Coventry University

Board of Governors
Wednesday, 15 February 2017
4.00pm in ABG20, Alan Berry Building, Priory Street, Coventry, CV1 5FB

Minutes
Document GM169

G169/1
Present:
Mr S Parker (Chair), Mr K Bissett (Deputy Chair), Mr N Crockett, Mr M Laverty, Mr A Majithia, Mr R Stockdale, Mr T Matthews, Prof J Norton, Ms M Plant, Ms J Hully, Dr V Cox, Ms F Secondino, Mr M Reeves, Mr A Enime, Prof J Latham (Vice-Chancellor)

In attendance:
Mr M Challoner (Clerk), Mr N Alcock (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor, Group Development and Resources), Mrs S Richardson (Group Chief Finance Officer)
Prof R Dashwood (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)) attended for Minute G169/5
Mr R Thompson (Director of Estates) and Mr R Talliss (Director of Estates Development) attended for Minute G169/7
Ms L Gearing (Director of Educational Strategies) attended for Minute G169/10

Apologies:
Mr A Adebiyi, Dr B Dhadda, Mr S Rogers, Ms J Cox, Mr G McKean,

G169/2
Declarations of Interest

Mr Parker declared an interest in Minute G169/9, Investment Proposal for the Centre for Applied Low-Carbon Propulsion Systems (C-ALPS) as a Senior Advisor to FEV Group GmbH. He left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Ms Plant declared an interest in Minute G169/10, Multi-Academy Trust. The Board considered the nature of the interest was such that Ms Plant should remain in the meeting during consideration of this item.

G169/3
Items from the Chair

None
G169/4
Confirmation of Minutes and Matters Arising

.1 The Minutes of the 167th meeting held on 28 November 2016 (Document GM167) and the Minutes of the Decision of the Board of Governors dated 26 January 2017 (Document GM168) were approved and signed as a correct record.

.2 The Chief Finance Officer reported that following the audit of the financial statements of those subsidiary companies which form part of Coventry University Group, the auditors had identified a number of issues associated with four of the companies. Whilst the issues identified were not sufficiently material to impact on the Group financial statements, these were currently in the process of being resolved in order that the accounts could be filed by the statutory deadline.

G169/5
Research Strategy: Refresh

.1 Consideration was given to a refresh of the Research Strategy presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Document G169/1) who attended for this item. The Strategy had been refreshed in the light of the University adopting the Corporate Plan 2021 and in respect to a recommendation arising from a report of the internal auditors.

.2 The Board considered the nature of the research targets in the Corporate Strategy 2021 and how they supported the University in developing its research capabilities and reputation. It was noted that whilst significant progress had been made against a number of the metrics, there remained a number of areas of improvement, particularly in terms of the processes necessary to support the delivery of the Research Strategy.

.3 Following consideration of the presentation the Board enquired whether the University was submitting bids to research sandpits and the methodology used to define the number of citations metric included in the Corporate Strategy. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) reported that whilst the University was submitting to sandpits, the number of bids submitted had declined. With regard to the number of citations, the Board was advised that this related to the number of times a citation was cited, rather than the quality of the journal.

.4 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor was asked whether he believed all of the research metrics within the Corporate Plan were achievable by 2021. He confirmed that the PhD completions was unlikely to be achieved given that the University did not haven’t sufficient numbers of PhD students coming through in order to meet the target. However, he believed all others targets were achievable.

.5 The Chair enquired whether the University would be seen in the sector as a research institution in the event that it achieved the research targets within the Corporate Plan. The
Deputy-Vice-Chancellor was of the opinion that should the University continue to focus on achieving a number of the true research targets, rather than simply those that were financially motivated, it would be seen a research institution in the future. He confirmed that the University was now winning a number of research bids which it had been unsuccessful in securing six months ago.

.6  **Resolved** that the refreshed Research Strategy be approved.

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The Board thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) for his helpful presentation following which he left the meeting.

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**G169/6**

**Corporate Strategy 2021 – Q1 Performance Report**

.1 Consideration was given to Corporate Strategy 2021 – Q1 Performance Report and the Vice Chancellor’s Board Update February 2017 presented by the Vice-Chancellor (Documents G169/2 and 2a).

.2 The Vice-Chancellor reported that the external environment continued to present a number of challenges and that the Group was unlikely to achieve the year end surplus target. Despite this there continued to be significant growth in student numbers against a backdrop of declining numbers across the sector. The University continued to focus on the student experience, transnational education and research.

.3 Following consideration of the report the Board sought clarification as to the capacity of the senior leadership team to deliver the ambitious Corporate Plan. The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had recently created the Group Leadership Team, consisting of the senior staff from within the University, Coventry University College, Coventry University London and Group Directors of major service functions. In addition, Executive Deans had been appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellors, with group-wide responsibilities, together with a number of Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor in order to provide additional capacity at a senior level. Academic Deans had also been appointed to back-fill the Executive Deans positions.

.4 In terms of project management capacity, the Board was advised that the Strategic Transformation Office (STO) had been established to support the delivery of major strategic projects. However, the challenge was to ensure there was sufficient capacity and arrangements were in place to review the structure and resources within the STO to support project delivery and management.
G169/7
Estates Development Plan

.1 Consideration was given to the Estates Development Plan Summary Report and Estates Project Programme (Document G169/3 and 3a) presented Director of Estates and Director of Estates Development who attended the meeting for this item.

