

BOARD OF GOVERNORSMinutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018

Present

Clive Edwards	Independent member	Chair of the Board
Lesley Munro		Clerk to the Board
Martin Ainscough	Independent member	
Paul Aplin	Academic staff member	Elected
Roy Bayfield	Support Staff member	Elected
Joe Bradford	Student member	Students' Union President
Julian Bucknall	Independent member	
John Cater	Vice-Chancellor	Ex-officio
Graeme Collinge	Independent member	Chair: Resources Committee
Christine Donnelly	Independent member	
Clive Elliott	Independent member	
Rob Green	Independent member	
Lisa Greenhalgh	Independent member	Deputy Chair & Chair: Audit
Luke Myer	Student member	
Tony Rankin	Independent member	
Louise Robinson	Independent member	
Mike Rush	Independent member	
George Talbot	Academic staff member	Academic Board nominee

In attendance

Mark Allanson	PVC (External Relations)
Clare Austin	Associate Dean of Health and Social Care & Interim Director of the Medical School (for presentation on the Medical School)
Lynda Brady	PVC (Student Experience) & University Secretary
Seth Crofts	PVC Dean of Health and Social Care (for presentation on the Medical School)
Steve Igoe	Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Apologies

There were no apologies

The Chair welcomed Joe Bradford and Luke Myer, student governors, to their first meeting as full members.

BG.17.111 Establishment of the Edge Hill Medical School

(Copies of presentation slides circulated after the meeting and included in the minute book)

The PVC Dean of Health and Social Care introduced the presentation highlighting the importance of the development of the new Medical School which would change the shape and nature of the Faculty whilst complementing current provision in Nursing, Midwifery and other professions allied to medicine. He emphasised the potential for sharing resources, especially in relation to current postgraduate work, and the increased impetus for the further growth of new programmes and partnerships. Noting that the Edge Hill bid had accentuated widening access to the profession and the ethos of patient-centred care, the PVC Dean of Health and Social Care highlighted the strong support received from partners. Faculty members were particularly enthusiastic to demonstrate proof of concept for this new approach. The underpinning curriculum, whilst developed by Edge Hill, incorporated the necessary common scientific base and was matched to allow the transfer of students to the sponsoring provider (University of Liverpool) – a requirement for any new medical school provider in order to protect student interests.

The Associate Dean of Health and Social Care and Interim Director of the Medical School outlined the process behind the bid for the Medical School and the implications for the Faculty and the University resulting from the award. She highlighted the following points:

- Discussions about the potential to establish a Medical School had been ongoing for some time recognising that many of the necessary building blocks in terms of staff, complementary programmes and external relationships were in place;
- Consideration had been given to a private venture but the preferred route had always been through Department of Health/Health Education England (DoH/HEE) funding with a rare opportunity to bid for places coming available in October 2016;
- The focus for bids was on meeting future workforce needs, especially in shortage areas, with a priority emphasis on widening participation which fitted the University's strengths and ethos in extending representation within the medical profession and delivering new models of care tailored to the particular needs of the North West region;

- Support for the bid from external organisations and partners had been very heartening, providing recognition of the University's reputation in the field and, importantly, the University of Liverpool agreed to act as the required contingency school seeing Edge Hill's bid as complementary rather than competitive;
- Following notification of success in March 2018, the University would be establishing a Widening Access programme to run from September 2018 with a Foundation Year starting in September 2019 and the first full intake scheduled for September 2020.
- Initial numbers were small at 30 students providing an opportunity to test the model and develop provision at a realistic pace;
- The Medical School would encompass existing postgraduate provision and incorporate the new Physician Associate programme;
- Whilst some additional costs would be incurred in terms of staffing and clinical skills resources, the availability of the LINC building (suitably refurbished) and the potential for sharing resources kept these to a minimum with the Medical School expected to be returning a surplus from 2019/20;
- Work was ongoing in terms of curriculum development with a timeline in place for final validation through the General Medical Council planned for July 2019.

