

# MINUTES

## SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE, SR-20

**Date:** Tues 7 March 2023

**Time:** 1300

**Location:** CA105/6, Catalyst building, Leek Rd

### Notes:

1. This Agenda is divided into three headings: Estates; Financials; and Human Resources / Employment. Each of these headings has a section 2 (For Discussion and/or Approval) and a section 3 (For Information).
2. Items marked with an asterisk (starred items) are 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.
3. Items classified as Confidential, and their subsequent minutes, will be redacted before publication of the agenda and minutes on the University's public website.

Members		
Mike Herbert	Co-opted Committee Member	P
Kim Newell Chebator	External Member	P
Kevin Gould (Chair)	External Member	P
Saima Hussain	Professional Support Staff Governor	P
Colin Hughes	External Member	P
Ian Jenkinson	Co-opted Committee Member	P
Professor Martin Jones	Vice Chancellor	P
Martin Pugh	External Member	P
Hayden Tsang	Student Governor	P
In attendance		
Ian Blachford	Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors	IA
Professor Kevin Hetherington	Deputy Vice Chancellor	A
Sally McGill	Chief Financial Officer & Deputy Chief Executive	IA
Professor Raheel Nawaz	Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation	IA

*P = Present (via Teams); A = Apologies; Ab = Absent; L = Late; IA = In Attendance (via Teams)*

MEETING MANAGEMENT	
512	<b>Apologies for absence</b> were received from Kevin Hetherington.
513	There were no new <b>declarations of interest</b> .
514	The <b>minutes of the last meeting of the Committee</b> , 09 Nov 2022 SR/20/01, were confirmed as a true and accurate record.
515	<b>Matters arising:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minute 494 – Campus Masterplan</b> – the meeting with Stoke-on-Trent City Council on the University campus to discuss the future developments was held on 8 Feb 2023. Feedback had been very positive.</li> <li>• <b>Minute 500 – Draft Financial Statements y/e 31 July 2022</b> – these had been approved, together with the external audit report, at an extraordinary meeting of the Board of Governors held on 24 November 2022.</li> </ul>

516 The \*Overview of annual business 2022-23\* SR/20/02 was noted.

**ESTATES AND INFRASTRUCTURE (E)**

517 The **Estates overview** SR/20/03 paper was introduced by Pro Vice Chancellor of Digital Transformation, Raheel Nawaz and the following was discussed:

- [REDACTED]
- Squires View Site - The planning department have advised they require new planning submission to submitted for the car park despite work having started work on a previous approval. Bidders for the Student Village project have all expressed an interest in using the site as a compound for the duration of the Student Village project as it would significantly assist in the logistics of managing the site as well as reducing deliveries passing Clarice Cliff Court.
- Conversion of the former Cadman Library to Office Accommodation - A decision was made to defer the start date until after Easter 2023 with a completion by Autumn 2023 to allow the works to be carried out over the quiet summer period so as to have minimal impact on the student experience.
- London Digital Institute Alterations - The works which were due to commence in October 2022 will now be carried out over the summer to minimise impact on teaching and student experience.
- [REDACTED]
- Sale of Land at Lichfield College for Coach Park - The Council have now decided they no longer wish to purchase the land for use as a coach car park having found an alternative site elsewhere in Lichfield.
- Estates Masterplan Following discussion with the planning officials the Masterplan was shared with Stoke City Council Planning Committee in February in order to familiarise Councillors with the proposed development of the campus in advance of future planning applications for the new Student Village and Digital Building. This will assist the Student Village procurement process by identifying and mitigating any potential major objections Councillors may have on the Village.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Kevin Gould asked about the implications of the Council no longer wishing to purchase the land in Lichfield for the coach park. It was noted that whilst there was no imminent sale of the land, this may be an option in the future, if the change of use was granted and the covenants issues resolved. In the meantime, the strategy is to build a strong relationship with South Stafford College and have a presence at Lichfield as was discussed at the Strategy and Performance Committee.
- Martin Jones confirmed to the Committee that the University now owns Squires View site and that this would be used as a parking and yard area to assist the student village construction once approved. Mike Herbert endorsed this approach.
- Mike Herbert commented that the response to the Local Plan from the Council would not be available until July 2024 at the earliest.
- Mike Herbert enquired about the timings associated with the broader masterplan. Sally McGill explained that the Student Village determines the timing of this and a clearer picture is expected in the autumn. Plans are in place to develop an overview plan for the College Road site within the campus, which will benefit from understanding the impact of the nearby Goods Yard development.

