

MINUTES

STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE, SP-15

Date: Tuesday 17 May 2022 **Time:** 1430 *pls note change from usual time*

Location: CA105/6, 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		
Hannah Blackburn	Student Governor (President, Students' Union)	P
Jonathan Chapman	External Member	P
Colin Hughes (Deputy Chair)	External Member	P
Baljinder Kuller	External Member	P
Professor Martin Jones	Vice Chancellor	P
Juliet Oosthuysen	External Member	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	A
Professor Kevin Hetherington	Deputy Vice Chancellor	A
Annabel Kiernan	Pro Vice Chancellor – Education	IA
Sally McGill	Chief Financial Officer	A
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	
272	Apologies for absence were received from Ian Blachford, Kevin Hetherington and Sally McGill.
273	There were no new Declarations of interest .
274	The Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee , 15 February 2022 SP/15/01 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.
275	Matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minute 258 – Update on Strategic Plan– it was noted that this had been approved at the Board of Governors meeting on 6 April 2022 and had been further discussed at the Strategic Event. It was further noted that the Strategic Plan and flywheel had been presented and discussed at the recent Staff Conference, where it had been well received, with high levels of engagement. Sara Williams noted that it was important to ensure that the more qualitative KPIs proposed were not lost in discussion. Martin Jones noted that Annabel Kiernan was working on a regular "Student Journey" report for the Committee which would cover metrics such as progression and satisfaction. • Cybersecurity – it was noted that the annual update on this area would come to the next Committee meeting, by

which point the Digital Infrastructure & Security internal audit would have been completed and the new Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation would be in post.

276 The *Overview of annual Committee business 2021-22* SP/15/02 was received for information.

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

277 The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled **Lichfield portfolio proposal SP/15/03**, introduced by the Vice Chancellor, who noted the following main points:

- The paper followed reports to the Sustainability and Resources Committee (March and November 2021) and flagged an alternative strategic vision for the Staffordshire University Campus in Lichfield.
- The site was currently operated under a joint management agreement set up in 2005 between the University and the College. Previous papers to the Sustainability and Resources Committee had identified several long-term options for the Lichfield Campus and it had been agreed in March 2021 that steps would be taken towards developing an exit strategy (whilst retaining the business village).
- It was now felt that due consideration should be given to whether the site should be retained and redeveloped for future use, particularly given current discussions around the HE-FE relationship and the external landscape.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Discussion focused on the profile of Lichfield, its position in the region and its demographic, as well as current University plans and projects.
- Baljinder Kuller asked whether there was a risk of other HEIs buying the site if it wasn't retained. Martin Jones confirmed that given its educational covenant, there was a possibility that a private provider could try to develop the space.
- Sara Williams asked about South Staffs College and Martin Jones clarified that the college agreed that they saw potential for the site as growth space.
- Jonathan Chapman asked about ongoing costs and Martin Jones confirmed that the site was currently in profit (business rates were being charged at 50%).

The Committee agreed that the sale of the current car park would be placed on hold and a business case for the development of the Lichfield site would be presented to Sustainability & Resources Committee on 9 November 2022.

