

AGENDA

| SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE, SR-23 | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------|------|--|--|
| Date: | Wednesday 20 th March 2024 | 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 | | | |
|------------------------------|--|------|--|
| Gemma Brierley | ma Brierley External Member | | |
| Kevin Gould (Chair) | External Member | P(T) | |
| Mike Herbert | Co-opted Committee Member | Р | |
| Saima Hussain | Professional Support Staff Governor | Р | |
| Colin Hughes (Deputy Chair) | External Member | Р | |
| Ian Jenkinson | Co-opted Committee Member | Р | |
| Professor Martin Jones | Vice Chancellor | Р | |
| Kim Newell Chebator | External Member | Р | |
| Leonard Stuart | Student Governor | Ab | |
| In attendance | | | |
| Ian Blachford | Chief Operating Officer and Clerk to the Board of Governors | | |
| Professor Kevin Hetherington | Deputy Vice Chancellor | IA | |
| Sally McGill | ally McGill Chief Financial Officer & Deputy Chief Executive | | |
| Professor Raheel Nawaz | Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital Transformation | IA | |

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

| 1 MEI | 1 MEETING MANAGEMENT | | | |
|-------|--|---|--|--|
| 597 | No Apologies for absence were received. Gemma Brierley was welcomed to her first meeting of the Sustainability & Resources Committee. | | | |
| 598 | There were no new Declarations of interest. | | | |
| 599 | Membership of the Committee for 2023/24: | | | |
| | Constitution External Members: Student | Membership Kevin Gould (Chair) Colin Hughes (Deputy Chair) Gemma Brierley Kim Newell Chebator | | |

Governor Leonard Stuart

Staff Governor Saima Hussain

Vice Chancellor Martin Jones

Co Opted Committee Members Mike Herbert

Ian Jenkinson

In attendance Ian Blachford, Chief Operating Officer & Clerk to the Board

Sally McGill, Chief Financial Officer & Deputy Chief Executive Professor Kevin Hetherington, Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Annabel Kiernan, Pro Vice Chancellor – Academic Professor Raheel Nawaz, Pro Vice Chancellor – Digital

Transformation

The **minutes of the last meeting of the Committee**, 16th November 2023 SR/23/01 were received as a true and accurate record.

601 Matters arising:

- Minute 573 Composition of the Committee It was noted that Martin Pugh had transferred to the Strategy
 and Performance Committee and Gemma Brierley had joined the Committee.
- Minute 575 Cultural Change Programme a full update was provided at the Board of Governors meeting on 12 October 2023 and work was continuing on the development of university level actions and School/Service actions.
- Minute 584 Draft Financial Statements Year End 31st July 2023 the financial statements were approved by the Board of Governors on 28 November 2023 and submitted to the OfS on 9th January.

The *Overview of annual business 2023-2024* SR/23/02 was noted for information.

