulation, advising that the University focused on showing staff, students and the wider community how the institution would look and feel different and distinct, as the plan progressed.</li> <li>• Simon Smith underlined the need for staff to feel included and highlighted that there was no specific mention of staff within the visual. Simon also enquired asked about work being done to link this to brand identity, both locally and further afield, and Martin Jones confirmed that significant branding work would follow later in the year.</li> </ul> |
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**2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)**

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| 259 | <p>The <b>Student Recruitment Report: End-of-Cycle Report (Sept 2021 enrolment)</b> SP/14/04 was received as a precursor to a strategic discussion, presented by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report provided key headlines and lessons learnt from the full End of Cycle Report for 2021 for entry onto undergraduate and postgraduate courses at Staffordshire. (A more detailed End of Cycle report had been provided to Executive, Schools, and the Senior Leadership team in February 2022.)</li> <li>• The report was based on data from UCAS End of Cycle 2021 and internal Recruitment and Enrolment dashboards and included analysis of current Staffordshire University student intake for 2021/22 with year-on-year comparisons, against available UCAS data End of Cycle releases for national and aggregated comparator sets.</li> <li>• The key purpose of the End of Cycle Report for 2021 was to review and analyse our student recruitment performance in the context of national and aggregated comparator sets and to focus on the 'lessons learnt' from the recruitment cycle and subsequent actions and adjustments for the 2022 cycle and beyond.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baljinder Kuller noted that the University of Buckingham had recently opened a location in Crewe (former MMU site), with a bio-medical offer, and Martin Jones confirmed that this would likely pose more of a threat to Keele than to Staffordshire. It was noted that this "outposts" model was becoming more usual within the sector, to help HEIs make the most of markets elsewhere.</li> <li>• Sara Williams highlighted the importance of strong local schools and colleges liaison to prevent local institutions looking elsewhere for partnerships. Simon Smith noted his experience of outreach work with local schools and colleges and underlined the importance of making these connections early enough in the pipeline. Annabel Kiernan noted that the University's position with this was improving, and that we were working with colleges on transition and co-curriculum.</li> <li>• Martin Jones agreed that it was clear that we were losing market share and a perception issue meant that we were not the default choice for local 18-yr olds. This would need to be addressed as part of the five-year business plans for the schools based on market insights. A piece of work had been commissioned and would inform the development of the five-year business plans.</li> <li>• Jonathan Chapman commended the data analysis and noted that a lot of action and activity was clearly underway.</li> </ul> |
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|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simon Smith noted the value of these insights during course design and Annabel Kiernan confirmed that designers of new courses now had to demonstrate market worth as well as the quality of pedagogy of a proposed course.</li> <li>• Colin Hughes commended the report and the opportunity to take away valuable lessons.</li> </ul>   |
| 260 | <p>The Committee received for approval an update on <b>International Recruitment Strategy</b> SP/14/05, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who noted the following principal points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in international student recruitment was an important factor for the future success of Staffordshire University as it entered the next strategic period to 2030. With approximately 3% of Staffordshire University’s 15,000 student population comprising international students, there was clearly an opportunity for growth in terms of both headcount and revenue for the institution. With changes looming on the UK student recruitment horizon, it was important that the University redressed the historic overreliance on home recruitment during the next strategic phase to 2030.</li> <li>• To realise its strategic ambition, the University would need to realign and reposition itself favourably in the global marketplace to ensure it was able to capitalise on available international recruitment initiatives. These measures were outlined in the report and the Committee was asked to consider and approve the following recommended Strategic Aims as outlined in this paper to support the International Recruitment Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ increase Staffordshire University’s on-campus international student population to approximately 13% (2,000) by 2030</li> <li>○ build a sustainable long-term presence in an intelligence-led priority market portfolio, supported by appropriate third-parties</li> <li>○ consider the provision of an international foundation programme and associated delivery models to secure undergraduate international recruitment pipeline</li> <li>○ diversify streams of revenue in relation to international recruitment opportunities (fee-paying summer schools, credit bearing summer schools, pre-sessional English, as examples)</li> <li>○ develop further entrance routes to the University from external qualification providers and partners through articulation arrangements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst the recruitment of international students was important, and the University had not achieved in this area previously, the current trajectory was applauded. It was highlighted that more opportunity could be made of progression from international partners, and this was being investigated further.</li> <li>• It was also highlighted that the University would need to reconsider the internationalisation approach to ensure that the international students had a valuable experience at the University and that domestic students would benefit from this increased internationalisation. This would be a key focus for the new Deputy Vice Chancellor.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee approved the <b>International Recruitment Strategy</b> to Board of Governors for approval.</p> |
| 261 | <p>The Committee received for discussion a report on <b>Evaluating delivery of the University’s Strategic Plan – Connecting Communities</b> SP/14/06, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who noted the following principal points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was the fourth annual progress report on the delivery of the Strategic Pillar—Connecting Communities. The report outlined developments in relation to the Connecting Communities Vision, presenting a framework designed to embed the Connected Communities strategy ‘into the everyday’, and pointing to examples of key activities, their success and impact and plans for future activity.</li> <li>• In addition to specific projects and initiatives in this report, a key focus during the last year had been on aligning strategic approaches to Connected Communities across Staffordshire University and Staffordshire and London Campuses. In the first part of 2022 we would ensure Connected Communities was complimentary and an enabler for the 2030 University and Research, Innovation and Impact Strategies, with rounded KPIs demonstrating our civic impact in its entirety, and building on existing KPIs of access and participation in higher education (the percentage of young people progressing into HE), graduate employability and retention.</li> <li>• The Committee was asked to receive this paper for information and to note the newly developing direction of travel to inform the Towards 2030 Strategy.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colin Hughes commended the report and its description of the journey.</li> <li>• Sara Williams also commended the paper and asked for more clarity on how the findings of the report influenced decision-making within the University; this was echoed by Jonathan Chapman.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed to refer the report on <b>Evaluating delivery of the University’s Strategic Plan – Connecting Communities</b> to Board of Governors for information.</p>  |
| 262 | <p>The Committee received for discussion the <b>Student Retention In-Year Report</b> SP/14/07, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who noted the following main points:</p>  |