In discussion, members raised a number of questions:

- .01 *How would the widening participation element of the bid be delivered:* It was noted that the University would be working closely with schools to identify and support possible candidates through the Widening Access to Medicine programme. In addition, the Foundation Year provided an opportunity to recruit students at slightly lower 'A' level grades where there was demonstrable potential and the Faculty would be using contextual data to support the admissions process;
- .02 *The level of additional staff investment required:* It was noted that the Faculty already employed staff with clinical skills through existing postgraduate programmes and had expertise in many of the necessary areas such as pharmacology through nurse prescribing provision. Some additional staffing would be required

however with fractional appointments commonly used to enhance clinical skills provision;

- .03 *What is the Physician Associate programme:* It was reported that this was a growth area in the sector. Physician associates work under the direct supervision of a doctor and carry out many similar tasks, including patient examination, diagnosis and treatment. The University had been awarded 30 places to train Physician Associates on a two year programme for life sciences graduates with some healthcare experience;
- .04 *The depth of the relationships with organisations declaring support:* It was reported that relationships with existing partners were strong and had been built up over many years. The bid to establish the Medical School had attracted much wider support however from a range of organisations interested in a new approach. This presented the Faculty with exciting possibilities in terms of new collaborations;
- .05 *The potential for international recruitment:* It was reported that, whilst international recruitment on the undergraduate programme was possible, the priority was to recruit to the 30 funded DoH/HEE places and that this was also the limit agreed with the University of Liverpool. Once the University had obtained its own licence (2025) it would be possible to explore the potential for international recruitment. The Vice-Chancellor pointed out that the University's postgraduate programme run with Wrightington Wigan and Leigh hospital was a largely international programme and that the Physician Associate programme was also likely to attract international applicants;
- .06 *Was investment appropriately recognised in the University's budget proposal:* The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that all provisions had been incorporated including equipment which would be depreciated at the appropriate rate.

Concluding discussion, the Chair thanked the PVC Dean of Health and Social Care and the Associate Dean and Interim Director of the Medical School for their informative presentation and members welcomed the efforts of the wider team in securing this important opportunity for the University.

BG.17.112 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest specific to the meeting.

BG.17.113 Chair's Announcements

.01 Graduation Ceremonies

The Chair thanked members for their support for the upcoming graduation ceremonies and indicated that it was still possible to book tickets if required.

BG.17.114 Chair's Action

There was no Chair's Action to report

BG.17.115 Minutes of the previous meeting

Received: Document BG/075/17

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

BG.17.116 Action Log

In noting the actions arising from the previous meetings, the Clerk reported that all had been implemented with a note that the International Strategy and development of the next Strategic Plan remained active as future agenda items.

The Action Log was **received**.

BG.17.117 Matters arising not included elsewhere on the agenda

There were no matters arising.

SECTION A ITEMS

BG.17.118 Minutes of Committees

.01 Audit Committee (4 June 2018)

Received: Document BG/077/17

The Chair of Audit introduced the minutes drawing attention to the following items:

- Progress on the completion of recommendations arising from the PwC Faculty Assurance Review and the HAR Action Plan;
- Three sound audit reports which were all classified as low risk;
- Approval of the External Audit Plan;
- Approval of an interim Incident Reporting procedure and revised Whistleblowing policy;
- Good progress with respect to GDPR implementation;
- A recommendation to the Board to approve a revised Scheme of Delegation.

In response to a member's question in relation to the discussion concerning one of the recommendations emanating from the PwC Faculty Review, it was noted that there had been a robust exchange of views at the meeting and that the committee had agreed a number of actions for further report before finalising the position.

.01 Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk introduced the Scheme of Delegation noting that this was subject to annual revision. The exercise this year had been on a larger scale given the approval of new Financial Regulations, recognition of the transfer of regulatory powers from HEFCE to OfS, a major review of governance procedures and committee Terms of Reference and observations made in the HAR report. She highlighted the importance of the scheme which was based on foundation documents such as the Instrument and Articles of Government and set out the locus of authority for decision-making and any agreed delegations.