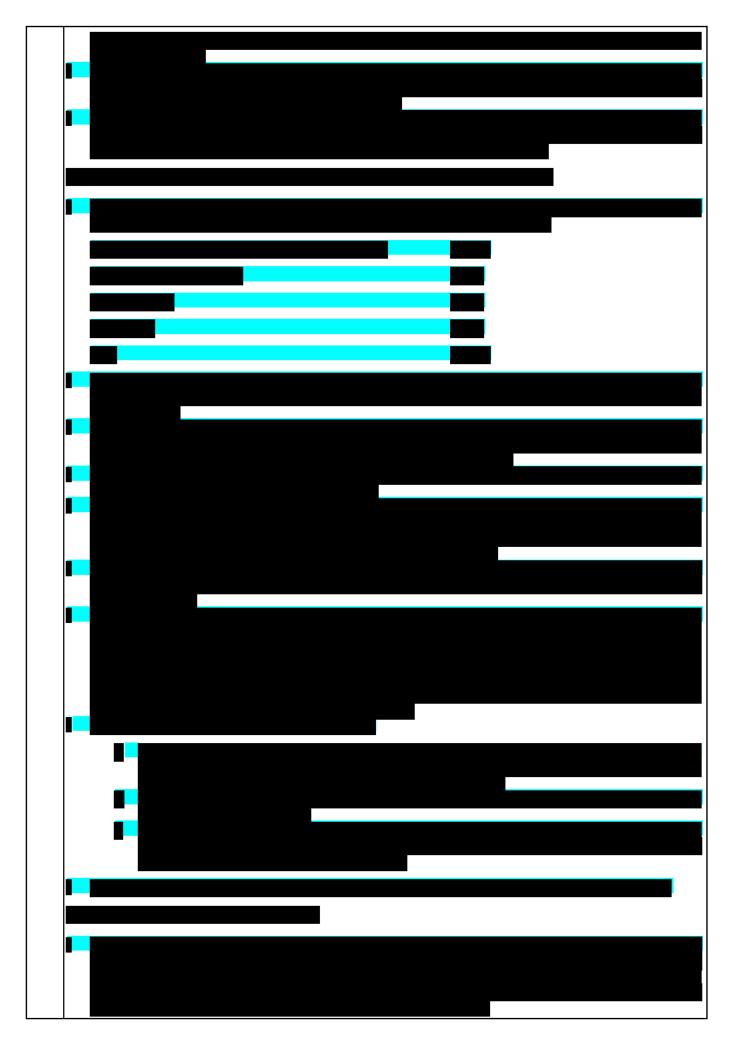
ESTATES & INFRASTRUCTURE (E)

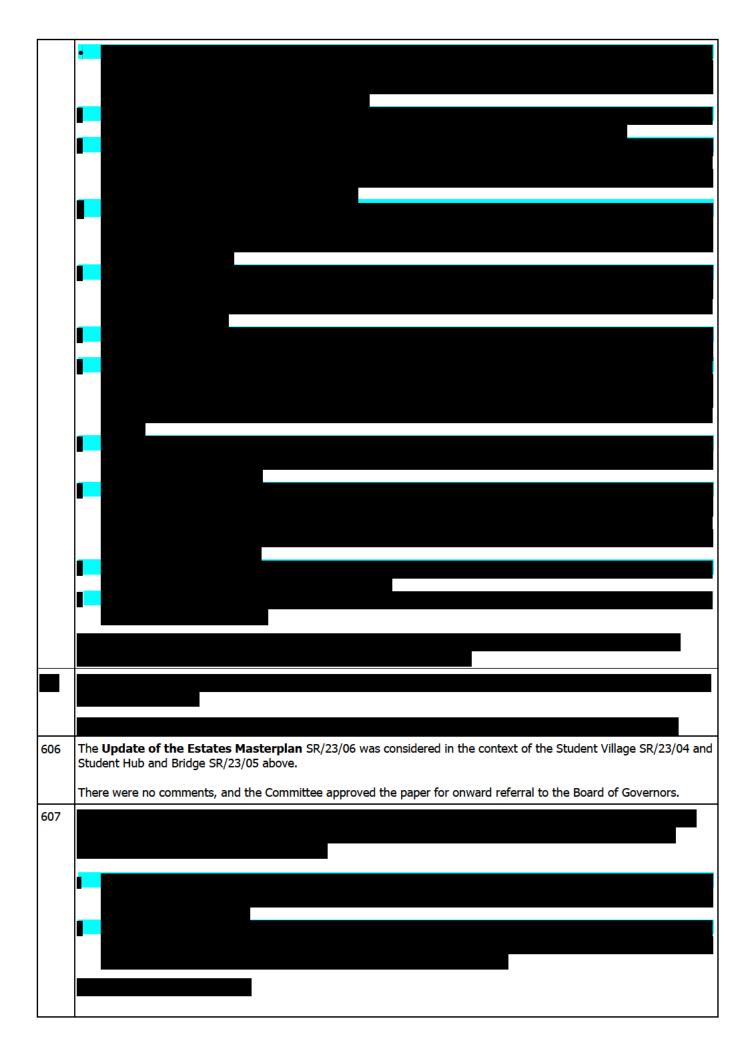
E2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)

The Estates Overview SR/23/03 was introduced for discussion by Pro Vice Chancellor Digital Transformation Raheel Nawaz.

