



University Council

Paper no: 2021-07-21-03

Paper title: Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 April 2021 at 09.30-13.00 by video conference

Present:

Ferguson, Iain (Chair)	Hynes, Alice
Atkinson, Helen	Lu, Lucy
Carter, Caroline	Mayhew, Maxine
Chen Davison, Lesley	Rowlands, Simon
Day, Colin	Saggu, Jaz
Fairweather, Paul	Sparks, Emma
Gregson, Sir Peter	Stokes, Claire
Hart, Ian	Thompson, Chris
Hill, James	Watkins, Peter

Attending:

- Aspinall, Philip, Chief Operating Officer
- Douglas, Gregor, University Secretary
- Pollard, Simon, PVC SWEE (for item 4)
- Sibbald, Ian, Director of Finance

1. Introduction

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor, members of University Executive and members of Council for the earlier briefing and engaged discussion on 'Towards an Operating Plan 2021/2022' (*refer to Appendix A to these minutes*).

The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the Council standard business meeting; in particular, Claire Stokes and Peter Watkins to their first Council meeting since being appointed.

Cranfield University was saddened to learn of the passing of its former Royal Visitor and honorary graduate, His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh. The Duke first visited the University in 1952 to support what was then the College of Aeronautics. His first visit was considered a pivotal moment in Cranfield's history and one which secured the College's future. His Royal Highness visited Cranfield on several occasions and delivered the first annual Handley Page Lecture in association with the Royal Aeronautical Society. The University had held a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

2. Disclosure of interest

There were no disclosures recorded.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-03 setting out the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020.

Resolved: The minutes were approved subject to the addition of Ian Hart to the attendee list.

Matters arising

Redactions applied

4. Health & Safety update

Professor Simon Pollard joined the meeting

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-04 being the quarterly report to Council from the Cranfield Health & Safety Committee (CH&SC).

- Noted:
- (a) Professor Pollard had taken on the role of Chair of CH&SC on 1 April 2021. Professor Pollard had many years of health and safety experience and held the Chair in Risk Management at Cranfield. Meetings between the Chair of the CH&SC and the Council lead on Health & Safety matters had been scheduled to the end of the calendar year.
 - (b) The reported RIDDOR incident had involved a member of staff who was undertaking a non-routine task when temporarily covering another role. Appropriate training had subsequently been given.
 - (c) CH&SC had approved revisions to the SHEL inspection process to encourage the move from a predominantly compliance-based approach to a more preventative approach to H&S management. Details of the pilot programme would be shared with PVC-Schools.
 - (d) Cranfield's hydrogen related projects on site remained below the level at which further action was required. However, a working group had been established to ensure that all relevant stakeholders were aware of the implications of any increases in the quantities of hydrogen. There was a need to upskill and provide training to relevant colleagues.
 - (e) Council sought further information on hazardous substances and broken equipment.

[Post meeting note: the detail was sent to Council members by email on 15 April 2021]

5. Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor's Report

5.1 Return to face-to-face teaching

Cranfield had welcomed students on courses with a substantial practical element back to face-to-face teaching on 8 March 2021. This included students from SWEE, SATM and the Cranfield Forensics Institute. The Shrivenham site remained closed. It had been disappointing that the latest Government lockdown roadmap had remained silent about all other students being able to return to safe, socially distanced in-person education from 12 April. The next Government decision date was expected to be 17 May.

5.2 REF2021

The University's REF2021 documents had been submitted in March 2021. A total of 367 research and teaching staff had been submitted into three Units of

Assessment. Beyond his retirement Professor Tom Stephenson would provide consultancy one day per week until the outcomes of REF2021 had been published.

5.3 Coronavirus

The University Executive, afforced by the Directors of HR, Communications, Facilities and Campus services and the Head of Health & Safety continued to meet twice weekly in dedicated 'Cobra' meetings to manage decision making and actions. There were no significant changes to report. The updated Site Operating Procedure (issue 4.5) had been released on 12 April with the next issue due on 17 May. The number of confirmed cases of coronavirus at Cranfield remained significantly lower than the UK higher education sector average.

