A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, The Carrington Building, on Friday 22 January 2016 at 2.15 pm.

The President
The Vice-President (Ms S M Woodman)
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor G Brooks)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Mr V. Raimo)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor R Van de Noort)

Professor M.J. Almond
Mr T Beardmore-Gray
Lord Crisp
Mrs P. Egan
Professor R H Ellis
Mr R E R Evans
Dame Moira Gibb
Ms N Hager
Dr O B Kennedy
Mrs M Martin

Mrs K. Owen
Mr H W A Palmer
Dr P R Preston
Mr S C C Pryce
Mr O Ratcliffe
Dr B Rawal
Mr S P Sherman
Professor S Walker

The University Secretary

In attendance: The Chief Operating Officer
The Director of Finance and Corporate Services
The Director of Quality Support and Development

Apologies were received from Dr P Erskine, Professor J Board and Mrs S L Webber.

The minutes (15/52-15/78) of the meeting held on 20 November 2015 were confirmed and signed.

Arising on the Minutes:

Minute 15/60  Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee

In connection with Freedom of Speech and the University’s Prevent duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Vice-Chancellor reported that, in accordance with a requirement of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the University was preparing a self-assessment of its implementation of the relevant statutory guidance and its measures to prevent
people being drawn into terrorism. The University’s policies enshrined the right to freedom of speech and open debate within the law, and placed restrictions only in respect of incitement to violence and other breaches of the law. There had been two cases in the recent past where such an issue had arisen, and in both cases, the University, in concert with the Students’ Union, had handled the matter effectively and sensitively. Mr Ratcliffe reported that the Students’ Union Board of Trustees was also considering its responsibilities in the relation to the Prevent guidance.

Minute 15/64 Presentation by Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks)

The Council received a copy of the University’s response to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills consultation on Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice (‘Green Paper’). The Vice-Chancellor advised that an indication of the outcomes of the consultation might reasonably be expected by mid-2016.

Resolved:

“That a copy of the University’s response to the Green Paper consultation, now submitted, be received.”

Items of Report

16/03 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 3.1)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 19 November 2015 relating to items for report.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 19 November 2015 relating to items for report, now submitted, be received.”

16/04 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 3.2)

The Council received a list of documents sealed and to be sealed.

Resolved:

“That the Council approve the action taken by the Officers and Members in affixing the University Seal to documents sealed since the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council and authorise the Seal of the University to be affixed to the documents to be sealed as now reported.”

16/05 Matters approved by the President on behalf of the Council (Item 3.3)

The Council noted that the President, on behalf of the Council, had approved:
(a) The appointment of two persons (Mrs S L Webber and Ms J Scott), not being employees or registered students of the University at least one of whom shall be a member of Council, to membership of a meeting of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee;

(b) That Honorary Degrees (Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Letters respectively) be conferred upon Her Excellency Vicki Treadell, British High Commissioner to Malaysia, on 25 February 2016, and upon Mrs Mary Riall, founder and CEO of the Ufton Court Educational Trust, on 7 July 2016;

(c) A request from the Restructuring Committee for Systems Engineering that various staff within the School be authorised to make grant applications with due dates in January 2016.

Items for Discussion and Decision

16/06 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 4)

The Vice-Chancellor:

(a) invited Professor Van de Noort to report on applications for entry in September 2016. Professor Van de Noort informed the Council that, by 15 January 2016 (which was the UCAS deadline for ‘on time’ applications), undergraduate applications relative to 2015 had REDACTED – S43 As a point of comparison, there had been a marginal increase (0.5%) in UCAS applications to date across the sector relative to 2015. There remained an upward trend in the University’s undergraduate applications over the longer term, and the current figures represented a REDACTED – S43 relative to 2014. Despite a slightly smaller pool of applications, the University had made nearly REDACTED – S43 offers than at the equivalent point in last year’s cycle, and had plans in place to improve its conversion activity.

Applications for postgraduate taught programmes to date had REDACTED – S43. Postgraduate research applications had REDACTED – S43.

REDACTED – S43 As part of the new planning process, contingency plans were currently being developed with all Schools either to off-set under-recruitment in one part of their operation with additional recruitment in another or to reduce their expenditure.

In response to questions, Professor Van de Noort referred to the continuing advantage which the University enjoyed from last year’s strategic investment in marketing and the importance of the improvements to the conversion operation in the current cycle. He assured the Council that entry standards were being maintained.