- The report provides an update on progress on the conversion of the former Cadman Library to office accommodation, updates on the creation of a Simulation "Simmersive" Suite in Ashley 2, the creation of an Esports arena in the Beacon Building, the proposed connection to the Stoke District Heating Network, disposal of an ex-sports field off Newcastle Road in Cotes Heath and the building condition surveys exercise currently taking place across the campuses.
- The estates overview was noted in the context of the Student Village paper and business case for the Student Hub and Bridge.

There were no comments, and the report was noted.





- The **District Heat Network (DHN) Heads of Terms for a Draft Agreement** SR/23/08 was introduced by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill who stated that that an update will be provided at the next Board of Governors meeting 10 April 2024.
 - As a first step in joining the Stoke-on-Trent District Heat Network (DHN), the University has been invited by SSE
 Heat Networks Limited (the contracting party) to sign Heads of Terms for a Draft Agreement (HoTs).
 - After seeking advice from Womble Bond the report concludes that: The HoTs as drafted present a reasonable balance
 of risk for the University, and generally follow the commercial norms for a heat supply agreement. Any significant
 diversion from a typical commercial position has been highlighted in this report. WBD see no reason not to continue
 to negotiate terms with SSE, based on the agreed HoTs.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Mike Herbert asked whether the geothermal pocket was large enough for this project. Sally McGill stated that a
 geological report had confirmed that there were adequate supplies, it is more a question of whether the technology
 is adequate and commercially viable.
- Kevin Gould asked about the financial aspects of the agreement. Sally McGill explained that the University will be
 provided with a price per unit of hot water and this figure will be provided before the we commit to a long-term
 Power Purchase Agreement. It was confirmed that this HoT was not legally binding nor committing the university to
 a future contract.

There were no further comments, and the report was approved

- 609 The Sustainability Update SR/23/09 was presented to the Committee by Chief Financial Officer, Sally McGill.
 - Staffordshire University has risen 36 places in the People & Planet University League Table 2024 which ranks
 universities for environmental and ethical performance. The annual sustainability league table of UK universities
 categorised Staffordshire University as a 2:1 class university, placing it 54th out of 150 institutions.
 - Following a review of the scores achieved, two specific areas have been identified where improvements can be made
 in 2025 and these are currently being explored Ethical Careers and Recruitment and providing funds for student
 led sustainability projects routed through the University's Sustainability Champions Group.
 - The University has two Strategic KPIs related to Sustainability with annual milestones to track achievement of the overall goals.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Gemma Brierley commended the report and asked if the University had undertaken the approach of identifying targets, committing to these and validating outcomes. Sally McGill confirmed this was the case.
- Ian Jenkinson asked about the Scope 3 part of the report which Sally agreed to include in more detail in the next update.

There were no further comments, and the report was noted.

- The Digital Transformation Plan Implementation Update SR/23/10 was presented to the Committee by Pro Vice Chancellor Digital Transformation, Raheel Nawaz.
 - An update on the inflight status of three projects was provided to the committee.
 - Having reduced the Digital Transformation plan in November 2023, and following feedback from the Sustainability
 and Resource Committee and Board of Governors, we have recently started the process of developing business cases
 for two high priority projects: Beacon Plus and Learner Engagement.
 - Future phases of Digital Transformation Plan will also underpin the Target Operating Model (TOM).

There were no comments, and the report was noted.

E3 FOR INFORMATION

The *Estates: Statutory Compliance/Maintenance Update* SR/23/11 was presented by Pro Vice Chancellor, Digital Transformation for information.

- This report provides assurance on the University's statutory and mandatory compliance position with an overview
 of the compliance strategy and principles with an averaged 90% compliance score for the reporting period of 1st
 September to 31st December 2023.
- Subsequent identified remedial actions are managed in line with the University's risk appetite and suitable control
 measures are implemented where necessary whilst these works are managed.