[Redacted text block]

Members and attendees commented as follows:

[Redacted text block]

263 The Committee received for discussion the **Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy (Draft) SP/14/08**, introduced by the Vice Chancellor, who noted the following main points:

- This paper outlined the successes achieved by the 2018-21 Research, Innovation and Impact Strategy, and the challenges which had not been completely overcome and which had led to incomplete achievement of the strategy's KPIs.
- The paper also described the critically important process which had underpinned the development of our new Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) Strategy which would guide activity from 2022 and explained the approach.
- At the time of writing (January 2022) the strategy itself was in draft form. Considerable work had been undertaken - the direction of travel was clear, and the incoming Deputy Vice Chancellor would be providing strategic input following his arrival in March 2022. The Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy will be one of the enabling strands to support the new Towards 2030 Strategy.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

NONE

264 The Committee received for discussion the **Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) annual report 2020-21 SP/14/09**, introduced by the Vice Chancellor, who noted the following main points:

- The past 23 months had been an extremely testing time across all sectors of education, but staff and pupils had shown incredible commitment, resilience and adaptability in embracing new ways of working.
- The loss of the long-standing CEO in the Autumn term of 2021 had undoubtedly been a significant loss to the Trust. Arrangements were being made for a substantive replacement at a sympathetic and appropriate pace.

