



## MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Friday 26 March 2021

Meeting held via Zoom

### MINUTES

**Present:** Jack Boyer (Chair), Hugh Brady (Vice-Chancellor, part-meeting), Madhu Bhabuta, Gillian Bowen, Andrew Carr, Jessica Cecil, Sheila Ellwood, Linda Fletcher, Nick Joicey, Jane Khawaja, Ore Odubiyi, Jason Palmer, Andy Poolman (Treasurer), Andreas Raffel, Mohammed Saddiq, Stephen Robertson, Judith Squires (Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) and Provost), Keith Syrett.

**In attendance:** Robert Kerse (Chief Operating Officer), Lucinda Parr (Registrar & University Secretary), Hannah Quinn (Clerk and Head of Governance).

**Apologies:** None

#### 1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2 The Chair noted that since the last Board of Trustees meeting, on 25 February, Kate Ashley (Professional Services Trustee) had left the University and therefore the Board of Trustees, effective from 19 March 2021. The Board of Trustees expressed thanks to thank Kate for her contributions to the Board since August 2018 and wished her well in her career beyond the University. The Nominations Committee would discuss next steps in the recruitment of a replacement.

1.3 The Chair noted the recent success of the planning application for the New University Library.

#### 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 NOTED that Jason Palmer has declared an interest in the COO report, specifically section 1, student tenancy management. He would not contribute to or vote on this item.

#### 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The minutes were APPROVED as a fair and accurate record of the Board of Trustees meetings of 5 and 12 February 2021, subject to minor changes.

#### 4 ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Noted the action register and that completed actions would be removed from the register.

4.2 AGREED to reinstate the action in relation to the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

4.3 AGREED that the Chief Operating Officer would pick up any questions about cultural assets and accounting policy outside of the meeting.

ACTION: Chief Operating Officer

#### 5 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT AND QUESTIONS

5.1 DISCUSSED the continuing impact of the pandemic, and recent developments.

## 5.2 The following items were NOTED

- 5.2.1 The remarkable achievements of students and staff over the year since the start of lockdown including outstanding research developments, particularly in relation to Covid, the imminent REF submission and the healthy balance sheet of the institution. Developments in testing and working locally and nationally with partners to inform debate, policy and research. The encouraging vaccine success and the potential for a more normal experience in the academic year 2021/22.
- 5.2.2 The recent Kill the Bill protests which had been a difficult day for the city and the police. That there were student residences in the vicinity of the protests, however, there had been no harm to residents, no evacuation and no report of student misbehaviour. Plans for continued protests over the coming days and weeks.
- 5.2.3 Significant cuts to Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding as discussed at the Research Development Day. Wider research funding concerns in relation to funding of Horizon Europe from the UKRI budget, loss of EU funding, reduction in charity funding and reduced capacity of industrial partners. Lobbying efforts with the Russell Group (RG) to address these concerns.
- 5.2.4 The lack of government guidance to date about the return of students after the Spring vacation. The prospect of over recruitment from A Level grade inflation and efforts to prepare for this.
- 5.2.5 The USS pensions dispute, which was covered further in the COO Report (BT/20-21/053).
- 5.2.6 Engagement with the Students Union in relation to the NUS campaign on tuition fee rebates and joint efforts to lobby government for relief on loan interest, and vaccinations for overseas students.
- 5.2.7 The granting of planning approval for the New University Library, further to a difficult process, which would be covered further in the DVC Report (BT/20-21/054).
- 5.2.8 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests].**
- 5.2.9 Positive engagement from colleagues with the strategy refresh process.
- 5.2.10 Recent freedom of speech issues, and media attention. That the University continued to receive a significant volume of correspondence from interested third parties. A statement had been issued on the 16 March 2021 which recognised that this was a significant concern to the University community and had provoked very strong differing views.