The report was noted by the Committee.

518	<p>The <b>Sustainability update</b> SR/20/04 was introduced by Chief Financial Officer &amp; Deputy Chief Executive, Sally McGill and the following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UK Government has published an independent review of the UK's progress towards Net Zero, led by Chris Skidmore, called 'Mission Zero'. The review states that: 'Net zero is the growth opportunity of the 21st century'. This has implications for potential for research and knowledge transfer activities but also teaching and learning and skills development – preparing students for 'green jobs'. This theme will be picked up by the newly formed Sustainability and Climate Change Education Group.</li> <li>• Platinum Jubilee Challenge: Accelerating the UK Tertiary Education Sector Towards Net Zero. A report was published on 23 January 2023, funded by the Royal Anniversary Trust and with 15 HE and 6 FE institutions providing evidence, which sets out the challenges and potential responses for HE and FE providers in achieving Net Zero. The report is the most comprehensive attempt so far to discuss the achievement of Net Zero in the UK tertiary education sector but given many of the solutions are not within the control or the affordability of HE providers, it may not push the cause forward as fast as the authors might have envisaged.</li> <li>• Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) - Alongside the Accelerating the UK Tertiary Education Sector Towards Net Zero report, and also published on 23 January 2023, the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) attempts to provide guidance on the measurement of emissions for scopes 1, 2 and 3 by FE and HE institutions. The SCEF is not yet mandatory but will eventually replace the Estates Management Record (EMR) which is also voluntary at the moment.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Jenkinson requested that KPIs should be included in the report to indicate the progress of the project. Sally McGill explained that KPIs will be included in the next stage and that these will be divided into Scope 1 and 2 and Scope 3 KPIs.</li> <li>• The contents of the paper were praised by Kevin Gould who said it was a very comprehensive report and it was pleasing to see the approach the University was taking on this matter.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted by the Committee.</p>
519	<p>The <b>Digital Transformation Strategy &amp; Masterplan</b> SR/20/05 was introduced by Pro Vice Chancellor of Digital Transformation, Raheel Nawaz, for approval by the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Transformation (DTX) is the unifying strand running through the University's new Catalyst for Change Strategic Plan, and a key enabler for the University's strategic pivot. The University's background as a pioneering digital institution has enabled it to establish an excellent reputation as the country's digitally-leading HEI, and the Digital Transformation Strategy &amp; Masterplan looks to build on these foundations to take the University onwards and upwards towards becoming a fully digitally-immersed university.</li> <li>• The strategy and masterplan, which has already been discussed by Committee members in meetings with the Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation, explains the strategic digital pivot which will take place in order to deliver this ambitious plan, including sections on the guiding principles and resulting information streams identified, and the synthesis of these into the two main strands of the overall masterplan: the three Underpinning Strategic Programmes, and the seven stakeholder-facing Thematic Transformation Programmes.</li> <li>• The Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation will deliver a "Know Your Business" session on the Strategy &amp; Masterplan at the 19 April 2023 Board of Governors meeting, and regular updates will be provided to the Committee, and referred through to the Board of Governors as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kim Newell Chebator enquired as to levels of engagement from all stakeholders. Raheel Nawaz explained that the plan had been created on a top-down meets bottom-up approach and engagement had been very positive. The new Digital Transformation Board was comprised of representation from across the University and these early meetings had been very engaging.</li> <li>• Kevin Gould commended the high standard of the paper and approved of the methodology and engagement process. He questioned whether the resources outlined are too modest to deliver the outcomes in the planned time frames. Raheel Nawaz explained that an interim Executive Director has been hired for a 6 month period and a permanent appointment was underway. The service would be realigned following the appointment of the new permanent Executive Director. Some service reshaping was also underway.</li> <li>• Colin Hughes agreed with the University's approach and said that the report highlighted that the University had some way to deliver its digital aspirations. It was highlighted that this should be used as a learning process to ensure that the university remained focused on delivery and clear on impact.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin Jones agreed that the paper revealed many areas for improvement and appointing the right Executive Director of Digital and Technical Services was critical.</li> <li>• It was agreed a further update would be provided at the June meeting of the committee.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Digital Transformation Strategy &amp; Masterplan</b> was approved and would progress to the Board of Governors for approval.</p>