There were no further comments, and the report was noted.

FINANCIALS (F)

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

- The Student Recruitment Position & Income Update for 2024-2025 SR/23/12 was presented by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill for information.
 - The report provides an update on the financial impact of the University's actual intakes and returning cohorts of full-time Undergraduate (UG) students and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students for 2023/24 and an early view of the 2024/25 recruitment picture compared to the latest Forecast for 2023/24. The 2024/25 predictions are based on the latest estimates following the 31st January UCAS deadline for UG Home and School targets for UG Overseas and PGT Home & Overseas.
 - The P3 Forecast presented to the Sustainability & Resources Committee on 16 November 2023 indicated an intake
 of 2,628 full-time undergraduate student FTE which has been confirmed at P6 as 2,701 student FTE; an improvement
 of 73 student FTE (£0.5m increase in income). There has been a further improvement in student numbers through
 an additional 139 FTE (from 4,877 to 5,016) continuing students (£0.8m increase in income).
 - The P3 forecast also indicated full-time postgraduate students would be 1,102 student FTE. This has now been confirmed at P6 as 1,087 student FTE; a reduction of 15 student FTE (£0.5m increase in income).
 - Early predictions for the September 2024 full-time undergraduate student recruitment indicate an intake of 2,371 full-time undergraduate student FTE, compared to 2,701 student FTE in 2023/24, as per the latest P6 Forecast; a reduction of 329 student FTE (£2.1m reduction in income; income reduction is smaller than FTE, as the 2023/24 Forecast incorporates an element of non-fee payers, mainly Erasmus exchange students). There is a further estimated reduction in student numbers; 425 FTE (from 5,016 to 4,591) reduction in continuing students (£3.1m reduction in income), reflecting the smaller cohorts progressing from 2023/24 to 2024/25, compared to progressing cohorts from 2022/23 to 2023/24.
 - The early predictions for full-time postgraduate student recruitment indicate a reduction of 107 student FTE, from 1,087 in 2023/24, as per the latest P6 Forecast to 981 in 2024/25 (0.6m reduction in income).

Members and attendees commented as follows:

 Kim Newell Chebator asked about the apprenticeship numbers and this was clarified by Sally McGill in the meeting, specifically the move of the paramedic provision from full time undergraduate students to apprenticeship provision.

The report was noted.

- 613 The Period Six Forecast Financial Forecast Outturn SR/23/13 was introduced by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill for information.
 - This is the second full reforecasting exercise for the financial year ending 31 July 2024 (2023/24), based on the
 results to 31 January 2024 (financial period 6) and any known changes for the rest of the year, including the first
 set of planned savings, and known as the P6 Forecast Outturn.
 - The P6 Forecast Outturn is based on the actual student enrolments for Semester One and Semester Two. As initially
 communicated to the Board in October, a considerable level of in-year savings will be required, if the budgeted
 operating surplus of 3% of income, before exceptional costs, is to be achieved.
 - The first 'waves' of the plan have now been implemented and the detailed results are covered in a separate paper.
 - The P6 Forecast Outturn has been prepared based on all known vacancies which are not being filled, all known approved applications for the Managed Severance Scheme (MSS) plus all approved Compulsory Redundancy (CR) cases. The leaving date for all approved MSS and CR cases has been used in order to get an accurate view of staff costs for the year. There are still 5.6 FTE of academic staff cost savings to be resolved plus 1.0 FTE professional services (PS) staff cost savings which will not contribute much more of a saving in 2023/24, but will give a saving of up to £0.4m in 2024/25.

There were no comments and the report was noted.

The **Period Six Forecast** – **Financial Outturn Savings Update** SR/23/14 was introduced by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill for discussion.