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 20 schools within the Trust continued to make progress and had received considerable business and school improvement support where necessary alongside a robust program of continued professional development.</li> <li>Staffordshire University Academies Trust (SUAT) continued to be a well-regarded, high-performing multi-academy trust.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Martin Jones noted that one of the MAT's primary schools currently awaited an Ofsted inspection. Once this had taken place and a "Good" rating awarded, the MAT could start to take on more high schools where appropriate, with implications for the recruitment pipeline.</li> </ul>   |
| 265                      | <p>The Committee received for discussion the <b>Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 update</b> SP/14/10, presented by the Chief Financial Officer &amp; Deputy Chief Executive, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The January Access &amp; Participation Plan (APP) report provided an update on the Access priority areas of our APP using recent recruitment data, detailed key changes to our APP approach and highlighted APP activity to date.</li> <li>We had maintained improvements in three Access targets, (Black participation rates, Asian participation rates and IMD 1 vs 5 part time study rates) since our last reporting period in November 2021, and established an APP Board to improve governance, oversight and localised planning of our priority areas.</li> <li>Significant cross service work had been undertaken to support APP activities, via three key strands.</li> <li>Phase one of GAME had delivered the Minimum Best Product (MBP). Phase 2 will commence in Feb 2022.</li> <li>Governors are asked to note the strengthening of governance, better clarity of purpose, increase in accountability and direct lines of sight to schools and services and focus and drive for delivery.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <p>NONE</p> <p>The Committee agreed to refer the <b>Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 Update</b> to the Board of Governors for information.</p>   |
| 266                      | <p>The Committee received for discussion the <b>Apprenticeship Performance and Monitoring</b> SP/14/11 presented by the Chief Financial Officer &amp; Deputy Chief Executive, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apprenticeship provision at the University continued to recruit well and total predicted recruitment for 2021/22 was 815 against a target of 736.</li> <li>The monthly ILR return for December 2021 had generated a total income of £1,277,000 (a record return). Overall retention for all levels of Apprenticeships across the University was slightly below the University target of 85%, reflecting the impact of courses which started before September 2020.</li> <li>The most recent Covid restrictions introduced in December 2021 had had very little impact on Apprentices or Employer partners and course teams continued to engage apprentices with face-to-face learning on campus.</li> <li>The Ofsted inspection had taken place during the week commencing Monday 24 January 2022. The draft report had been shared with Governors (rated Good 2) and the final report would be circulated once received.</li> <li>The ESFA had invited all Apprenticeship providers to resubmit an application for reapproval to the register of Apprenticeship providers and the University's submission had been completed in December 2021.</li> <li>The annual subcontracting audit had taken place in June 2021, with 2 medium-risk and 2 low-risk issues identified (reported to UEB and Audit and Risk Committee) - the agreed action plan had now been fully implemented.</li> <li>New apprenticeship standards continued in development and the University had continued to be successful in winning new business through public tender. The first cohort from the successful MoD bid for Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) would start in February 2022.</li> <li>The Department for Education (DfE) and Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) had reported on its proposed changes to Degree Apprenticeships and all five proposed changes would be introduced between September 2022 and July 2023.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colin Hughes asked what it would take to move to an Outstanding rating (and increased revenue growth) and asked how Staffordshire compared to the sector as a whole in terms of apprenticeships. Sally McGill confirmed that a summary report could be produced for this, widened to include all work-based learning, however the University's rating of good meant the University was in a leading position, with others, in the sector.</li> <li>Sara Williams commended the breadth of portfolio on apprenticeships.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee agreed to refer the <b>Apprenticeships performance and monitoring update</b> to the Board of Governors for information.</p> |
| <b>3 FOR INFORMATION</b> |  |

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| 267                         | <p>The Committee received for information an <b>Update on HE sector consultations</b> SP/14/12, which noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper was the third of such reports to the Committee, summarising current HE sector consultations and our responses.</li> <li>• It should be noted that since September 2020 the University had responded to 36 consultations, with 6 responded to in the current academic year.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annabel Kiernan highlighted that OfS was looking to pull its various regulatory arms together into a unified framework. The University had undertaken modelling on the B3 conditions, which had numerical targets against completion, continuation and progression, but did not yet know what would constitute a breach. We would have to meet all three conditions in order to register for TEF.</li> <li>• Martin Jones highlighted that OfS were particularly keen to focus on areas where they perceived downward trends had been ignored.</li> <li>• Simon Smith highlighted a trend he had noticed regarding retention and the importance of accommodating students looking to withdraw onto other Staffordshire courses where necessary.</li> </ul> |
| <b>4 ADDITIONAL MATTERS</b> |  |
| 268                         | <p><b>How have we made a positive impact on our students today?</b></p> <p>It was agreed that insights from Hannah Blackburn had been very useful for the Committee (who underlined that the datasets would be expanding soon).</p>  |
| 269                         | <p><b>Additional matters:</b></p> <p>Hannah Blackburn asked whether any Members of the Committee would be prepared to join the Students' Union upcoming focus groups.</p>  |
| 270                         | <p>Items to be referred to <b>Board of Governors:</b></p> <p><b>Approval</b></p> <p>a. <b>Minute 260</b> – International Strategy</p> <p><b>Information</b></p> <p>b. <b>Minute 259</b> - Student Recruitment Report: End-of-Cycle Report (Sept 2021 enrolment)</p> <p>c. <b>*Minute 261</b> – Evaluating Delivery of the Strategic Plan – Connecting Communities</p> <p>d. <b>*Minute 265</b> - Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 update</p> <p>e. <b>*Minute 266</b> - Apprenticeships performance and monitoring</p>  |
| 271                         | <p><b>Next meeting:</b> Tuesday 17 May 2022 (CA105/6 The Catalyst, Leek Road)</p>  |