Whilst many of the changes had been in relation to technical referencing, the Clerk drew attention to three new provisions which proposed the Vice-Chancellor as the responsible officer in relation to ongoing OfS registration requirements; the specific responsibility of the

Audit Committee in approving and monitoring the University's Whistleblowing policy and the Board of Governors as the approval body for tender waiver proposals (a derogation from the Financial Regulations) above £250,000 with delegated authority to the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Finance for lower value tenders. The transfer of authority for the approval of Financial Regulations from the Resources Committee to the Audit Committee was also noted.

In response to a member's question concerning the HAR observation that the Board retained ultimate responsibility for any decision taken on its behalf, it was noted that this was referenced at the end of the document.

Noting the detailed discussion undertaken at Audit Committee and the positive recommendation, **the Board RESOLVED to approve the revised Scheme of Delegation.**

Action: Clerk/Executive

Responding to a member's query with respect to progress on the University's registration submission to OfS , it was noted a decision was anticipated in July but that no response had yet been received.

The Audit Committee minutes were received.

.02 Resources Committee (18 June 2018)

Received: Document BG/078/17

The Chair of Resources introduced the minutes drawing attention to the following items:

- The late mid-year reforecast which showed a further upturn in the projected surplus to £17,073 million;
- Approval of the revised Financial Regulations following a quinquennial review noting that these provided a solid framework;
- Receipt of the Gender Pay Report noting the gender pay gap which, whilst it compared well with the sector, indicated there was still work to do;
- Receipt of the Students' Union Budget for 2018/19 which identified some significant challenges following a difficult year in 2017/18;

- A recommendation to the Board to approve the proposed Operating Budget for the University for 2018/19 – a matter for separate discussion later in the agenda.

With respect to the Gender Pay Report, the Vice-Chancellor noted that this was not an issue about equal pay but related to the fact that a larger number of the female workforce were in lower paid jobs.

The impact of the possible reduction in the block grant to the Students' Union was raised but it was noted that this was formula driven and reflected the lower number of students recruited in 2017/18. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor highlighted that the University had made a conscious decision not lower the quality of student intakes simply to make up numbers and that any consequent reduction to the Students' Union block grant was an unfortunate by-product.

In response to a member's question concerning staff reductions (minute RE.17.057.03) and the potential impact on the delivery of teaching, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor indicated that posts were only disestablished in areas where student numbers had shown a consistent fall. The University remained committed to funding new posts in areas of growth and development.

The Resources Committee minutes were received.

.03 Nominations Committee (18 June 2018)

Received: Document BG/079/17

The Chair introduced the minutes drawing attention to the following items:

- Agreement of a shortlist from applications for independent governor vacancies (*Clerk's note: summary details subsequently circulated to independent governors for information*). It was noted that recommended appointments would be brought to the September board meeting for approval;
- A recommendation for the Board to approve revised governance procedures and Terms of Reference following a major review;
- Recommendations in relation to the Clerk's appointment.

.01 *Review of Procedures and Committee Terms of Reference*

The Clerk introduced the documentation noting that this was a planned review which incorporated benchmarking and general updating as well as responding to comments made in the HAR. There had been a full and detailed discussion at Nominations Committee as noted in the minutes. She highlighted the following major changes which had been recommended:

- *Attendance requirement:* It was proposed to introduce an attendance requirement for individual members of the Board set at 60% for meetings and that, where attendance fell below this level, continued eligibility for membership would need to be considered. Provision had also been made for members to seek approved leave of absence for a specified period. Any such period would not be included in calculating attendance levels;
- *Fit and Proper Person:* The OfS Fit and Proper Person requirements to be incorporated in the appointment procedures and Governor Role Descriptor;
- *Constitution:* Incorporation of a full articulation of the Board's constitution within the appointment process and procedures;
- *Department Link Governor Scheme:* Official recognition of the scheme as a means for governors to enhance their knowledge and understanding of a particular area of the University;
- *Complaints procedure:* Incorporation of provision for a case review process;
- *Board authority:* Clarification that whilst committees, panel and working groups exercise their responsibilities in line with their terms of reference, it was the Board's prerogative to re-open or re-evaluate any decision as it saw fit;
- *Statement of Primary Responsibilities:* Amendments to ensure all aspects covered in the CUC Model Statement were fully incorporated;
- *Nominations Committee:* Major changes were proposed to formally incorporate the committee's advisory role in the

development and review of governance process and procedures with a change of name proposed to the 'Governance and Nominations Committee'. This was in line with recommended practice.

In response to a member's question concerning the operation of the link governor scheme, it was noted that attachments would be for a limited period (one year) and were primarily to enhance governors' knowledge and understanding. The scheme also had the benefit of increasing governor visibility in the University but it was important to ensure it avoided becoming a lobbying mechanism.

The Board RESOLVED to approve the revised procedures and Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

Action: Clerk

.02 Clerk's Appointment

The Chair reported that the current Clerk's appointment was offered on an annual contract which terminated on 31 July 2018. Having given notice of her intention to retire, it was necessary to instigate procedures for the appointment of a successor. After consideration of the options, it was the committee's recommendation that applications should be sought from internal candidates in the first instance. In the interim, the current Clerk had indicated her willingness to serve for a further year in order to ensure a smooth handover.

The Board RESOLVED:

- 1. to approve an extension to the current Clerk's appointment to 31 July 2019; and**
- 2. to authorise Nominations Committee to instigate an internal application process to select a new Clerk who would assume full duties with effect from 1 August 2019 and to make a recommendation to the Board.**

Action: Chair

The Nominations Committee minutes were received.

.04 Remunerations Committee Report (Meetings held on 11 June and 9 July 2018)

Received: Document BG/080/17

The Chair of Remunerations Committee introduced the report from the 11 June meeting drawing attention to the following items:

- The voluntary election of the Vice-Chancellor to take a reduced salary and an associated recommendation to divert the savings to increase the Student Opportunity Fund;
- Approval for the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to accept a non-executive director appointment at an NHS Trust in the region with associated salary to be retained by the University;
- Agreement of Performance Review arrangements for Governor appointees (attached for information);
- Progress on the development of a University Framework for Pay and Reward (paper attached for information);
- A recommendation to the Board to adopt the CUC Remuneration Code noting that this provided a national framework which supported the consideration of fair and appropriate remuneration.

The Board RESOLVED:

- 1. To adopt the CUC Remuneration Code;**

Action: Clerk

and

- 2. To recommend that the savings from the Vice-Chancellor's election to take a reduced salary should be used to increase the amount available through the Student Opportunity Fund.**

Action: Vice-Chancellor

In relation to the meeting held earlier in the day, the Chair of Remunerations Committee reported that decisions had been taken with respect to the overall envelope available for the pay and reward of staff on management and professorial contracts. The pay and reward for Governor appointees had also been determined having regard to performance review outcomes and benchmarking data, with new

objectives set for each appointee for 2018/19. A full report from this meeting would be made in September.

The report from Remunerations committee was received.

BG.17.119 Report from the WLBC Forum

Noting that the minutes from the last meeting were not yet available, the Vice-Chancellor reported that an update on the University's position with respect to recruitment and progress on approved capital projects had been given. Council members had provided an update on a possible joint venture with a commercial partner to develop the bus station area with the inclusion of some residential accommodation.

The report from the WLBC Forum was received.