5.3 Trustees expressed thanks to the Executive for their continued efforts over this difficult year.

## 6 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

6.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost introduced the item. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Global Engagement (Erik Lithander), the Director of Strategy, Planning and Change (Steve Chadwick) and the Head of Planning & Business Intelligence (Matt Shute) also attended, supported by a presentation.

### 6.2 The following points were NOTED

- 6.2.1 The process of developing the Green and White papers, further to consultation. The updated Strategy Refresh White Paper would then be discussed with the Executive in April and early May and then with staff, students and other stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees in May. The strategy document would then be iterated through University Executive Board and other senior committees before finally being approved by the Board at the November meeting.
- 6.2.2 The focus of the presentation would be on ranking, size and shape, with the commitment to regain our position as a top 50 research intensive University. That Bristol was in the top 100 in all the major global rankings but that over

the last five years had fallen fairly systematically in the rankings, consistent with the majority of Russell Group (RG) universities. Bristol had fallen by 15 places on average across the three main international league tables. Many Asian universities had improved their rankings dramatically in recent years and had also grown very fast. In terms of research intensity, Bristol was in the middle of the pack with an average income and 10<sup>th</sup> in the RG.

- 6.2.3 The distribution of the QS world top 50 institutions by size of student population. Although there were Universities smaller than Bristol in the top 50, these were small, specialist, mono-technics such as Caltech and MIT. A 'Global 10' benchmarking group had been established by removing small specialist institutions and institutions with vast endowment resources or government support, such as Harvard. This 'Global 10' represented the 10 universities in the QS top 50 that are most like Bristol.
- 6.2.4 The distribution of RG institutions ranked by size of the student population. Bristol was 14<sup>th</sup> out of 24 in terms of overall size and had grown fast. In terms of UK growth, only UCL, Liverpool, Exeter and Queen Mary had grown faster than Bristol.
- 6.2.5 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
- 6.2.6 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**. When compared to the RG, Bristol was between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and bottom quartile and all the RG institutions in the QS top 100, as well as the Global 10 institutions, had a higher percentage of international students than Bristol.
- 6.2.7 That Bristol had a high proportion of home students, with 65% home undergraduate students on regulated fees. That apart from a small inflationary uplift of £250, the home undergraduate tuition fee has been frozen and in real terms will be worth £1,200 less than it was when first introduced in 2012. Of that fee, approximately £1,000 is required to be spent on widening access and participation.
- 6.2.8 That PGR students were critical to a research-intensive university and that Bristol had a relatively small proportion. Significant attention was being given to how numbers could be maintained or increased when funding was becoming increasingly competitive with increasing requirements for internal match-funding.
- 6.2.9 The subject mix as compared to RG comparators. The percentage of academic activity in Social Sciences & Law had grown from 26% of the total to 31% but still represented a smaller percentage than the mean for RG peers. STEM disciplines represented a larger percentage of activity than the mean in the RG.
- 6.2.10 The degree to which the full economic cost of activities was recovered through income sources. International students generate a significant surplus; however, research is hardly ever funded at a rate which meets all of its costs. The cross-subsidy comes from international students, the vast majority of whom are in Social Sciences & Law, particularly the EFIM Schools.
- 6.2.11 It would be important to consider what approach to take with those areas of the University that require significant financial subsidy and are not performing particularly well academically.
- 6.2.12 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
- 6.2.13 Demographic trends which will increase the number of 18 year-olds, and the top six likely undergraduate and postgraduate subject growth areas.
- 6.2.14 That 16 of the 18 UK institutions in the QS Top 100 had named Business Schools offering MBAs or Executive Education programmes, with St Andrews and Bristol the only exceptions.
- 6.2.15 Key elements of the suggested strategy. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**