520	<p>The <b>Ashley 2 Simulation Suite</b> SR/20/06 was introduced by Pro Vice Chancellor of Digital Transformation, Raheel Nawaz for approval by the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing facilities in the Crime Scene House and Community House pose significant accessibility, inclusivity, safety and security issues, and house technology that is not fit-for purpose. The current state of these facilities negatively impacts on student recruitment, student experience, teaching and learning approaches, student employability and commercial opportunities.</li> <li>• It is proposed that existing space on the ground floor of Ashley 2, currently used for teaching, office space and social space would be transformed into flexible simulation facilities suitable for delivery of teaching, research and enterprise activities. Additionally, space on the first floor, currently used as an archive room, will be transformed into a digital courtroom. This will significantly improve the teaching and learning spaces, will consolidate the University's simulation facilities enabling interdisciplinary opportunities and ensure accessibility for all students.</li> <li>• It is proposed that the building work will commence on site in June 2023, with construction work ending in October 2023, and overall project completion at the end of November 2023. This has been designed to have minimum disruption on teaching and learning. The only issue will be the lead times for the delivery and installation of Digital Services, Network and AV equipment, as reported on late last year. This will not affect the completion of the construction work, but full integration/operation of digital equipment may well be delayed. Digital Services are constantly monitoring this situation which is a worldwide issue.</li> <li>• Approval to proceed with the procurement and construction of a Simulation Suite in Ashley 2 was sought from the committee.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin Gould asked whether the final figure of £3.5m, which includes the power and data upgrades was included in the budget. Sally McGill confirmed that £3.5m was included in the budget.</li> <li>• Ian Jenkinson and Mike Herbert said the refurbishment looked expensive but having examined the breakdown of costs, they asked whether savings could be made on the contingency budget. The contingency budget would continue to be monitored, however cost savings had already been taken account of as part of the cost re-engineering work prior to the committee.</li> <li>• Kevin Gould asked if the University had attempted to quantify the benefits of the refurbishment. Martin Jones explained that the refurbishment project was important for student recruitment and that improvements ensured the school remained attractive to students in a competitive market. Sally McGill highlighted that the project will also address accessibility issues for disabled students and that improving poor facilities, such as the courtroom and corridors in the Law school will help the University achieve two KPIs focused on student recruitment.</li> <li>• Mike Herbert asked about the Simulation Suite and whether the space has a flexible use. Martin Jones said the Simulation Suite provides an immersive experience and is a unique selling point that puts the University ahead of the competition and would be available for other uses.</li> <li>• Saima Hussain expressed her enthusiastic support for the benefits in terms increased student numbers that should result from this project.</li> <li>• Martin Pugh suggested that future refurbishment propositions should be presented in a wider context, demonstrating how they affect the University's overall strategic plan, strategic priorities and the KPIs. This was agreed.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Ashley 2 Simulation Suite paper</b> was approved and would progress to the Board of Governors for approval.</p>
<b>E3 FOR INFORMATION</b>	
521	<p>The <b>Statutory compliance update</b> SR/20/07 was introduced by Pro Vice Chancellor of Digital Transformation, Raheel Nawaz for information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This report provides an assurance on the University's statutory and mandatory compliance position with an overview of the compliance strategy and principles. A summary of our overall compliance position is also included.</li> </ul>

- The University's status with statutory compliance is that all the inspections are current. The remedial actions that have been generated from the inspection have not left any high-risk actions outstanding. The risk level for the University is low.
- The report was noted.

