

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

TIME /DATE / VENUE	1030, Tuesday 19 September 2023, St Andrew’s Court room 0.32
PRESENT	David Madoc-Jones (Chair) Madeline Denmead (via zoom) Professor Graham Galbraith Vineet Khurana (via zoom until item 9) Christopher Williams (via zoom) David Willan (via zoom)
IN ATTENDANCE	Tahir Ahmed, Director of Estates and Campus services, (Minute 9 and 10 only) Stephen Avery, Interim Chief Financial Officer Dr Rich Boakes, Staff Representative Chris Chang, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, (Global engagement and student life), (Minute 7 only) Anna Clodfelter, UPSU Chief Executive, (Minute 4 only) Temidayo Dosunmu, UPSU Officer Dr Adrian Hull, Academic Council Nominated Staff Governor Ian McCormack, Energy and Environment Manager (Minute 9 only) Kerry West, Project Accountant (minute 8 only)
SECRETARIAT	Claire Dunning, Executive Director of Corporate Governance Helen Malbon, Senior Governance Officer

### **1 Welcome, apologies, declaration of interests and apologies**

- i. Penny Emerit had sent her apologies. The Executive Director of Corporate Governance noted that she had discussed Penny’s future availability and membership expectations. Nominations Committee would be reviewing Committee membership once the new external governors were appointed in October. External governor Roger Burke-Hamilton was absent.
- ii. On behalf of Committee, the Chair welcomed Stephen Avery, Interim Chief Financial Officer and Temidayo Dosunmu, UPSU elected officer to their first Committee meeting.
- iii. Thanks were recorded to Emma Woollard, Executive Director of Finance who had retired in August after 30 years’ service to the University. Emma had devoted the majority of her working career to the University and was at the heart of some major developments, not least supporting the master plan through negotiating the private placement loan.
- iv. There were no interests to declare.
- v. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business.

## 2 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record, subject to correcting the numbering of points in the Estates update on Victoria Park at minute 90.

**Action: Senior Governance Officer**

## 3 Matters actioned and matters arising

Committee:

- i. Noted that the March 2023 minutes had been updated.
- ii. Noted that the project accountant had provided feedback to one governor on the Faculty budgets and discussed a future template for providing the Committee with greater detail at a Faculty level in the future.

**Action: Interim Chief Financial Officer**

- iii. Noted that the continuous improvement report requested for this meeting had been deferred until later in the year. It was reported that a Task and Finish Group had been established to address ways of reducing the potential budget shortfall in 2023/2024 and the continuous improvement work would be a part of this group's considerations. Committee acknowledged that the continuous improvement work would be covered in updates about the budget shortfall work in coming meetings and would welcome hearing from the continuous improvement lead.

**Executive Director of Corporate Governance**

- iv. The project tracker was discussed and some updates agreed:
  - a. The most recent Committee to see the Student Accommodation Strategy had been the Board in July, not IFC in June 2023.
  - b. The Estates Masterplan should comprise of 2 elements; the overall plan itself and separately the projects that arise from that plan requiring approval.
  - c. The projects within the Digital Plan would also in some instances require governor approval in the context of the 10-year financial plan which was under development.

**Action: Senior Governance Officer**

- v. Committee endorsed the Chair's action taken on 18 August 2023, authorising estates to carry out work to the Hockey pitches in a timely manner, following a single tender quote.

## 4 UPSU Budget 2023/2024

Anna Clodfelter, Chief Executive of UPSU, introduced the UPSU Budget for the financial year 2023/2024. Key points noted were:

- i. The UPSU Group Budget for the financial year 2023/24 was based on principles agreed by the Union Leadership Team in May 2023, approved and formally adopted by Trustees in June 2023.