The report highlights that owing to additional student enrolments in September/October 2023, the savings target
required to achieve a 3% operating surplus, before exceptional costs of severance, in 2023/24 was calculated in
October 2023 as £13.8m, but an early view of 2024/25 shows that additional savings will be required before the
start of that financial year. According to latest estimates, the in-year effect in 2023/24 of those additional savings
would increase the total in year savings to £15.0m, which has been adopted as the new minimum target for savings.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Kim Newell Chebator asked about the costs associated with leavers and Sally McGill that some of the reduction in costs was due to staff leaving naturally. Any skills shortages will be reassessed in September 2024, once the latest enrolment position was known.
- Colin Hughes asked that a one-page summary be provided of the current situation and where we expect to be
 based on different scenarios taking into account the Target Operating Model programme. Sally McGill will provide
 an update on the savings achieved and expected within the current financial year at the next Board of Governors
 meeting. A more detailed update on the implementation of the proposed Target Operating Model, the potential
 scenarios for 2024/5 and the required savings will be provided at the next Sustainability and Resources Committee
 meeting in June.

There were no further comments, and the report was noted.

- The **Period Six Forecast Capital Expenditure Report** SR/23/15 was introduced for discussion by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill.
 - This paper provides an update on current capital expenditure projects, highlighting the current status of major projects as at 31 January 2024. In summary the expenditure on capital forecast for 2023/24 will be £9.2m under budget, made up of:
 - £5.9m Unallocated budget
 - £2.4m deferred relating to the Squires View car park
 - £1.1m not required for infrastructure within the Simmersion project in Ashley 2
 - £0.4m of work on the nature reserve deferred
 - £0.4m other savings
 - (£1m) additional expenditure forecast relating to maintenance
 - As at 31 July 2024, the unallocated budget and any other known budget amounts which are no longer needed will be released for future use.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

 Ian Jenkinson asked about the underspend on completion of the Catalyst building and if that will be released in the future. Sally McGill explained that the overspend was identified once the accounts were finalised on completion on the Catalyst, and confirmed this would be released.

There were no further comments, and the report was noted.

- The **Forward View of Capital Expenditure** SR/23/16 was introduced by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill for information.
 - The paper provides an update on the University's strategic capital expenditure plan, in order to inform the University's decision to invest in the Student Village. The tables in the report show the revised future plan, the impact on the University's cash reserves, including the year end balance (must be more than £25m) and the lowest cash balance anticipated in each year. The lowest balance is always in April owing to the timing of the receipt of the final tranche of payments from the Student Loan Company.
 - The year end cash balance, as proposed, is always above £25m and the lowest cash balance (April 2025) is manageable. Not all of the University's cash over the next five year has been committed in order to leave a further contingency of about £45m which could be used for investment in the future, if this could be demonstrated to be sustainable.

There were no comments, and the report was noted.

- The **Finance Strategy Update** SR/23/17 was introduced by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill for approval. The report is an update of the Finance Strategy which was approved by the Board of Governors in early 2022 as part of the new University Strategy, supporting the development of Staffordshire University through to 2030.
 - The following actions are required in order to implement the Finance Strategy:
 - The Board of Governors will sign off an annual budget and five-year strategic financial plans which are compliant with the Bank covenants and any other external regulatory requirements.

- The annual budget and five-year strategic financial plans will achieve the target annual operating surpluses of 5%, unless otherwise approved by the Board.
- The annual budget and five years strategic will cover both revenue and capital expenditure in order to support the achievement of the Strategic Priorities of the University, which are monitored via the six-monthly Strategic Reviews.
- Quarterly reforecasting of in-year results and balance sheet, along with a forward view of future years' likely
 performance, will be carried out in order to inform the future availability of cash for investment.