278 [Redacted content]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
279	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled Student recruitment 2022-23 SP/15/05, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who highlighted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report provides an update on our current recruitment position for Full Time Staffordshire Delivered Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses (including PGCE). • Undergraduate: with a 3.1% drop in applications (sector increase of 2.8% and competitor increase of 8.9%), the University was currently performing below for year-on-year applications. • Based on the latest forecast, the University was expected to enrol 2861 Home students, 8.5% below target, and 144 Overseas students which was 9.9% above target, meaning the University was forecast to have 3005 full time undergraduate new entrants - 7.8% (254) below target. • Postgraduate (including PGCE): the University had received a total of 4815 in-cycle applications to our 2022/23 FT Semester 1 PGT courses (up 3575, 288.3%) and 359 applications to our PGCE courses (down 54, -13.1%). This rise was broadly due to improvements in international applications. • Based on the latest forecast, the University would have 502 PGT (Inc. PGCE) Home new entrants, 30% (221) below target. • The latest forecast for full-time overseas PGT (inc. PGCE) new entrants is 527, 134.2% (302) above target, meaning the University is forecast to have a total of 1029 PGT (Inc. PGCE) new entrants, 8.5% (81) above target. • The incoming Executive Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions. Sapreena Kumari, was due to start on 13 June and was already advising on strategy at this point in the cycle. <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annabel Kiernan highlighted that we were still working to very ambitious legacy targets that had not been sufficiently well-informed about the current market (recent extensive analysis from DataHE had confirmed this) and that progress was being made, despite rates currently showing as below these targets. • Sara Williams asked about tariff comparisons and Annabel Kiernan clarified that the current strategy involved changes to tariff offer timing rather than to numbers. (Applicants who didn't meet the minimum tariff would still be referred to the relevant academic School for further discussion.) • Juliet Oosthuysen asked about courses with capped numbers such as nursing and Annabel Kiernan clarified that despite a slow-down in nursing applications, the conversion rate was high enough for numbers to stay on target. • Jonathan Chapman asked whether course dynamics would be affected by the drop in numbers. Annabel Kiernan highlighted that on low-number courses, course identity was often stronger amongst a cohort and therefore metrics showed more positive results. • Discussion continued around potential opportunities presented by the closing of 136 (mainly performing arts) courses at Wolverhampton, with Martin Jones confirming that he was in contact with the VC there. It was also noted that De Montfort was closing its politics department. • Juliet Oosthuysen highlighted the significant drops in offers made within both psychology and computing. • Simon Smith asked about reliance on clearing in the long-term and Annabel Kiernan noted that although there was some nuance by subject, as an organisation our reliance on clearing, rather than recruitment during the main cycle, had increased in recent years.
280	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled Student retention in-year report SP/15/06, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention was the measure of in-year withdrawals for all Staffordshire delivered students irrespective of fee status, excluding apprenticeships, after students had fully enrolled. The measure included all withdrawals and not just those