BG.17.120 Code of Governance: Compliance Analysis

Received: Document BG/081/17

The Clerk introduced this report noting that a gap analysis had been undertaken at the time the CUC HE Governance Code was initially published to identify any areas for development in order to ensure compliance. A further report was made to the Board a year later following up on identified actions. It was noted that the Board Effectiveness Review carried out by the LFHE which reported in September 2016 had confirmed the University's compliance with the Code. The report to this meeting had been prepared as a further update to provide assurance that compliance had been maintained. It highlighted additional evidence of compliance and reflected observations made in the HAR as well as other general changes since the first analysis was undertaken.

In addition to updating, the Clerk drew attention to a new clause in the Code which related to the operation of Remuneration Committees following the publication of the CUC Remuneration Code. It was noted that the Terms of Reference of the Remunerations Committee had been revised and approved by the Board last year, in advance of the Code, and already reflected the new approach.

Concluding, the Clerk indicated that the Board could take assurance from the report that compliance with the Code had been maintained.

In receiving the report, and for clarity, **the Board RESOLVED to minute its formal adoption of the CUC HE Governance Code.**

Action: Clerk

BG.17.121 Revised Students' Union Code of Practice

Received: Document BG/082/17

The Clerk introduced the Code noting that this document set out the relationship between the Students' Union and the University and was updated on an annual basis. Whilst this year had seen a more substantial review in consultation with the Students' Union, there were no major changes of principle. It was noted that provision had been included in relation to the General Data Protection Regulation with respect to the Data Sharing agreement between the Students' Union and the University.

In response to a request from a student governor, it was agreed to amend the wording in paragraph 15.3 from 'him/her' to 'them' in order to be more inclusive.

Subject to the change noted above, **the Board RESOLVED to approve the revised Students' Union Code of Practice.**

Action: Clerk/President of the Students' Union

SECTION B ITEMS

BG.17.122 Edge Hill University and its subsidiaries: Operating Budget 2018/19

Received: Document BG/083/17

The Chair of Resources introduced the budget noting the projected surplus was significantly down on the 18/19 outturn at £10.1 million reflecting the drop in revenue from successive reduced student intakes. In addition, tuition fee rates were static. He noted that, whilst operating expenses were tightly controlled, this scenario placed more pressure on the management of staff costs. Even so, the operating surplus was still comfortable and would be within the upper levels of HEI performance.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor acknowledged a more challenging environment with respect to staff costs and the need for disinvestment in areas of reduced activity. He drew attention to the termination of the Every Child Counts (ECC) programme as an example which would result in a loss of income but also provided for associated staff cost savings. Nevertheless, it was essential that the University continued to invest in areas of growth such as the Medical School. Importantly, he highlighted that the cash position remained strong and would support completion of the planned building programme with growing cash balances forecast.

Attention was drawn to the assurance which could be taken from the sensitivity analysis which had been subject to a rigorous assessment and presented a robust but realistic picture.

A member observed that, whilst the situation for next year was secure, close management would be needed to ensure the University was in the best position to withstand the challenges for the following two years with further income reductions forecast. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor indicated that staff costs were regularly scrutinised through the regular meetings with budget-holders and new posts were subject to specific approval from the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor pointed to challenges posed to planning given the uncertainties of government policy highlighting that the expectation of an inflation-based tuition fee rise (an option recently withdrawn) had not been included in budget assumptions.

Noting the more challenging environment and taking account of the detailed discussions and positive recommendation from Resources Committee, **the Board RESOLVED to approve the 2018/19 operating budget for the University and its subsidiaries as presented.**

Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

BG.17.123 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: Document BG/084/17

The Vice-Chancellor introduced his report which set out the context underpinning the University's position of comparative strength since

designation in 2008. Looking forward, he drew attention to the following points:

- The importance of the award of the Medical School in enhancing the reputation of the University and in offering new opportunities for development;
- The continued success in achieving prestigious national awards across many Services and Departments with the University currently awaiting the announcement of the Global Teaching Excellence Award where Edge Hill was one of just seventeen universities drawn from across five continents to be nominated;
- Further improvements in relation to employment data on graduating students both in terms of the number of students in work or further study and particularly the number in graduate level jobs;
- The outcome of NSS results due later in the month and the importance of restoring the University's comparative position in this exercise which had slipped last year as methodological changes were introduced;
- The need to continue to drive up retention rates and ensure that each student gained the maximum benefit from studying here;
- The outcome of the first LEO (Longitudinal Educational/ Employment/Earnings Outcomes) data analysis which was something of an unknown but would reflect the fact that many of the University's graduates chose to work in the region where salaries were generally at a lower level.