- 6.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 6.3.1 That the presentation had focussed on specific areas of the strategy, and future sessions would focus more on Education, with reference to blended learning and changing student behaviours. Different types of Education may allow for growth without impacting the physical campus footprint.
  - 6.3.2 The impact of the pandemic, particularly on the potential to leverage international students in future, and on PGR recruitment.
  - 6.3.3 The importance of elaborating the economic benefits to the City of increased student numbers.
  - 6.3.4 That the “global 10” benchmark was a benchmark which Bristol had developed, rather than being a recognised measure.
  - 6.3.5 The importance of considering the full spectrum of data when reviewing areas for growth or for shrinkage. The Executive displayed further slides with detailed heat maps of School performance, which allowed comparison against the RG and the sector. This was data that would stimulate thinking and discussion, and it was important to also consider trajectory, for example where Schools were seeing improvements in NSS scores. There were very few schools which both required significant subsidy and did not perform well across a range of metrics.
  - 6.3.6 The possibility of growing an endowment portfolio through philanthropic efforts.
  - 6.3.7 The time required for benefits to accrue from a Business School, and the competitive market. The Executive confirmed that this would require investment, and recent examples from other HEIs were being carefully considered.
  - 6.3.8 The soft limits imposed by the City of Bristol, and other restrictions on growth including the city infrastructure and accommodation.
  - 6.3.9 Developments in the international student market during the pandemic. That the recruitment position for 2020/21 was better than predicted, being one of only 5 RG institutions to grow both UG and PGT international student shares, and the only institution to grow an International Foundation Programme. While economic uncertainty and travel concerns persist, concerns have become more normalised. Applicants have shown less anxiety about online or blended education, and the UK has become more attractive as a destination due to the success of the vaccine roll out. Quarantine restrictions would likely remain into the Autumn but data indicated strong interest and demand for UK HE.
  - 6.3.10 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**. Whether this growth would impact the civic agenda, support NSS scores or impact student experience and EDI. The impact on the growing domestic demand due to the demographic of UK students. That the intention was to maintain tariffs for high quality students, and take forward the widening participation agenda within that.
  - 6.3.11 Whether there was any ability to use pricing to build financial margins in areas of strength, particularly reflecting the opinion of the market that the UK is safer than other destinations. It was confirmed that fees are reviewed each year, **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
  - 6.3.12 The importance of showing value for any fee increase in relation to student facilities and support.
  - 6.3.13 The research approach discussed at the Development Day, and the need to work in a direction which emphasised strength whilst retaining the agility and flexibility to be able to change to meet new priorities.
- 6.4 The DVC & Provost thanked Trustees for their engagement and helpful questions.

## **7 DIGITAL STRATEGY REPORT (reference BT/20-21/0047)**

7.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Office introduced the item. The Chief Information Officer (Keith Woolley) was in attendance for this item, supported by a presentation.

7.2 The following points were NOTED

7.2.1 The focus of the Digital Strategy on modernising infrastructure, and enhancing the staff and student experience. That there were two programmes of work being delivered over four years, which would result in the ability to support complex research, enable collaboration and improve digital equity.

7.2.2 Progress so far, which included the design of a governance framework with external assistance from Deloitte LLP, the creation and delivery of a Technical Assurance Framework, the engagement of communication and student voice roles within the programme and the approval of three mobilisation business cases, namely Modern Network, Identify and Access Management and Data Management. The co-creation of the Next Generation Data Centre with the academic community.

7.2.3 Work required to transform the IT Services Division, which was on track. The improvement in external benchmarking by Gartner which had showed significantly improved digital capabilities.

7.2.4 Developments in Cybersecurity and the increased risk profile of the HE sector, particularly in relation to research work on Covid. Significant action had been taken to manage this risk.

7.2.5 The intention to continue bringing together academics, students and professional services colleagues to define and deliver against the programme.

7.3 The following points were DISCUSSED

7.3.1 Whether there were any particular problem areas or stakeholder groups. The CIO confirmed that the programme had seen good engagement and had taken a co-creation approach. Although there was initial scepticism, this had been addressed by inviting staff into the design process and the Division was now seen as an important enabler.