(b) outlined the programme of events to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the grant of the University’s charter, including the opening of the Malaysia campus, a meeting of Court which would include the conferment of honorary degrees, and a ‘homecoming’ event towards the end of June for
alumni and their families. While celebrating the University’s achievements over the past 90 years, the events would also be forward-looking and project the University’s vision for the future. The 70th anniversary of Henley Business School and the 20th anniversary of the Hugh Sinclair Unit for Human Nutrition were also being marked this year;

(c) reminded the Council that he had undertaken to report in January and June of each year on the progress of strategic projects and on the achievement of the institutional strategic KPIs. In respect of the strategic projects, he confirmed that no projects were at serious risk of non-delivery; however, the impact of these projects was presenting a challenge to the University Executive Board (UEB) and the University more generally. The UEB remained realistic about its capacity to add new major projects at this stage, but recognised that the University needed to continue to respond to developments within the fast-changing higher education environment. The Vice-Chancellor reported, in respect of the Professional and Administrative Services (PAS) project, that detailed proposals for most workstreams were now undergoing formal consultation, and processes of matching and recruiting to roles would follow shortly. The Vice-Chancellor commented on performance against the institutional KPIs, noting those KPIs where progress had been slower than anticipated and those which had already been achieved.

Mrs Martin, who was also a staff representative on the Staff Forum, observed that the progress of the different workstreams under the PAS process was variable, and that some workstreams were not yet in a position to start the consultation process. She was concerned that delays in the process had a detrimental effect on staff who were naturally anxious about their future employment. The Vice-Chancellor reported that the process of matching, advertising and appointing to roles would begin, for the large majority of roles, by mid-February, but that there were one or two areas where difficult issues were yet to be resolved. He was concerned about the impact on staff and confirmed that a resolution was being sought with due speed.

The President reported that he had received a letter from the President of the local branch of the University and College Union raising concerns about the PAS process. He noted that the Strategy and Finance Committee would consider that letter as part of a broader review of PAS at its meeting in March, and would report on this matter to the next meeting of Council.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked Mr Pryce for his helpful feedback in developing the reports on progress against the Strategy.

Resolved:

“That:

(a) a paper entitled Strategy Review, now submitted, be received;

(b) a paper entitled Major Projects, now submitted, be received;
(c) a paper entitled Institutional Strategic KPIs, now submitted, be received;

(d) the Report of the Vice-Chancellor, now submitted, be approved.”

16/07 Presentation to the Council by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the University’s Health Strategy (Item 5)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor made a presentation to the Council on the University’s Health Strategy, together with a brief update on the progress of the University’s Research Strategy (copy inserted in Minute Book).

In respect of the Research Strategy, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor outlined the structures and leadership which had been put in place to support the strategy and drive forward research excellence across the range of disciplinary areas. Academic staff had engaged well with the Research Strategy, its ambitions and implementation.

In respect of the Health Strategy, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor explained the central importance of health-related research and education to the fulfilment of the University Strategy. The health agenda, nationally and internationally, was increasingly focussed on prevention and the psycho-social dimensions of health, and the University was well placed to address these needs. The University already had strong and productive relationships with the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, was working to develop major new facilities including the NHR Biomedical Research Centre (in collaboration with Southampton University) and the Thames Valley Clinical Trials Unit, and was developing areas of research and educational provision which addressed emerging national and international health themes. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor set out the ambition to develop the infrastructure to sustain current and future health-related research and education and to co-locate such activity in a Health and Food zone, which would promote research synergies and more effective use of facilities.

Lord Crisp and Dr Rawal commended the Health Strategy and believed that it was well aligned with the government’s priorities in relation to health. In response to a question from Dr Rawal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the increasing importance of health informatics and confirmed that Henley Business School was undertaking significant work in this area. In response to a question from Dame Moira Gibb, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor elaborated on the case for co-location of health-related activity, noting that innovative research often arose from informal contact and serendipitous engagement between disciplines, that specialist equipment would be more accessible to a wider range of projects, and that patient facilities could be managed more effectively.

16/08 Reports of the Strategy and Finance Committee

The Council received reports from the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 19 November 2015 relating to items for discussion and decision.
In regard to item 6.1, **Major Capital projects: approval of the Library and URS and temporary accommodation projects**, the Chief Operating Officer explained that the major capital projects for the Library and the URS Building addressed key priorities for both the student experience and the estates strategy. The temporary accommodation project was a necessary enabler for the Library and URS Building projects and for other projects which would be submitted, for approval, to the Council’s March meeting (to which Minute 16/13 refers). Funding of the three major capital projects currently under consideration was possible from within the University’s existing cash resources which had been supplemented over the last few years by a series of property disposals.