Concluding his report, the Vice-Chancellor indicated that the government's post 18 review, currently in its consultative phase, could throw up further challenges and opportunities.

The Vice-Chancellor's report was received.

BG.17.124 Students' Union Report

Received: Document BG/085/17

The Vice President (Academic Representation) of the Students' Union introduced the report which specifically related to a survey on student

perspectives of Value for Money at the University. It was noted that this had been a national initiative. The results of the survey indicated that, overall, students at Edge Hill felt they received less Value for Money from their tuition fee than the average. In response to a member's question concerning any action taken by the Students' Union in the light of the results, it was noted that the report had been prepared for information and consideration by the University.

Responding to some of the issues raised in the report, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) indicated that the University had a very positive message in relation to Value for Money but that this needed to be articulated more explicitly. She also reported that the Academic Quality Unit was currently undertaking an audit of contact time (a key issue for students) to ensure all the relevant data was being captured.

A further question was raised by a member in terms of the University's communication strategy to raise awareness of the University's Value for Money proposition amongst the student body and it was noted that the Director of Corporate Communications was leading a project to identify student insights through engagement. This would also help to better target students who might not be making the most of the value-added opportunities available to them such as work placements.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that many students still perceived that they were paying a fee which affected their view on Value for Money and he highlighted the current repayment thresholds for student loans which put a different perspective on the issue.

Observing the importance of listening and responding to the student voice, members welcomed the report from the Students' Union and noted the actions being taken by the University.

BG.17.125 Financial Forecasts 2016/17 to 2022/23

Received: Documents BG/086/17

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the financial forecasts drawing attention to the following points:

- Direct comparisons with the budget were not possible because of differing calculation methodologies with respect to areas such as

staffing costs and pension provisions. He noted that all projections had been cautiously drawn;

- Further small surplus reductions were projected for the period, reflecting lower overall student numbers, with a new norm of between 3-5% of total revenue anticipated by 2022. This was more in line with sector performance than in previous years where significant surplus levels had positioned the University as an outlier;
- The position with respect to asset maintenance costs was currently being reviewed with the possibility of some transfer from capital to revenue;
- Cash balances were projected to grow steadily from £37 million at the end of 2017 to £50-£60 million by 2021 following completion of major capital spend programmes.

A member queried whether stress testing had been applied to areas of particular uncertainty and this was confirmed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

In response to a member's question as to whether the University was seeking to increase market share in relation to applications, it was noted that the University was working to widen its geographic recruitment base which had allowed the University to maintain, but not extend, its current position. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (External Affairs) indicated that there had been extensive work on data analysis to better target recruitment efforts as well as in relationship building and this would put the University in a strong position for the demographic upturn.

It was observed that the University held a particular resource in the number of ITT students placed in schools which could be used to advantage.

Concluding discussion, **the Board RESOLVED to approve the Financial Forecasts 2016/17 to 2022/23 for submission to the Office for Students.**

Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

BG.17.126 Capital Projects Update

Received: Document BG/087/17

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the report noting the successful completion of the new Catalyst building (toured by members prior to the meeting) with the exception of some final fit-out work. Phase 13 residences were due to complete in time for the start of the new academic year despite the pause in the programme to accommodate the examination period.

With reference to the tendering documentation for the refurbishment of the old library, a member observed that, whilst the analysis between bidders was sound, he was not convinced that 100% scores could ever be justified.