- ii. The proposed 23/24 budget was a circa £76.5k deficit budget funded from UPSU reserves. This covered the UPSU contribution of planned investment for the Student Outcomes programme. UPSU Reserves remained budgeted to be within required funding levels for the year 23/24 and 24/25.
- iii. The trading company was budgeted to deliver a £141k contribution.
- iv. The Union was very appreciative of the funding assigned for the collaborative 'Better Student Outcomes project' focussing on co-creating solutions to areas of need. 58 projects had run in 2022/2023 with initial evidence showing improvement in NSS scores in these areas of activity.
- v. One notable project was the payment of a team of students to support the elected volunteer course representatives, helping increase engagement at a course level.
- vi. The block grant from the University that covered core activity remains static for the 4th consecutive year, which is not sustainable
- vii. Whilst very mindful of the University financial position in the immediate future, UPSU planned in future to present a case for a different model of funding based on a per student basis which may bring the level of funding more in line with other Student Unions in the south.
- viii. UPSU was working closely with the University Estates team to enhance the quality and relevance of the spaces in the Union building and to potentially also generate income.
- ix. The closure of the union bar (previously owned by a University subsidiary company) some years previously, had appeared to have the consequence of reduced footfall into the building due to the lack of a clear purpose for the space, although it was noted that the attitudes of students to alcohol had changed considerably in recent years.
- x. Committee noted the budget as part of its role in helping to ensure that the Students' Union was accountable for its finances (Statement of Primary Responsibilities, para 13).
- xi. The Executive and the Committee thanked UPSU for their work which was central to the success of the University.

## 5 Terms of Reference, Membership and Committee Business

Claire Dunning, Executive Director of Corporate Governance, presented the paper. Key points noted were:

- i. Each Board committee was required to review its terms of reference annually so that Committee could ascertain if it had discharged its terms of reference (TOR) in the academic year 2022/2023 and agree any changes required for the 2023/2024 year. Discussion took place on the following points:
  - a. Committee agreed that the analysis provided showed that it had discharged its terms of reference in the 2022/2023 year and this could be reported to the Board of Governors.

**Action: Executive Director of Corporate Governance**
  - b. However, a number of areas of the TOR would benefit from expanding for the 2023/2024 year:

- 1) Section 2a of the TOR referred to monitoring the budget and financial statements of the University but in fact the remit could extend to monitoring such items as a Financial Strategy, Investment Policy, Reserves Policy and income streams. Although some of these items could be implicit in documents the Committee already saw, it was agreed that a medium- and long-term financial plan incorporating sources of income and future expenditure. should be prepared and updated regularly for the Committee to monitor.  
**Action: Interim Chief Financial Officer**
- 2) Item 4 required the Committee 'To track and respond to the strategic resource implications of current and planned student recruitment.' However, Committee felt that it would appreciate more information in order to do this effectively in a timely manner, especially given the impact on both the 2023/2024 budget and beyond. This could have a strategic impact and so it was important that Committee received regular updates about the number of enrolled students, new and continuing. The terms of reference would be updated to reflect this.  
**Action: Executive Director of Corporate Governance**
- 3) It was agreed that a presentation recently given to the Executive on the impact of previous decisions on tariff scores, should be shared with Committee at the next meeting along with the proposed revisions to tariffs and courses for the coming recruitment round.  
**Action: Executive Director of Corporate Governance**
- 4) Although mindful that Committee should not be involved in operational matters, it was felt it was important for it to be given early sight on the challenges faced and business improvement initiatives. More regular updates were all the more necessary when running at a deficit.
- 5) The Environmental Policy had been superseded by the Climate Positive Sustainability Policy and so item 2d would be updated.
- 6) Committee discussed requesting a change in the delegation for approving the digital plan from the Board but agreed that the current method was fit for purpose. Approval of projects supporting the Plan would continue to require the current approvals governed by the financial regulations.
- 7) Acknowledging that few project boards currently had a governor on their membership, it was agreed to add the words as appropriate to TOR 5 along with a statement noting the introduction and purpose of the strategic project tracker. Committee noted that Nominations Committee was responsible for recommending the appointment of a governor to a project Board at an appropriate time, noting that the Medical School and Digital Plan did not currently have governor membership.
- 8) Item 3a concerning the approval of policies should be amended to remove responsibility for accounting policies since this more appropriately sat with the Audit and Quality Committee.