	<p>that occurred two weeks after enrolling. At a University-level, headlines were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The withdrawal rate for full-time undergraduate courses in 2021/22 was currently 5.7.% (521/9086) compared with 4.7% (426/9085) at the same time last year. ▪ Whilst we had not set specific retention targets in our Access and Participation Plan, in-year retention was a leading indicator for continuation and the paper set out details of areas of current focus. ▪ The paper also gave an outline of withdrawal rates by new entrant and continuing students, and for postgraduate courses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More needed to be done to understand and improve the University’s retention position and we had accelerated several key projects which would address this. The University had moved to a Schools and Service local plan approach to developing interventions for access and participation, using the Theory of Change approach, enabling stakeholders to articulate both their interventions and their approaches to evaluation. • Continuous course monitoring used a data-informed approach, leading to cross-institutional good practice sharing for courses. We continued to implement actions from the last continuous monitoring session. • The University’s attendance monitoring process and reporting had been fully rolled out and mandatory to all University staff and students in January 2022. The process would be continuously improved to ensure full participation and data quality. • AQD had appointed an academic developer for learner analytics who would work with Schools, DS and PBI to reinvigorate the Online Engagement dashboard, link the data with attendance monitoring and develop an enhanced plan of early alerts for students at risk of dis-engagement. • Since the previous report, a review in the GAME MVP (Minimum Viable Product) has taken place and a future proposal for GAME had been presented to Strategic Change Board. <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sara Williams asked about benchmarking for this, and Annabel Kiernan confirmed that this was built in to the course monitoring process. • Juliet Oosthuysen highlighted the importance of data on withdrawing students’ reasons for leaving, echoed by Simon Smith, and proposed the University consider using an agency to drill down into this • Juliet Oosthuysen asked about the effects of Covid on the last two years’ retention figures and Annabel Kiernan there had been a considerable impact (and to some extent across the whole sector). • Sara Williams underlined that the aim here was not specifically to bring the number of withdrawing students down to 0 but to ensure that the reasons cited did not affect the student experience as a whole. • Hannah Blackburn proposed surveying students who had not actually left the University in order to clarify what measure were effective in increasing retention. • Jonathan Chapman asked about the possibility of using our own academics to research this further and Annabel Kiernan confirmed that internal review of the data was already taking place.
281	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled Update on student evaluation system – EvaSys SP/15/07, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report gave an update on the pilot implementation of centralised module evaluation using the EvaSys platform, including sections on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ development of the module evaluation survey approach, ○ selected findings from the Semester 1 evaluation period, ○ enhancements for the semester 2 evaluation period and ○ progression to “business as usual” roll-out for 2022/23 academic year. • The University reimplemented a centralised approach to module evaluation in 2021/22 academic year following a brief pause. • The module evaluation period for semester 1 was from 11 January 2022 to 25 January 2022. There was a 22% response rate across all subject areas and levels. There was 81% overall satisfaction across all levels and subject areas. • Thematic analysis into how online learning and teaching could be improved has been undertaken. • A ‘closing the loop’ pilot for semester two has been implemented with five module leaders, as well as a project to monitor the impact of the Catalyst Learning Principles. • The module evaluation process will be reviewed over the summer to embed back to business as usual for academic year 2022/23. <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Smith asked about the completion of evaluation surveys. Annabel Kiernan noted that realising a high rate of completion remained a significant challenge and discussion ensued around potential measures to help remedy this, with the Committee agreeing that higher response rates were essential for useful data.
282	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled REF update on results SP/15/08, introduced by the Vice Chancellor, who noted the following main points:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University had submitted 102 FTEs across 7 academic disciplines, or 'Units of Assessment' (UOAs). The assessment process of each UOA considered three elements: the quality of research outputs, the non-academic impact of our research, and the quality of our research environment. We had made significant progress in the volume and quality of our research since the previous exercise, REF2014. Our analysis expected that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We had climbed 20 places using the most common league table methodology, based on the weighted average score, or Grade Point Average (GPA) We were 88th on GPA now, compared to 108th in 2014 Our GPA was 2.78, up from 2.2 in 2014 We were in the top 10 most improved universities, measured by rise in ranking position (20) and increase in GPA (0.58) For research impact, we had climbed 27 places, and were now 70th We were in the top 10 most improved universities for impact, measured by the rise in ranking position (27) and increase in impact GPA (0.63) All of our UOAs had been assessed to have research that was world leading (4*) - the highest ranking. Headlines at an individual UOA level were set out in the report. In the West Midlands region, the University was the top post-92 institution for impact (and third overall behind Birmingham and Warwick), second for output quality (behind Coventry) and second on overall Grade Point Average (behind Coventry). <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion focused on the key contributing factors to the University's REF2021 success and how to ensure that these excellent results were used to turn around undergraduate recruitment, i.e., to influence 18-yr olds and their parents. Martin Jones highlighted that this would be a key challenge for the incoming Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, who would start on 13 June 2022. Sara Williams noted the Committee's thanks to all staff involved in the REF2021 submission.
283	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled League table performance report SP/15/09, introduced by the Vice Chancellor, who noted the following main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the previous strategic plan, the University had set a KPI of achieving top 50% in the three major UK league tables. KPIs on league table performance as part of the new University Strategic plan were being finalised but based on available data a drop in rankings was expected, mainly because although we had seen improvements in the performance of a number of metrics (Degree Outcomes, Continuation Rates and Completion Rate), the sector had outpaced these. The University also monitored performance in three key international rankings. It was ranked 1001-1200 (out of 2112) in THE World rankings in 2021, was currently not ranked in the QS Rankings, and was ranked 401-600 out of 1406 institutions (down from 301-400 out of 1117 last year) in The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. The University League Table group had been reviewed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and a new group was under development, to be chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor and reporting to SLT. The group would focus on reviewing the performance and working with Schools and Services to develop actions that aligned to the key enabling strands from the University strategy and would improve league table performance. These activities would be evaluated, and the outcomes presented regularly to SLT. <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Jones highlighted that the league tables metrics shifted year on year, and included internal metrics created by the league table compilers themselves. Sara Williams asked about our own process for monitoring these and Martin Jones confirmed that this was the remit of the League Table group chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
284	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy Update SP/15/10, introduced by the Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The substantive part of this paper was the Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2022-2027 draft strategy, written following extensive cross-University consultation with ca. 170 colleagues designed to maximise engagement with all staff, in particular key groups of leaders, with the strategy. It would be a key enabler for the University's overall strategy, and in support of this set out our vision for Research, Innovation and Enterprise: "To be internationally recognised for high-quality, challenge-led research, innovation and enterprise that delivers transformation for people, places and society in our regions". It also identified the achievements required for delivery of this. Furthermore, the strategy described how we would achieve this vision and identifies measures by which we could