.2 The Board discussed the extent to which the current Estate could accommodate the growth in student numbers and the need to ensure close co-operation with the local community. It was reported that the growth in student numbers meant that the University was likely to require greater flexibility from its estate. The Estates team were also working with the Marketing & External Affairs Team to improve communication with the local community.

.3 The Group Chief Finance Officer reported that the work had been completed to model the cash flow required to finance the capital programme and that work would continue to ensure that the appropriate projects were prioritised to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

G169/8
Subsidiary Governance Structure

.1 Consideration was given to the Subsidiary Governance Progress Update Report presented by the Clerk to the Board of Governors (Document G169/4 and 4a).

.2 The Board noted the progress made and next steps involved in introducing the Common Board model for the subsidiary companies that form part of the Coventry University Group.

.3 It was noted that the Board would be asked to formally approve the establishment of the Common Boards following finalisation of all documentation.

G169/9
Investment Proposal; Centre for Applied Low Carbon Propulsion Systems

.1 The Chair left the meeting for consideration of this item and the Deputy Chair took the chair.

.2 Consideration was given to the recommendation of the Strategy and Resources Committee presented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Group Development and Resources) in respect of the proposed investment in a Centre for Applied Low Carbon Propulsion Systems (Documents G169/5, 5a, 5b and 5c).
.3 The Board noted that the proposed investment had been considered by the Investment Committee at its meeting on 9 February 2017 and the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 14 February 2017. Each Committee had considered the proposals and recommended the project for approval.

.4 The Board considered carefully the contributions that the project would make to the University’s Corporate Strategy 2021 and the importance of the proposal to delivering the research pillar of the Corporate Strategy. The Board noted that the proposal was expected to deliver significant research income and research outputs for the University.

.5 Redacted for reasons of confidentiality

.6 Redacted for reasons of confidentiality

G169/10 Multi-Academy Trust

.1 Consideration was given to a report setting out the proposal to establish a Coventry University sponsored Sixth Form Multi-Academy Trust presented by the Director of Educational Strategies who attended the meeting for this item (Document G169/6 and 6a).

.2 It was reported that the Strategy and Resources Committee had considered the proposal (Minute GSR25/8 refers) and recommended to the Board of Governors that approval be given to the establishment of a Coventry University sponsored Sixth Form Multi-Academy Trust.

.3 The Board noted the benefits that the establishment of a multi-academy trust could bring to the University as well as its potential contribution to the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

.4 The Board discussed the risks which the sponsoring of a multi-academy trust could bring for the University and the Government’s expectation that universities support the school sector.

.5 Resolved that support in principle be given to the establishment of a Six Form Multi-Academy Trust subject to the following information and satisfactory assurances be provided to the Board at its next meeting:

(A) Details of the extent of the educational responsibilities which would rest with the Board of Governors and any liabilities which the Board of Governors would be required to discharge;
(B) An assessment of the reputational risks that the Multi-Academy Trust could pose for the University and satisfactory assurances in respect of the outcomes of the due diligence exercise to be undertaken in respect of the initial two Sixth Form Colleges;

(C) Advice as to how to mitigate any risks associated with the members of the Multi-Academy Trust Company being considered as shadow directors.

G169/11
Appointment of External Auditors

.1 Consideration was given to the Appointment of External Auditors Report presented by the Group Chief Finance Officer (Document G169/12).

.2 **Resolved** that the appointment of BDO LLP as the external auditors for the University Group for a period of three years with the option to extend, as approved by the Audit and Risk Committee be ratified.

G169/12
Board of Governor and Co-opted Member Nominations

It was noted that the Board of Governors and Co-opted Member Nominations Report of the Clerk to the Board of Governors (Document G169/7) would be dealt with by circulation following the meeting.

G169/13
Update from Student Governors

.1 Consideration was given to the CUSU Report to the Board of Governors presented by the Student Governors (Document G167/8).

.2 It was noted that work would continue between the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Group Development and Resources) and the Students Union in estates planning activities.

G169/14
Financial Update, including P5 and P6 Group Management Accounts

.1 Consideration was given to the P5 and P6 Group Management Accounts presented by the Group Chief Finance Officer (Document G169/9 and 9a).

.2 It was reported that there would be challenges in achieving the income growth target for 2016/17. A review of the University’s pension liabilities had also been commissioned.
G169/15
Matters Dealt with Under Chairs Actions

.1 Consideration was given to Academic sanctions for Non-Academic Debt Report which included the changes to sections 1.4 and 1.5 of the University’s General Regulations and the authorisation to the Directors of Coventry University Enterprises to allot relevant securities (Documents G169/10a and 10b).

.2 Resolved the matters dealt with by Chair’s Actions be ratified.

G169/16
Work Plan

The Board noted the draft Work Plan (Document G169/11) presented by the Clerk to the Board of Governors.

G169/17
Any Other Business

None

G169/18
Schedule of Meetings

The Board noted the schedule of meetings for 2016/17. All meetings start at 1600 hrs:

18 May 2017 (please note change in date) – location Ryton Gardens Organic Centre
18 July 2017 (followed by annual dinner) – location Techno Centre.

Matt Challoner
Clerk to the Board of Governors