7.3.2 That the programme was back on track further to a hiatus before Christmas to support the lockdown. Additional effort had been employed to ensure overall delivery was where it needed to be. Greater than anticipated progress had been made in relation to the transformation of the team, with a significant culture change underway. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) would provide an update on Figure 1.

ACTION: CIO

7.3.3 Challenges to the delivery of the strategy. The CIO noted the volatile external environment and ongoing uncertainty which resulted in the need to be responsive. The significant challenges in relation to cybersecurity which were being monitored and managed.

7.3.4 The two Key University Risks in relation to cybersecurity and disaster recovery which continued to be rated red. The CIO noted that the impact was still high and, although progress had been made, this had to be balanced with the threat level to the sector. Ransomware was a particular growing risk for the HE sector and other institutions have had to invest significantly to recover from ransomware positions.

7.4 The Vice-Chancellor noted thanks to the CIO and his team, and confirmed the high quality academic partnership that had developed through the transformation of the Division.

## **8 CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNISATION (reference BT/20-21/048)**

8.1 RECEIVED the additional pack. The Registrar & University Secretary introduced the item.

- 8.2 APPROVED by Special Resolution, subject to Privy Council resolution, the following resolution:
- 8.2.1 The amendment of the existing Charter of the University by adopting, subject to an Order in Council, the provisions of the draft Charter attached at Appendix 1 as the Charter of the University in substitution for and to the exclusion of the provisions of the existing Charter which are capable of amendment by such Order, subject to any amendments which the Board considers to be expedient or necessary and/or which are required or recommended by the Privy Council.
- 8.3 APPROVED minor drafting changes to the Statutes, attached at Appendix 3, which the Board of Trustees considered to be expedient or necessary. The changes allowed for the establishment of working groups of the Board of Trustees which do not require terms of reference to be described in Ordinance, and working groups of Senate which do not require terms of reference to be described in Academic Regulations.
- 8.4 APPROVED an amendment to the Ordinances (Appendix Four) that the drafting of Ordinance 2, section 14.3 be amended to refer to the requirements of the CUC Code of Practice, rather than specifying a time interval.
- 8.5 DISCUSSED the responsibilities of the Board, as described in Ordinance 1, which were derived from the CUC Code and the requirements to ensure that proper books of account are kept.
- 8.6 NOTED that further feedback had been received in relation to Ordinance 4, Appendix 5 (the Terms of Reference for the Finance & Infrastructure Committee) which would be addressed after the meeting.
- Action: Head of Governance
- 8.7 APPROVED by Special Resolution the new Ordinances, attached at Appendix Four, with the exception of Ordinance 4, Appendix 5.
- 8.8 DELEGATED authority to the Chair of the Board to approve Ordinance 4, Appendix 5 outside of the meeting, on the recommendation of the Chair of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee, and correct any remaining minor drafting errors.
- 9 HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT (reference BT/20-21/049)**
- 9.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the item.
- 9.2 NOTED progress made in making health and safety business as usual and the outstanding achievements of the team in relation to the pandemic. Work was ongoing on property related health and safety issues with an action plan in place to comply with landlord responsibilities.
- 9.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 9.3.1 Adjustments required to support staff working from home. The team had carried out several thousand DSE assessments and made equipment available.
- 9.3.2 Fire safety particularly in relation to the Grenfell fire. The University had taken a prudent approach in relation to cladding and made changes to Clifton Hill House despite the cladding being legal.
- 9.3.3 What audit activity was carried out on the University's statutory health and safety requirements. It was confirmed that there were at least 7 primary sources of assurance including internal auditors, external consultants and audits from statutory bodies.
- 9.4 APPROVED the Health and Safety Annual Report 2019/20
- 10 TEMPLE QUARTER UPDATE REPORT (reference BT/20-21/050)**

