

Board of Governors Committee Minute

Meeting Details

Minute of the meeting held on 22 February 2024 (8.30am – 10.20am).

Present: Dr C Hunter (Convener), K Gifford (Vice-Convener), A Bannister, J Booth (remotely), Dr G Barron, A Campbell, M Clare, N Crawford, S Elston, P Innocent, Dr J Isaacs, M McGinlay, Professor R Marcella (remotely), P Murray, J Oshodi, Professor S Olivier, Professor N Seaton, J Strachan, T Walker (remotely) and E Walton.

Apologies: A Easton.

Executive: D Beaton, S Cameron, Dr D Cockburn, N Fyfe, L Kilbride, J Lindley, and V Strachan.

In Attendance: J Azeem (Clerk).

Declarations of Interest:

No additional interests were declared beyond those recorded in the Governors' profiles at <https://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/our-leadership/board-of-governors>

Item	Business	Action
	<p>CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS</p> <p>The Chair welcomed and thanked Board members for accommodating this interim update meeting prior to the March Board meeting. The focus of the meeting would be to discuss the financial position.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the new Director of Finance; Jeremy Lindley, to this first Board meeting.</p>	

The Chair then invited the Principal to give some background information on the financial position.

The Principal said the aim was to get back to surplus by 2025/26 – 3% surplus target. He outlined the various pressures on University business and finance including international recruitment and specific issues in Nigeria, changes in the government UKVI arrangements as well as operational pressures such as Inflation and increased pension costs. These issues were across the whole sector, with a number having a larger deficit than RGU.

The Finance Transformation Project (FTP) was an ambitious project with risk mitigation important. An overview of the key financial pressures and mitigations was provided

The proposed VS timeline will coincide with major restructure of the University.

There was a detailed discussion with Board members raising a range of questions around potential operational aspects of the scheme, not least around the teaching of courses and the student experience more generally, which would assist Executive in finalising the scheme with input from Thornton. It was agreed that Tricia Walker would meet further with Director of HR to provide further insight.

1. Sir Ian Wood Building deferral costs

It was noted that the defects did not increase the risk to life of building users and that the additional mitigation of patrols was for the protection of the asset. The tendering process for the work costs will continue as these costs will be used in the court case and a proposal will be taken to FGPC regarding potential deferral of the works due to the current financial position to assess risks and benefits.

2. VS Scheme – Board Approved

SGC had approved the scheme on 19 February 2024 although some refinement would be undertaken with advice from Thorntons. It was noted that decisions on VS would need Board approval at a certain level.

Board **approved** the VS scheme, noting the timeline open to further discussion/amendment.

3. Strategic Investment

On the recommendation of the Executive, the Board approved reducing the total level of approved research investment.

It was also agreed that Internationalisation/Diversification area needs investment in the diversification of its international student recruitment to enable the University to spread the risk of its student recruitment activity and noting the increased competition for international students, so investment in that activity was approved.

It was agreed that the other investment decisions would not now be progressed due to the financial position.

Communications: Actively aware of a need for communications. Discussions are confidential until further information is disseminated. The March Board will approve the direction and decisions.

C Hunter (C)
February 2024