All business cases for capital investment will identify how they contribute to the following capital rationing priorities:

- d. addressing statutory, regulatory, compliance and security (eg cybersecurity) risks within the University's High Level Risk Registers (HLRRs)
- e. protecting and growing revenue streams which are consistent with the Strategy Plan and the Strategic Priorities
- f. supporting the diversification of income sources in order to reduce dependencies and therefore reduce risk. This could involve turning off some revenue streams which are not consistent with the strategy, do not generate sufficient surplus/cash or require excessive capital investment.
- g. supporting the achievement of other non-income generating Strategic Priorities
- h. addressing other major risks within the HLRRs

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Colin Hughes asked if this information was required by the regulators and Sally McGill explained that it was not a
 regulatory requirement but was important in providing a framework for the continued financial direction of the
 university. This had been useful most recently in responding to queries raised by UCU in relation to the financial
 management of the University.
- Kim Newell Chebator suggested that this information be included in the governor induction material as it was a helpful document. This was agreed.

There were no further comments, and the report was approved for onward progression to the Board.

The Bad Debt Write-Off Update SR/23/18 was introduced by Chief Financial Officer Sally McGill for approval.

- The 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 £234,649.83 (which includes a total of £1,171.52 of debts under £100) and a breakdown of the value of debt shown in the report.
- 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.

There were no comments, and the report was approved.

F3 FOR INFORMATION

619 *Treasury Management Report* SR/23/19

- The paper provides a summary of the University's investment performance for the period August 2023 to January 2024. Performance of money market holdings has improved throughout the period due to the Bank of England base rate increase. Interest receipts generated on the investments for the period were £1,381k against an original budget of £699k.
- The OfS continues to have 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 2024 was 177 days, meaning there was nothing to
 report.

There were no comments, and the report was noted.

HUMAN RESOURCES/EMPLOYMENT (H)

H2 FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR APPROVAL (marked below accordingly)

The Implementation of the Consultation Proposal to Address the In Year Financial Position SR/23/20 was presented by Chief Operating Officer Ian Blachford.

- The paper focuses upon the delivery of Wave Two and Wave Three, the focus of the 45-day collective consultation period with the recognised trade unions and staff, which commenced on 13th October 2023 ending on 27th December 2023. We have previously reported on the savings yielded from Wave One, the vacancy freeze.
- As per the agreed timeline, the consultation response was issued to the unions on 3rd January 2024 and all staff on 4th January 2024.

• It was confirmed that delivery of the proposals is on track to yield the target 3% surplus for this year.

There were no comments, and the report was noted.

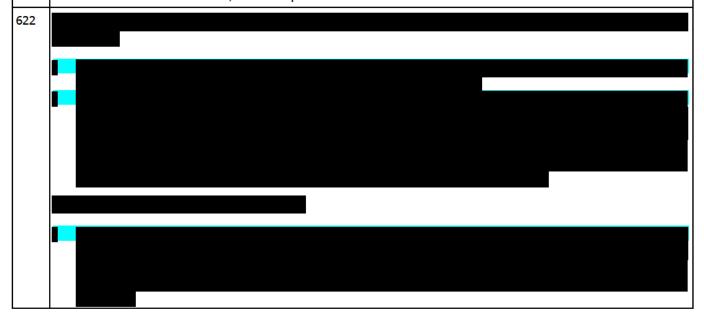
621 **The Target Operating Model Update** SR/23/21 was presented for information by Chief Operating Officer Ian Blachford.

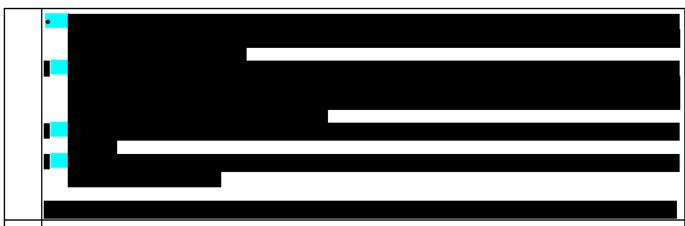
- The document has been developed as a result of a significant programme of work to assess how the University's Professional Services (PS) should develop in the context of broader University requirements. At its meeting in October 2023, the Board received a paper 'Early-Stage Development Work on the Target Operating Model' which outlined the work to be undertaken.
- Since that time, a programme of work has led to the development of a Target Operating Model (TOM) which will
 deliver the 'Catalyst for Change' Strategic Plan, the School Five Year Business Plans, the six Strategic Priorities and
 ultimately deliver the KPIs. The Target Operating Model will determine the appropriate business model and allocation
 of resources for the University, by controlling our costs against income. Furthermore, it triangulates with the future
 direction of the Digital Transformation Plan and reflects the values of the organisation, aligned to the rebranding
 project. It also ensures that the new two School structure is supported as well as corporate requirements.
- The work has been undertaken alongside, but separately from, the tactical cost reduction requirements that have been made over the course of the current financial year. The TOM will be responsible for delivering staff savings as part of our future cost reduction plans, and was identified in the Autumn of 2023, as part of the 'waves' proposal on cost reductions.
- The TOM needs to be seen as a mechanism for ensuring that activities are organised in a way that support and
 deliver the University's requirements. It is first and foremost a way of designing activity, which then leads to revised,
 structures, roles and ways of working. It is much broader than an organisational restructure. The programme remains
 on time and on budget.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