- 10.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the item.
- 10.2 CONSIDERED the progression of TQEC-CM1 revised Scheme A and the TQEC-Sheds. The following points were NOTED:
- 10.2.1 That since the last update to the Board of Trustees, development of the programme had removed further Engineering related facilities, working to a revised brief based on relocations of research groups. This had allowed further simplification of the building, moving towards a brief that would cost less, be less risky to construct and could provide capacity for considerably more business and management type students.
- 10.2.2 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
- 10.2.3 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
- 10.2.4 **[REDACTED: information for future publication]**
- 10.2.5 A formal programme check in would be brought to the Board of Trustees in May 2021, and would consider the strengthening financial outlook for the institution alongside the cash position, grant permissions, and any developments from the Treasury.
- 10.2.6 Some concerns had been expressed in relation to the designation of part of the site as a conservation area and a meeting had been scheduled with the Mayor of Bristol to understand more.
- 10.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 10.3.1 The impacts of revised student number modelling on income and space. Some of the increase in student numbers reflected existing student numbers currently located on the Clifton Campus. That as well as consideration for a Business School, the change in student modelling reflected the intersection between Engineering, Social Sciences and innovation, and disciplines likely to attract funding. Space considerations included an element of blended learning assumptions, and the reduced requirements from removing Engineering students and non-core research. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
- 10.3.2 The level of risk within the programme, and the risk of not delivering additional space and a new learning and research environment. The revised plans provided for a space that was still better than that available on the Clifton campus, but adjustments could make it more efficient.
- 10.3.3 **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**
- 10.3.4 The remaining gap in funding if Treasury contributions were not forthcoming. The COO confirmed that options to cover this gap would be discussed at the May Board meeting.
- 11 KEY UNIVERSITY RISK REVIEW (reference BT/20-21/051)**
- 11.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Registrar & University Secretary introduced the item.
- 11.2 NOTED the University's risk profile and the controls in place to manage the Key University Risks. NOTED that there were now 9 key risks in the red zone, which were linked to ongoing Covid impacts. That the impact score for Student Wellbeing had increased to acknowledge the demand for services and capacity to deliver them.
- 11.3 NOTED that the paper was intended as a light-touch exceptions update reflecting the situation at the time of writing, and that the risk environment is changing very rapidly.
- 11.4 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 11.4.1 The Temple Quarter risk, which was reviewed monthly. It was noted that this was the overall risk rating and further detail on project risks was included in the Temple Quarter report.
- 11.4.2 The increased score for the Student Wellbeing risk, and how longer term impacts of the pandemic would be considered, alongside specific impacts for students from liberation backgrounds. The Registrar & University Secretary confirmed that the impacts on different student groups had been considered

through focussed staff training and development, and was embedded in the risk assessment process. In relation to longer term impacts, it was likely that demand, complexity and investment would grow. Critical posts had been approved and longer term planning was being developed in collaboration with students.

- 11.4.3 That Industrial Action was an emerging risk, with potential for increase alongside the return to campus. Risk 7B, Pensions, would be picked up in the COO report.
- 11.5 CONSIDERED the overall level of risk and ACCEPTED the Risk Profile as presented, whilst acknowledging that this is outside the normal risk tolerance.
- 12 CHAIR'S REPORT (reference BT/20-21/052)**
- 12.1 RECEIVED the Report. The Chair of the Board of Trustees introduced the item.
- 12.2 NOTED the update from the initial meeting of the Effectiveness Steering Group.
- 12.3 ORDERED the Vice-Chancellor to enact Ordinance 17 for a further 12 months. This would be reviewed by the Board no later than Spring 2022.
- 12.4 NOTED the decisions taken between meetings.
- 13 COO UPDATE REPORT (reference BT/20-21/053)**
- 13.1 RECEIVED the report. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report.
- 13.2 CONSIDERED the financial performance for the 7 months ended 28 February 2021, including whether management is taking appropriate action to address areas of underperformance (Section 1.0 & Appendix 1). The following points were NOTED:
- 13.2.1 High levels of student fee and accommodation debt and positive impacts from telephone contact with students over the last three weeks. Students with tuition fee debt are restricted from progressing and graduating and work was underway with the Students Union to improve student awareness of debt processes. In a non-pandemic year, debt collection efforts would have progressed further by this point, however a reasonable approach was being employed. No eviction notices were being issued in relation to accommodation debt. After 10 June 2021, external debt collection methods would be engaged.
- 13.2.2 That the forecast for contingency had been downgraded to £5m, but had not been released for spend. There was still potential for further student rent rebates after Easter.
- 13.2.3 The proposed approach to student accommodation tenancy management as set out at 1.7 and the response provided from the Students Union.
- 13.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 13.3.1 The likely reasons behind the student debt situation, and the establishment of a working group to consider relevant processes. It was considered likely that students not being on campus meant that they were less exposed to some of the informal interactions with staff, and felt less obligation to respond to email communications. There were a further 800 students actively withholding rent as a form of strike action. Further updates would be provided via the COO report.
- ACTION: COO
- 13.4 APPROVED the proposal for student accommodation tenancy management for the remainder of the year set out in paragraph 1.17 (Section 1.0).
- 13.5 APPROVED the letter of support for the Research Foundation Limited attached at Appendix 2 and authorised the COO to sign it on the University's behalf (paragraphs 1.9 – 1.11).