The Chief Operating Officer reported that the budget for the URS Project had increased from **REDACTED – S43**, due to an increase in the contingency and some additional costs in relation to services. He explained that the project involved a proposal to divert a public right of way, which might entail delays to the programme, and that Historic England were considering whether to apply for the building to be listed, which, notwithstanding the sympathetic design intrinsic to the current plans, could entail additional costs and an extension of up to 12 months to the programme.

In respect of the temporary accommodation project, the Chief Operating Officer indicated that accommodation could be provided at lower cost, but that its poorer quality would adversely affect the student experience. Given that the accommodation would form a significant part of the learning environment for some students for the duration of their programme, the additional costs were considered to represent good value.

The President noted that the Council had followed the gestation of the proposals for the Library and URS Building over a period of some three years, and that the benefits arising from the projects were well-established. In response to a question from Dr Rawal, the Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that the disruption arising from such extensive works would have an inevitable impact on the experience of current students and on perceptions of applicants; however, these developments were necessary to secure the student experience in the future and care was being taken to mitigate the adverse impacts. The Council noted that the URS Project would enable the demolition of the longstanding Temporary Office Buildings at Earley Gate.

The Chief Operating Officer invited members to a tour of the campus before the meeting of the Council in March in order to view the sites for development.

In regard to item 6.2, **Thames Valley Science Park**, Mr Evans, as Chair of the Investments Committee, explained that the current proposal provided for the first phase of the larger Science Park project, and related to the development of the enabling infrastructure and the Gateway building. He indicated that there was a high level of confidence that the project would be completed within budget, that the forecast returns were achievable on the basis of the proposed levels of rent, and, notwithstanding the difficulty of gauging demand, that a high occupancy rate would be achieved within 24 months. Mr Evans affirmed the importance of maintaining the development’s sharp focus on science-related enterprises, which was a characteristic of those science parks which had proved commercially successful. The development of the Science Park would contribute to the realisation of the University’s strategic ambitions.
In response to a question from Mr Palmer, the Vice-Chancellor suggested that the proposed expansion of Heathrow airport, the development of CrossRail with Reading as a terminus, and other local and regional transport infrastructure projects meant that the area would be more attractive to business and strengthened the case for the Science Park. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the Science Park would be served by bus services and that the University was contributing to the costs of public transport in relation to the Shinfield West and Science Park development.

Mr Evans informed the Council that its approval of the project would be subject to confirmation from the University’s advisers that the recent turbulence in markets had not led to any variation of their advice.

Resolved:

1. “That:  
   (a) the Library refurbishment project with a budget of REDACTED – S43, including a project contingency of REDACTED – S43, be approved;  
   (b) the URS Building refurbishment project with a budget of REDACTED – S43, including a project contingency of REDACTED – S43, be approved;  
   (c) the Temporary Accommodation project, with a budget of REDACTED – S43, including a project contingency of REDACTED – S43, be approved;  
   (d) a paper entitled Major Capital Programmes Part I, now submitted, be received.”

2. “That:  
   (a) A proposal to proceed with the first phase of the Thames Valley Science Park project, which relates to the development of the enabling infrastructure and the Gateway building, be approved;  
   (b) a Report on the Thames Valley Science Park, now submitted, be received.”

16/09 Report of the Senate (Item 7)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 2 December 2015.

In regard to the Student Contract, the Vice-Chancellor explained that the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) had recently investigated the higher education sector and, on the basis of its findings, had issued guidance to universities. In common with many universities, the University had substantially revised its Terms and Conditions in the light of the CMA guidance.
Resolved:

1. “That, with reference to item 1, the following be accorded the title of Visiting Professor:

   * **Agriculture, Policy and Development**
     Professor E. John Wibberley (REALM), for the period ending 31 December 2018;

   * **Henley Business School (Management)**
     Mr Christopher Kirwan (Reignwood Group), for the period ending 31 December 2018;

   * **Henley Business School (ICMA)**
     Professor Ilias Vivikis (World Maritime University), for the period ending 31 December 2018;

   * **Henley Business School (Marketing and Reputation)**
     Professor Malcolm McDonald, for the period ending 31 December 2018;

   * **School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences**
     Professor Suzanna Rose (Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation), for the period ending 31 December 2018;

   * **School of Systems Engineering**
     Professor Victor Becerra (University of Portsmouth), for the period ending 30 November 2018.”

2. “That, with reference to item 2, the following be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years from the date indicated:

   Miss J. Edwards (31 October 2015),”

3. “That the Terms and Conditions and Programme Specification, now submitted, be approved.”

4. “That a proposed process for conferment of Honorary, Visiting and Courtesy Titles be approved.”

5. “That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 2 December 2015, now submitted, be approved.”