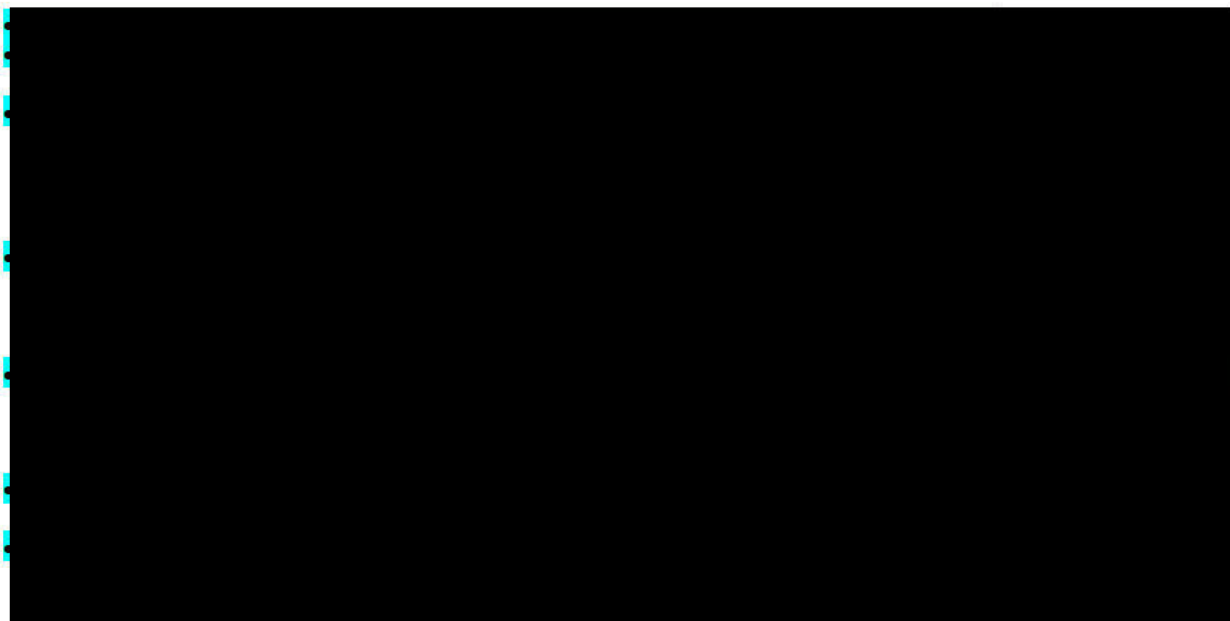
## FINANCIALS (F)

### F2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)

- 522 The **Bad debt write-off update** SR/20/08 was introduced by introduced by Chief Financial Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, Sally McGill for approval by the Committee:
- This paper seeks to obtain authorisation to write off debtor balances. These balances have previously been passed to our debt collection agent STA, who have attempted to collect the debt but have advised us that the debt is no longer recoverable or not economical to pursue. The total amounts to £123,360.34 (which includes a total of £1,877.54 of debts under £100 shown in Appendix A) and a breakdown of the value of debt is in the next section.
  - In accordance with the current Financial Regulations the Chief Financial Officer can approve write offs if the balance is under £5,000, debts between £5,000 and £20,000 the Vice Chancellor can approve for write off and any write offs over £20,000 must be approved by the Board of Governors. Full details of the proposed write offs can be found in Appendix A.
- Members and attendees commented as follows:
- Sally McGill updated the Committee that a number of plans have been put in place to control the levels of debt experienced by some students.
  - Kevin Gould highlighted that it would be helpful to have comparable information from previous years, so that the information could be contextualised.
  - Kim Newell Chebator asked whether there has been an increase in bad debt due the cost of living and Sally McGill explained that it was too soon to update on this and she will be in a position to update at the June Committee meeting.
- The report was approved.