To note: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

The Board congratulated the team on the excellent standards achieved in the Catalyst building and **received** the Capital Projects Update report.

BG.17.127 Equality and Diversity: Annual Report
(Discussion taken earlier in the meeting)

Received: Document BG/088/17

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the document which presented an overview of the University's staff and student demographic composition in relation to key protected characteristics having regard to trends and benchmarks. The analysis identified any areas of significant variation, whether there were reasons for such variation and what action, if any, the University intended to take. He indicated that, whilst the analysis had not shown any areas of systematic bias, there were a number of areas to highlight:

- Both staff and student data showed an increase in reported mental health issues, mirroring a sector trend. In this regard, Student Services and Human Resources staff were working together to provide a holistic approach and a number of initiatives such as the 'Let Us Know' campaign and 'Wellbeing for All' programme were being supported. A new equality and diversity role had been identified in Human Resources;

- Whilst women were well represented in most senior academic roles, this was less the case in the professoriat. This issue was a prime focus of the Athena Swan Project Steering Group.
- Within the staff demographic there was some evidence of a reduction in the number of male and disabled applicants progressing to the shortlisting stage. Whilst this was not yet a matter for concern, it was an area identified for vigilance;
- Within the student demographic the recruitment, retention and attainment of BME students remained a challenging area although it was noted that recruitment was, in part, a geographic issue. The University had identified BME access and attainment, along with that of young white men from lower socio-economic backgrounds, as priority areas for action within the Access and Participation Plan submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OfFA) and was working with schools to seek to address this. In addition, all Faculties had been asked to produce student retention plans which considered protected characteristics.

Responding to a query from a student governor, the Director of Strategic Planning indicated that the service was able to undertake further, more detailed comparative analysis on any particular group and he would be happy to work with the Students' Union on any specific request.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that, because the numbers for several groups with protected characteristics were very small, graphical comparisons could sometimes be misleading in terms of overall impact and that it would be helpful to show absolute numbers in future reports.

Action: Director of Strategic Planning

Concluding discussion, the Chair thanked the Director of Strategic Planning for his clear and informative report.

BG.17.128 KPI Report

(Discussion taken earlier in the meeting)

Received: Document BG/089/17

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the report which was presented in the new style as previously approved by the Board. He

noted that there had been few changes since the last report with most indicators only updating on an annual basis. He drew attention to the following points:

- The reduction in applications as a result of a decline in market size and increased competition, especially in relation to the number of institutions making unconditional offers;
- A marginal reduction in conversion rates which, combined with the reduction in applications, was likely to lead to a reduced intake although this would be boosted by Fastrack students and Clearing activity. It was further noted that the University had determined to maintain academic quality in recruitment and was therefore planning on a slightly smaller institution size during the demographic downturn;
- Updated League Table positions with the University up one place in the Guardian table but down seven places in the Complete University Guide. These positions had been affected by the lower comparative position in last year's NSS;
- Research and International indicators set at amber although both of these were noted as areas 'in development' rather than as areas for concern.

In response to a member's question on the reason for the reduction in research income, it was noted that, whilst this had decreased marginally, the number of bid applications had increased. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) indicated that there was an improvement in research output and that an increase in publications should support a better success rate in grant applications.

In relation to the increase in staff turnover, another member suggested that it might be more fruitful to support staff retention initiatives than to rely on recruitment drives. The Director for Strategic Planning indicated that both activities were equally important. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that recruitment of key staff had become very competitive and there was a need for tailored recruitment packages in some instances.

The KPI report was received.

BG.17.129 Any other Business

There was no other business

SECTION C ITEMS

BG.17.130 Calendar 2018/19

Received: Document BG/090/17

The confirmed calendar of meetings for 2018/19 was received.

BG.17.131 Students' Union Budget 2018/19

Received: Document BG/091/17

The Students' Union budget for 2018/19 was received.

BG.17.132 Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 24 September 2018.