- c. A revised TOR for 2023/2024, incorporating these changes would be presented to the October meeting of Committee before being presented to the Board.

**Action: Executive Director of Corporate Governance**

- ii. Committee noted the outline Committee Business and indicative work programme for 2023/2024

## 6 Chief Information Officer report

Committee noted the report and recorded congratulations that the IT systems supporting Graduation and Confirmation and Clearing had worked without faults.

## 7 Student Recruitment update – confidential item

## 8 Interim Chief Financial Officer Report- confidential item

## 9 Climate Positive Sustainability Policy

Ian McCormack, Energy and Environment Manager, and Tahir Ahmed, Director of Estates and Campus Services presented the new Policy. Key points made were:

- i. The policy and action plan replaced the Environmental Policy and Carbon Management Plan and was based around achieving the ambitions laid out in the University 2030 Vision and Strategy 2025.
- ii. The focus would be on three main areas:
  - a. Directly reducing carbon emissions;
  - b. Leveraging Research & Innovation to sequester residual carbon emissions;
  - c. Empowering People.
- iii. These three areas of focus formed the framework for the action plan, which contained a number of ongoing and potential future activities. The Sustainability Strategy Delivery Group (SSDG) would provide oversight of these activities, including capturing and monitoring progression towards the goals.
- iv. Whilst the first two objectives were primarily targeted on activities that directly impact on, and can be measured by their contribution to, carbon reduction, the latter focuses on behaviour change that would ultimately be crucial in sustaining the University as a climate-positive institution.
- v. In response to a question, it was agreed that Committee would receive information on the number of University buildings that already had LED lighting installed.

**Action: Director of Estates and Campus Services**
- vi. Clarification was provided that the ‘strong and long-standing partnerships with other key local organisations’ referred to in the civic responsibility section included such groups as Portsmouth City Council, the cycle forum, campaign and business groups.
- vii. Committee recommended to the Board the approval of the policy, noting:
  - a. the definition of what was in and out of scope;
  - b. the 2030 targets for scope 1&2 and scope 3 emissions;
  - c. the approach to carbon reduction;

- d. a commitment to measuring the carbon footprint through a Science-Based Target approach;
- e. that any activities that required new resource, or significant reallocation of existing resource, would be subject to approval by the appropriate group;
- f. the policy would be reviewed annually, possibly widening the scope of the policy to include other areas such as the UN's sustainable development goals;
- g. The action plan was an organic and a developing document and would be reviewed and monitored regularly by the SSDG.

**Action: Director of Estates and Campus Service**

## **10 Director of Estates and Campus Services Report – confidential**

### **11 Self-assessment**

Claire Dunning, Executive Director of Corporate Governance, introduced the paper. Key points noted were:

- i. The last IFC self-assessment was conducted in autumn 2020 reviewing the 2019/2020 year. In June 2023 Committee agreed that a self-assessment questionnaire should be circulated via survey monkey giving members a chance to review the Committee's effectiveness during the 2022/2023 academic year. Six of the nine people invited to complete the questionnaire did so by the deadline of 4 September 2023. A summary report with anonymized responses was included.
- ii. Many useful insights had been provided and the Corporate Governance team would review and act as required.
- iii. One issue requiring discussion was how to deal with the need for more meeting time. An additional meeting could be added in May 2024 but after discussion it was felt that to save on travel time and reduce the environmental impact, each meeting should be extended by an hour to facilitate a lunch break in the middle and increase agenda time available. The situation would be kept under review  
**Action: Senior Governance Officer**
- iv. A discussion on the balance between in person and remote meetings concluded that each Committee member was free to make the choice most preferable to them.
- v. Committee noted the report.

### **12 University and Subsidiary management accounts provisional year end 2022/2023**

Committee noted the provisional planned deficit and suggested that in future the accounts should be appended to the CFO report. It was confirmed that there was error in the year heading dates.

### **13 Office for Students (OfS) circulars**

Committee noted that OFS circulars could be found on their website at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/>

**14 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would take place at 1030 on Tuesday 3 October 2023.