### F3 FOR INFORMATION

- 523 The **Management accounts to 31 Jan 2023** SR/20/09 were introduced by Chief Financial Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, Sally McGill for information:



Members and attendees commented as follows:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The question was asked on the impact of the police contract negotiations on apprenticeship numbers. Sally McGill responded that the lower apprenticeship numbers will be reflected in next year's figures.</li> <li>It was highlighted that the growth in international students had been impressive. Martin Jones said it has been a priority to provide an excellent student experience for international students and feedback has been good.</li> <li>It was noted that the accounts reflect the University's good financial position and an exercise to evaluate the University's operating model is being undertaken which will link into the Digital Transformation project to improve efficiencies at the University and assist in the containment of staff costs.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted.</p>
524	<p>The <b>Treasury management report</b> SR/20/10 was introduced by introduced by Chief Financial Officer &amp; Deputy Chief Executive, Sally McGill for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This paper provides a summary of the University's investment performance for the period August 2022 to January 2023. Performance of money market holdings has improved throughout the period due to the Bank of England base rate increases. There are no further issues to report.</li> <li>There have been no changes to the University's Treasury Management Policy within the period and no changes are proposed.</li> <li>The OfS has introduced a requirement to report if our liquidity is at risk of falling below 30 days anywhere within the next three months. Our liquidity days as of 31st January 2023 was 175 days, meaning there was nothing to report.</li> <li>Sally McGill would be undertaking some further work on the treasury management approach to ensure that ESG issues were considered.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted.</p>
<b>H2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)</b>	
525	<p>The <b>HR and Organisational Development annual report 2021-22</b> SR/20/11 was introduced by Chief Operating Officer, Ian Blachford:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the last 12 months, work has continued on delivery of the University's People Strategy with its focus on next generation thinking designed to create the best working environment for our 2030 vision and to have a significant impact on how staff are enabled to work, teach and research.</li> <li>The Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD) Annual Report describes the impact of the major programmes of work undertaken during the academic year 2021-22, illustrating how this activity supports the achievement of the University's Strategic Plan and its supporting strategies and progress towards achievement of the People Strategy.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted.</p>
526	<p>The <b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion annual report 2021-22</b> SR/20/12 was introduced by Chief Operating Officer, Ian Blachford for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each year, an annual report is produced to summarise the main developments within the field of equality, diversity and inclusion that have occurred within the University. The attached report highlights the main developments for the last academic year, 2021-22.</li> <li>The report has been professionally produced to have the appropriate standing of a key publication of the University, showing the importance of the inclusion agenda to the university.</li> <li>The report has been redeveloped to focus upon the foundation building over recent years, together with the University's demographic profile and actions for different constituencies, together with an outline of the actions that will extend into the current academic year.</li> <li>The Committee is asked to approve the annual report for display on the University website. The report has been approved by the University Inclusion Group and Senior Leadership Team.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kim Newell Chebator asked if there is any evidence that Diversity and Inclusion reports assist with recruitment. Ian Blachford said that ensuring the information relating to diversity is easily accessible assists with recruitment as it elevates the University's position as an attractive proposition for both students and staff. Showcasing the University's ambition to attract a mix of demographics also demonstrated a tangible commitment to inclusion for interested students and staff.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin Pugh asked how widely embedded the EDI framework is within the University. Ian Blachford said that the EDI framework is a focus at all levels within the University and features throughout discussions at the SLT, UEB and Board of Governors meetings. It was agreed that a forthcoming KYB session be led by Ravinder Kaur, the Head of Inclusion and a separate briefing meeting organised with Martin Pugh as part of his onboarding.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted.</p>
527	<p>The <b>Pensions update</b> SR/20/13 was introduced by Chief Operating Officer, Ian Blachford for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The University introduced a second set of pension reforms with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021, which was finally implemented in September 2021, allowing for further dialogue with UCU, the union representing academic staff. Since that date UCU have continued to register their objections to the reforms, which now allows the University the route of employing new academic staff within its wholly-owned subsidiary and providing a defined contribution pension rather than being employed by the University and being entitled to receive a defined benefit pension scheme, the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS). Since the date of implementation UCU undertook an indicative ballot for industrial action and then a full ballot on industrial action. UCU represents circa 200 academic staff, from an academic staff base of circa 650 staff. The ballot was successful for UCU and since that date they have engaged in industrial action. This has been comprised of two routes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The first route has been full industrial action and specific dates for strike action have been undertaken.</li> <li>○ The second route is a 'work to contract' route which commenced on 30th March 2022.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• On 1st December 2022 UCU commenced a local ballot of members on the Phase Two pension reforms, as the previous ballot result had expired. The ballot closed on 13th January 2023 and the result was that the branch failed to get a majority of members voting (27.35%) and therefore the ballot was unsuccessful, and there is no mandate for industrial action.</li> <li>• In addition, UNISON undertook a local ballot on Phase One and Two pension reforms which closed on 18th January 2023. The branch failed to secure a majority of members voting (39%) and therefore the ballot was unsuccessful and there is no mandate for industrial action.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colin Hughes commended the work undertaken by Ian Blachford which demonstrated careful planning and foresight and an adept approach to union relations. This was a significant piece of work as it de-risked the institution and forms part of its long-term strategy for financial sustainability.</li> <li>• Sally McGill highlighted that the University was in discussion with the LGPS on the triennial valuation and how we progressed with future contributions. Mercers were assisting with these discussions.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted.</p>
528	<p>The <b>Cultural Change Programme update</b> SR/20/14 was introduced by Chief Operating Officer, Ian Blachford for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Staff Make Staffs cultural improvement programme launched in February 2020 and since that time work has been ongoing led by the Staff Make Staffs Steering Group (comprised of staff from across the University) supported by a number of change champions who work closely with Schools and Services. The Staff Make Staffs programme launched by taking the cultural temperature of the University through completion of the Denison culture survey.</li> <li>• Based upon consistent survey themes from across the University, four workstreams were developed to achieve a range of cultural improvements which cut across the University.</li> <li>• The cultural improvement work has been ongoing since this time and this report provides an overview of progress to date and highlights of the current activities underway since the last update.</li> <li>• The Denison Culture survey will run again this year. Plans are underway to take the University's cultural temperature during May 2023 to gauge how staff are feeling about the culture at the University.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted.</p>
529	<p>The <b>Pay negotiation reform</b> SR/20/15 was introduced by Chief Operating Officer, Ian Blachford for information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The national pay negotiating process was established in 2006.</li> <li>• Over the last few months 'a conversation' has been taking place behind the scenes with the sector on how to modernise the current national pay negotiating process. This has now been consolidated into a survey for universities to respond. The briefing document and the survey is attached as Appendix One.</li> <li>• This was previously shared with the Chairs of the Committees and Executive, following a broader discussion with UEB. This survey response outlines our position to the proposals, although we are not bound by any of</li> </ul>