	<p>measure success. The measures are stretching but achievable, and include a significant growth in research, innovation and enterprise income to £13m. Much of the existing innovation and enterprise income which would contribute to this growth would come from overseas teaching partnerships, and to achieve this, it would be important that growing this income was an important feature of concomitant strategies, including a new international strategy.</p> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juliet Oosthuysen asked whether the paper had been produced post the Strategic Event on 28 April and Martin Jones confirmed that it had been finalised since then.
285	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 update SP/15/11, introduced by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report provided an update on the monitoring process for 2020-21, summarised regulatory changes to Access and Participation Plans (APP), analysed insights from the recent sector-level publication of APP data and reported on the progress of the APP Project Board and GAME. There had been significant changes to regulatory policy following the appointment of a new Director of Fair Access and Participation at OfS, including a change from a five-year planning cycle to a four-year planning cycle. Providers were required to submit variations to their APP to respond to new priorities for 2023-24 by 31 July 2022. Our APP variation submission was required to respond to four priorities, set out in the report. In late March the OfS published a data dashboard which highlighted significant attainment gaps for Staffordshire around ethnicity and IMD. Key insights were included within the report. The University had made significant progress in accelerating the implementation of local action planning, which was further detailed in the report. <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
286	<p>The Committee received for discussion a paper entitled Apprenticeship Performance and Monitoring SP/15/12, introduced by the Vice Chancellor. The following main points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship provision continued to grow strongly with the overall University target exceeded by 16% for 21/22. The growth had been across most areas with the contribution to the total from PCDA reducing from 65% in 20/21 to 55% in 21/22. The March 2022 monthly ILR return had generated a total income of £1,142,518.31. The income forecast for 21/22 was £14,728,000. At 84.5%, overall retention was slightly below the University target of 85%, but well above the ESFA minimum level of performance at 63%. Ofsted recognised the high achievement on Degree Apprenticeships such as 100% on Healthcare Science Practitioner and Digital Solutions Technology. The Ofsted inspection in January 2022 had resulted in a Grade 2 for all elements. The University had been successful in its application to the register of Apprenticeship training providers (RoATP). In October 2021, the ESFA had commenced a full audit of HEIs with Apprenticeship provision and the University expected notice of audit before the end of the Academic year. In April 2022, KPMG had carried out an internal audit to check readiness and identify any issues for action. QAA would shortly commence review of end-point assessment of integrated Degree Apprenticeships and as a provider with 9 courses in this category, we could expect an early visit. There was a healthy pipeline for recruitment onto Apprenticeships starting in October 2022 and academic schools were developing new Apprenticeships for offer from semester 2 in February 2023. The University had successfully won a tender to deliver the level 6 Digital Solutions Technology Apprenticeship to

	<p>employees at Rolls Royce. Initially this was for a small number who would infill with other organisations.</p> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that success in delivering apprenticeships had been significant for the University and should be leveraged in the upcoming rebrand discussions. • Sara Williams highlighted the importance of the student experience particularly for small-cohort apprenticeships students.
3 FOR INFORMATION	
287	The Committee received for information the Update on HE sector consultations SP/15/13. The Vice Chancellor noted that OfS had publicised some data around highest rises in degree classification outcomes, in which the University had appeared, and this was being looked at urgently.
288	The Committee received for information the report on National apprenticeships data SP/15/14, which used data from the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) and the DfE to compile National Apprenticeships Data Top 10 rankings by institution, grouped into different categories. The overall picture showed that although the University did not deliver as wide a range of standards as some providers, it was one of the largest providers based on number of starts and book value.
4 ADDITIONAL MATTERS	
289	<p>How have we made a positive impact today?</p> <p>It was agreed that several discussions on today's agenda were of key strategic importance for the University, including the Lichfield campus discussions and the focus on recruitment and retention.</p>
290	There were no additional matters .
291	<p>Items to be referred to Board of Governors:</p> <p>Approval</p> <p>a. Minute 277 - Lichfield portfolio proposal BG/125/03</p> <p>Information</p> <p>b. Minute 278 - [REDACTED]</p> <p>c. Minute 280 - Student retention report BG/125/06</p> <p>d. Minute 282 - REF update on results BG/125/08</p> <p>e. Minute 283 - League table performance report BG/125/09</p> <p>f. Minutes 285 - APP update BG/125/11</p> <p>g. Minute 286 - Apprenticeships performance and monitoring BG/125/12</p>
292	Next meeting: Thurs 13 October 2022 (CA105/6, The Catalyst, Leek Road)