16/10  Report of the Appointments and Governance Committee (Item 8)

The Council received a proposal in respect of the membership of the Appointments and Governance Committee.

Resolved:
“That the Dean of Diversity and Inclusion (Professor S.N. Chandler-Wilde) be appointed to the Appointments and Governance Committee (vice Professor B. Cosh) for the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018.”

16/11 Final Report of the Restructuring Committee in respect of the School of Systems Engineering (Item 9)

The Council received the final report of the Restructuring Committee in respect of the School of Systems Engineering. In accordance with Ordinance A1.5.3, the names of individuals recommended to cease employment by way of voluntary and compulsory redundancy had been redacted from the Report as presented in Unreserved Business; an unredacted copy was presented under Reserved Business.

Mr Evans, as Chair of the Restructuring Committee, reported that the process had been conducted transparently and efficiently, and had been well supported by Human Resources. The Committee had issued weekly progress bulletins to staff in the School, and staff had expressed appreciation of the regularity and clarity of these communications. The outcome of the process was that eight members of staff were taking voluntary redundancy, 22 members of staff were being redeployed to alternative roles in other Schools, and three members of staff who did not meet the selection criteria for the available posts were being recommended for compulsory redundancy; eight posts within the new structure remained vacant. Professional and support staff in the School had not been considered by the Committee since they fell within the scope of the PAS project. A Transition Management Group had been established to oversee the quality of the student experience during the period of transition.

In response to a question from Dr Kennedy, Professor Van de Noort reported that the publicity surrounding the restructuring appeared not to have had an adverse effect on recruitment: applications for undergraduate programmes in Computer Science had decreased by 1% relative to the previous year and there was evidence of more pronounced decreases in Computer Science applications at other universities.

In response to a question from Mr Palmer in respect of the University’s public communication of the restructuring, the Vice-Chancellor explained that he had been concerned to provide a clear and comprehensive account, which gave due attention to the closure of the School and the cessation of some activities as well as the reorganisation of areas of continuing activity. He believed that such an approach built respect for, and confidence in, the University’s transparency, and that feedback from the local business community had been positive and had welcomed the greater focus on Computer Science.

Resolved:

“That the final report of the Restructuring Committee in respect of the School of Systems Engineering, redacted in respect of the names of
individuals recommended to cease employment by way of voluntary and compulsory redundancy, now submitted, be approved.”

16/12 **Matters relevant to Statute XXXIII**

The Council received a report concerning a Statute XXXIII Disciplinary Tribunal. The University Secretary thanked those members of the Council who had served on the tribunal and reported that an appeal in respect of the case had now been received.

**Resolved:**

“That the Report concerning a Statute XXXIII Disciplinary Tribunal, now submitted, be approved.”

16/13 **Update on further major capital projects to be submitted to the Strategy and Finance Committee and thence to the Council in March**

The Council received a paper outlining further major capital projects which it was intended would be submitted to the Strategy and Finance Committee and thence to Council in March. The principal projects related to:

- Health and Life Sciences Building at Whiteknights;
- New client accommodation for Executive Education at Greenlands;
- New University teaching accommodation and an extension to the Henley Business School Building at Whiteknights.

In addition, the paper outlined a smaller scale project for the first phase of a redevelopment of Whiteknights House.

The Chief Operating Officer explained that the projects supported the University’s ambitions for growth and its commitment to a high quality student experience, and were also consistent with the estates strategy. Financial information would be included in the proposals to be submitted to the Strategy and Finance Committee and to Council in March.

In response to a request from Mrs Owen, the Chief Operating Officer undertook to submit to the March meeting a summary overview of the University’s principal assets and liabilities.

**Resolved:**

“That the paper entitled Update on further major capital projects which it is intended will be submitted to the Strategy and Finance Committee and thence to the Council in March, now submitted, be received.”

16/14 **School of Architecture**

Professor Brooks reported that the new undergraduate programme in Architecture, which would admit its first cohort in September 2016, was recruiting well, and had attracted, to date, 240 applicants for 40 places. There
was some evidence that the introduction of the programme had impacted on
recruitment to Architecture programmes at other universities.

16/15 University of Reading Malaysia

The President noted that the official opening of the Malaysian campus would
be held in February and that a number of members of the Council would be
attending.

In response to a question, the Chief Operating Officer explained that
discussions with the Malaysian authorities were continuing in relation to the
proposed undergraduate programme in Law at the University of Reading
Malaysia and the applicability of the Malaysian government’s moratorium.

16/16 Dates of further meetings of the Council in the Session 2015/16

Further meetings of the Council in this Session had been scheduled for:
Monday 21 March 2016 at 2.15pm
Monday 11 July 2016 at 2.15pm