- 13.6 CONSIDERED the latest developments and potential outcomes from the USS 2020 valuation (Section 2.0). The following points were NOTED:
- 13.6.1 The recent email update provided to Trustees and the substantial risk due to the position taken by the USS trustee and the lack of additional employer covenant support provided to date, which have resulted in an unfavourable valuation. The resultant risk of Industrial Action. That the Vice-Chancellor and the COO had met with representatives of the pension scheme, and written to the USS Trustee.
- 13.6.2 The over-prudent position taken by the USS Trustee which was not affordable for employers. Bristol had made provision for a higher contribution rate, but was in the minority in the sector. There was some hope for a compromise but it was likely to still be higher than most employers wanted to pay. That UCU had taken a position of no detriment on behalf of their members.
- 13.7 The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 13.7.1 The prospect of disregarding this valuation and moving directly to the March 2021 valuation. That the VC had pressed hard for this outcome but there was no indication it was being considered.
- 13.7.2 The challenge of working with 340 employers of different shapes and sizes, with varying willingness to pay increased contributions.
- 13.7.3 Equity for junior members of the scheme, who were less able to afford contributions with a national rate of 1 in 6 junior members leaving the scheme, however, the local rate was better, partly attributed to Union clarity on the value of pensions.
- 13.7.4 Concern for employers leaving the pension scheme. Scheme rules prevented employers leaving until the valuation was agreed, but this was not an actual moratorium. Employers can still leave with the USS Trustee's consent.
- 13.8 The Chair NOTED the recent success of the planning application in relation to the New University Library. The COO commended the excellent work undertaken, and thanked students who had spoken at the Planning Committee. **[REDACTED: likely to prejudice commercial interests]**. Trustees DISCUSSED the potential timeline for delivery of the Library, and interaction with the Temple Quarter timeline. Previous Board of Trustees agreement was to minimise the risk of exposure associated with simultaneous delivery of two significant capital programmes. It was confirmed that planning permission allows three years to start development and the Board of Trustees would be consulted on timelines.

#### **14 DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PROVOST'S REPORT (reference BT/20-21/054)**

- 14.1 RECEIVED the report. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost introduced the report.
- 14.2 NOTED the Gender & Ethnicity Pay Gap reports. The following points were DISCUSSED:
- 14.2.1 That progress has been made, but that there was still more to do. That an intersectional approach had been applied and impact was anticipated from the new development programmes including Elevate, Diversify & Excel. Further information on these programmes would be shared with Trustees.
- ACTION: DVC & Provost
- 14.2.2 The need to address initiatives to management and senior staff, and address representation on Committees and other groups. The Executive confirmed that targeted initiatives were under consideration for professional services career development, and ethnically diverse appointments at senior levels.
- 14.2.3 That feedback from the Female Leadership Initiative and other gender related initiatives had been very positive. That the institution was earlier on the journey in relation to ethnicity, however there were active staff and student BME networks and the creation of the Anti Racism Steering Group had been well received.