- Professor Chris Headleand asked when the full details of the 'to be' Target Operating Model will be available. Ian
 Blachford confirmed that a greater level of detail will be available at the next Sustainability and Resources Committee
 in June when structures and posts and cost of activities will be further developed.
- Gemma Brierley asked if digital projects had been aligned with the TOM. Ian Blachford responded that identification
 of the digital transformation projects is progressing in tandem so that both quick wins could be identified and that
 larger project investments could be identified and approved as appropriate.
- Colin Hughes noted that this project was complex and ambitious and that UEB input would be critical to its
 effectiveness. This was agreed.
- Colin Hughes asked if engagement with other organisations had been helpful for this programme. Ian Blachford
 confirmed that discussions in other organisations where similar programmes had begun to be implemented had been
 enlightening. Vikki Goddard, the Consultant for the project was well networked and others were now engaging with
 other companies and instutions for further reconnaissance.

There were no further comments, and the report was noted.





- The HR and Organisational Development Annual Report 2022-23 (DISCUSSION) SR/23/23 was introduced for discussion by Chief Operating Officer Ian Blachford.
 - The annual report for HROD and outlines the latest annual position regarding the workforce and its developments.
 It should be noted that the information regarding the workforce has subsequently been impacted by the in-year financial challenges response and will be a feature of the next annual report.

Members and attendees commented as follows:

Kim Newell Chebator asked about the culture within the University following the response to in year financial challenges. Ian Blachford responded that the culture survey was last deployed in summer 2023. Since then, the financial stabilising exercise has taken place. Work was now underway, post the delivery of the savings, to rebase the culture survey and identify short and medium-term priorities for all areas of the university. A session on the theme of 'building back' was planned with the top 120 managers before sharing more widely with staff to commence this important piece of work.

There were no further comments and the report was noted.

H3 FOR INFORMATION

624 *Review of Organisational Structures and Staff Capability* SR/23/24

There were no comments, and the report was noted.

625 *Cost of Living Pay Award Update SR/23/25

The Current Position is that the latest UCEA pay round has commenced for the August 2024 pay award, with UCEA discussing their thoughts on the level of award with institutions. The unions have yet to submit their pay claims. The meetings between UCEA and the unions have yet to commence. We have indicated that we will not be opting into this year's collective approach, nor opting out, but retaining a view of these discussions, before committing, based on the university's financial position.

There were no comments, and the report was noted.

4 ADDITIONAL MATTERS

- 626 There were no Additional Matters.
- There were no items to be Referred to Audit and Risk Committee.
- 628 Items to be Referred to Board of Governors

Approval

- a) Minute 607 Proposed Disposal of Ex Crime Scene House BG/132/16
- b) Minute 608 District Heat Network (DHN) Heads of Terms for a Draft Agreement BG/132/17
- c) Minute 617 Finance Strategy Update BG/132/18

Information

e) Minute 620 – Implementation of the Consultation Proposal to Address the In Year Financial Position BG/132/22

629 **Next Meeting:** Wednesday 12th June 2024 (The Catalyst)