

Effectiveness of the Council

(for submission to the Strategy and Finance Committee on 10 June 2013 and to the Council on 8 July 2013)

At its meetings on 28 January and 25 March 2013, the Council received reports from the body appointed to review the effectiveness of the Council and asked that a series of recommendations derived therefrom be formulated for transmission to the Council through the Strategy and Finance Committee in the Summer Term 2013. For the reasons advanced in those prior reports and confirmed by the relevant minutes of the Council, it is now **recommended**:

- (a) that the **Council** continue to be composed of thirty members save that Class 2 (Fifteen lay members appointed by the Council) be conflated with Class 7 (One member appointed by Convocation) to form a single Class of membership comprising sixteen lay members, no fewer than four of whom shall as a matter of policy be graduates of the University;
- (b) that the size and remit of the **Strategy and Finance Committee** remain unchanged but that it henceforth take care (i) to avoid any unnecessary duplication of business with that of the Audit Committee and (ii) to keep its Investments Committee fully apprised of the strategic drivers that had a bearing on those matters it was asked to consider;
- (c) that the size and remit of the **Investments Committee** remain unchanged and that its position subordinate to the Strategy and Finance Committee be confirmed;
- (d) that the lay membership of the **Appointments Committee** be reduced by one, that its lay membership be aligned informally with that of the Remuneration Committee and that its remit remain unchanged save that its wish to continue to receive Reports of Committees of Selection *in extenso* be kept under review;
- (e) that the size and remit of the **Remuneration Committee** remain unchanged, save that its lay membership henceforth be aligned informally with that of the Appointments Committee;
- (f) that the size and remit of the **Audit Committee** remain unchanged but that care continue to be taken to maintain a proper separation of the business of the Audit Committee from that of the Strategy and Finance Committee;
- (g) that the **Support Services Policy Committee** be amalgamated with the Students' Union Liaison Committee (which, uniquely and anomalously, reports direct to the Council) on a model whereby a 'policy' committee would have oversight of those matters currently within the purview of the Support Services Policy Committee, save for Museums and Collections, in respect of which monitoring responsibility would be remitted to the Senate which would report direct to the Council on such matters by exception. Under such a model it is recommended that an

'operational' sub-committee report to the Council through the 'policy' committee on matters such as the Students' Union Constitution, its financial affairs and, by exception, areas of synergy between the University and the Union; and that the naming of the 'policy' committee reflect the overview it will be expected to take of The Student Experience. The distinctive and independent nature of the Students' Union would be recognised in the terms of reference, and respected in the subsequent operation of, the proposed groupings. Despite our belief in the integrity of these recommendations, we understand that an alternative proposal is to be brought forward by the Support Services Policy Committee and, naturally, will be receptive to whatever it suggests.

- (h) that, as introduced in 2012-13, **attendance by non-members** at meetings of the Council and its principal committees continue to be limited to those required to make oral contributions.
- (i) that representation of the Council (from amongst its own number or appointed by it) be retained as now on the following bodies:
- Appeals against decisions of the Personal Titles Committee**
 - Appeals against decisions of the Faculty Promotions Groups**
 - Complaints Committee**
 - Campaign Strategy Board**
 - Standing Disciplinary Committee**
 - Standing Disciplinary Appeals Committee**
 - Honorary Degrees: Joint Standing Committee**
 - Statute XXXIII Panels.**
- (j) that representation of the Council (from amongst its own number or appointed by it) be discontinued on the following bodies:
- Arts: Joint Standing Committee (with a consequent change of status to that of a Senate Committee)**
 - Personal Titles: Joint Standing Committee (with a consequent change of status to that of a Senate Committee and the amending of Ordinance XXIII)**
 - Research Ethics Committee**
 - University of Reading Science and Technology Centre:**
 - Board of Directors**
 - Joint University/UCU Committee**
 - Joint University/UNISON Committee**
 - Joint University/UNITE Committee.**
- (k) that members of the Council be provided with a structured programme of **induction and continuous development** devised locally by the University Secretary and led by the Vice-Chancellor drawing upon the resources made nationally available through the Governor Development Programme the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, and tailored to the individual needs of new members, having regard in particular to their familiarity with the University (geography, organisation and student experience) and their previous experience, if any, of governance of similar institutions.

Feedback from those new members of the Council appointed in 2012 suggests that an opportunity for physical orientation (including departmental visits) is best offered in the Autumn Term, detailed policy briefings from University Officers in the Spring Term, and attendance at regional seminars and the like thereafter. It is also recommended that each new member be assigned a more experienced 'buddy' from amongst the existing lay membership to facilitate and accelerate their integration.

- (l) that, to improve the role of constructive challenge and governance undertaken by members, the **agenda and papers** presented to meetings of the Council and its principal committees should:
- (i) contain a brief summary of each item on the agenda;
 - (ii) identify, for the benefit of those preparing for the meeting, which matters on the agenda require discussion of proposals and which require approval of decisions already taken; and in the former case the issues of principle and issues for decision arising in such discussion;
 - (iii) identify, where possible, those parts of papers which are most pertinent to discussion;
 - (iv) identify, where possible, alternative courses of action available if proposed courses of action are not followed;
 - (v) identify, where appropriate, background papers which may be accessed electronically by members who desire more information in advance of the meeting.

- (m) that, further to improve the role of constructive challenge and governance undertaken by members, the **structure of meetings** of the Council and its principal committees should be such that:

- (i) one or more items on the agenda be identified in advance as suitable for significant debate, with some identification of the pros and cons of proposed decisions or actions;
- (ii) from time to time an item on the agenda should be included to enable debate on a proposal for long term strategy;

and time for conducting the business of the meeting should be managed to enable such debates to take place.

- (n) that in accordance with principles set out in the annex to this paper, a thorough-going **review of the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances** be initiated, to be led by the University Secretary, the Director of Human Resources and the University's Employment Solicitor, supported for a fixed term by the engagement of a paralegal assistant for which dedicated resource must be identified prior to commencement.

Howard Palmer QC
Chairman of the Review Body
Keith Hodgson
University Secretary