- 14.3 NOTED developments to address excess workload which had been developed with UCU including a list of actions which could be stopped or paused and a review of the workload framework integrated into the planning process. Benchmarking of staff student ratios had resulted in some additional appointments.
- 14.4 NOTED thanks to Tim Peters, Paddy Ireland and colleagues in RED for the fantastic achievement in preparing for the REF submission. **[REDACTED: information for future publication]** It would be difficult to predict outcomes and was likely that the results of the Russell Group would be compressed due to the change of rules around selection of outputs.
- 14.5 NOTED plans to return to blended learning after the Spring vacation subject to government and PHE advice.

## **15 REGISTRAR'S REPORT (reference BT/20-21/055)**

- 15.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Registrar & University Secretary introduced the item.
- 15.2 The following points were NOTED:
- 15.2.1 Work with the Scientific Advisory Group and Public Health England to plan for the next academic year, maintaining the joint risk assessment process.
  - 15.2.2 That the Student Experience programme was making good progress, embedding the student voice within the programme, co-creating and co-designing processes. Further development of the Student App was also underway to provide personalised content and information.
  - 15.2.3 That student recruitment was looking positive and that a cautious approach was being taken to areas at high risk of overshoot.
- 15.3 The following points were DISCUSSED
- 15.3.1 The variation in the student journey resulting from a blended learning approach and how that was being captured. The Executive confirmed that mapping had been undertaken with different types of student groups and this was being reviewed to pick up on pandemic changes. Key processes were being considered with staff and students.
  - 15.3.2 Community relations, particularly in response to students returning to campus. The Executive confirmed that a meeting had been held with stakeholder groups and concerns were not specific to students. That it was important to recognise the contribution of our students to the City, to maintain engagement and dialogue with stakeholders.
  - 15.3.3 Plans for managing undergraduate recruitment and lessons learned from the previous year. It was confirmed that a very detailed offer making strategy was in place, and there was clarity of which programmes might be at risk of over recruitment. A cautious approach was being taken, in communication with Schools.
  - 15.3.4 That Andrew Monk had been appointed as Director of Development & Alumni Relations further to a period as Acting Head of the service.

## **16 CHAIR OF THE BOARD REAPPOINTMENT (reference BT/20-21/056)**

- 16.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair left the meeting and the Deputy Chair introduced the item.
- 16.2 The Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees NOTED the consistent feedback he had received from the members of the Board of Trustees and the Executive noting, in particular that the Chair had been effective and committed over the last 3 years and had demonstrated a collegiate approach.
- 16.3 ELECTED Jack Boyer as Chair to the Board of Trustees for a second 3-year term from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024, on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee.

**17 REPORT FROM THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (reference BT/20-21/045)**

17.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair introduced the item.

17.2 NOTED the report of the Nominations Committee.

17.3 NOTED that on 5 March 2021, the Chair of the Board approved the following via Chair's powers to take decisions between meetings conferred by Ordinance 3.

17.3.1 The reappointment of Michael Pearson as the Staff Representative on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for a second year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

17.3.2 The appointment of Margaret Simmons-Bird as the Co-opted External Advisor on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for an initial year from 8 March 2021 to 31 March 2022

**18 REPORT FROM THE FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE (reference BT/20-21/058)**

18.1 RECEIVED the paper. The Chair of the Committee (Andreas Raffel) introduced the item.

18.2 NOTED the report of the Finance & Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 11 February 2021.

18.3 NOTED that the Chair of the Committee would respond to further questions outside the meeting.

**19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

19.1 It was AGREED to invite Jason Palmer and Ore Odubiyi to meet the Board in person, when physical meetings resume, even if this exceeded their term of office.

**20 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 27 May 2021.**