	<p>these responses in the future. In addition, at Appendix B, is a briefing document that was prepared for UEB on the possible implications of the survey proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UCEA is currently considering the survey responses before determining a future proposed direction. Any changes to the future national pay negotiating process will need an agreement by all the trade unions within the sector, which will not be easy, even if there is consensus within the sector, which also may be unlikely.</li> <li>• The University would await the outcome of the UCEA consultation before determining its position. This would also be discussed with the Board of Governors prior to any final decision.</li> </ul> <p>Members and attendees commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Jenkinson highlighted that moving away from national pay bargaining to local pay bargaining could result in a large administrative burden being placed on the University because of the wider remit of nationally agreed terms and conditions. Ian Blachford highlighted that the University was not party to any other national processes other than for the annual uplift. Moving to local pay bargaining would however require pay negotiating machinery to be created locally.</li> </ul> <p>The report was noted.</p>
<b>H3 FOR INFORMATION</b>	
530	<p>The <b>Review of organisational structures and staff capability</b> SR/20/16 was introduced by Chief Operating Officer, Ian Blachford for information covering the review in media, performance and communication and the SMT review across schools.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>
531	<p>The <b>*Cost of Living pay award update &amp; Addendum*</b> SR/20/17 was introduced by Chief Operating Officer, Ian Blachford for information and had been superseded by the extraordinary Board meeting held earlier that afternoon.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>
<b>4 ADDITIONAL MATTERS</b>	
532	<p><b>LGPS Pension Valuation – Circulated Separately Prior to the Meeting</b></p> 