5.4 Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group (MADG)

Engagement with MADG on the Air Park continued through monthly meetings with the Chief Executive and Chair of the Board. A separate line of engagement exploring new training and development opportunities had led to a joint mission statement being agreed between the Marshall Centre and Cranfield.

5.5 Government funding for research

Following UKRI's announcement that it was withdrawing Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding, Cranfield was reviewing the impact on staff and would mitigate where possible. Government had allocated additional funding to support the UK's association with Horizon Europe.

5.7 MK:U

The preparations for the pilot programme were progressing well. The lease on Bouverie House had been signed enabling building works to commence in early March. It was anticipated that the first cohort of pilot degree apprenticeships would commence in May 2021 with all four degree apprenticeship courses having commenced by September. MHCLG continue to be the sponsoring department indicating that government still regarded MK:U as investable. A significant amount of work was being done to strengthen links to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

6. Reports from Sub-Committees

6.1 Audit Committee

The Chair of Audit Committee reported that the Risk and Resilience Workshop (March 2021) had been well attended and several new thought streams had emerged. A revised strategic risk framework would be developed for presentation by the Autumn.

6.2 Finance Committee

The Chair of Finance Committee presented the following items:

6.2.1 Management Accounts

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-06a being the management accounts to 28 February 2021

- Noted:
- (a) In the first six months income was £1.1 million above budget due to increased tuition fees and research.
 - (b) The bank balance at 31 January was £6.1 million below budget, the variance reflecting the revised payment profile for the residential development which was significantly ahead of planned timescales.
 - (c) An increase in research income was due mainly to additional income in relation to a hydrogen research project which is offset by an increase in research equipment costs.

6.2.2 Medway 5

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-06b setting out a proposal to purchase Unit 5, Medway Court on Cranfield Technical Park

- Noted:
- (a) In 2015 Cranfield had purchased the Medway Court phase of the Technology Park which included Conway House and units 1-4 of Medway Court. In late 2020 Cranfield was advised that unit 5 would come onto the market.
 - (b) An independent view on the market value had been sought and the negotiated cost of £1.05m was confirmed as a fair price. An inspection of the building and its services infrastructure had been carried out and it was confirmed to be in good order having been well maintained by the occupier
 - (c) Recognising that the purchase of unit 5 Medway Court had been included in the Cranfield Estate Masterplan, Council discussed whether the timing was right and whether there was an opportunity for rental income.

Resolved: Council approved the purchase of Unit 5, Medway Court for £1.05m noting that Cranfield favoured using the building for its own strategic purposes.

6.2.3 Data Centre

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-06c setting out a proposal to approve costs associated with relocation and upgrade of the Cranfield Data Centre

- Noted:
- (a) The move and upgrade of the core Data Centre 1 had previously been approved as part of the Beacon project but as that project was now on hold there had been a need to bring forward an alternative proposal.

- (b) The Data Centre was now at significant risk due to ageing electro-mechanical components, outdated chillers and cooling systems, and other end of life component parts requiring replacement.
- (c) The location for the new Data Centre would be the former Santander building, which although public facing, benefitted from advanced security features.

Resolved: Council approved the proposed budget of £1.95m to cover the essential move of the University core Data Centre 1 and its upgrade. It was noted that the Data Centre would be funded through the bond as originally planned, with the Beacon project costs being reduced accordingly taking account of the inflation rate at the time.

6.2.4 Cranfield Seed Fund

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-06d setting out the details and development of the Cranfield Seed Fund.

- Noted:
- (a) Cranfield had piloted a small, informal, seed fund in 2016. It had been set up with gifts from alumni entrepreneurs and had given grants to early-stage businesses started with the University or by alumni.
 - (b) Cranfield School of Management intended to launch a campaign to raise charitable gifts for an expanded seed fund which would invest in business started by students, alumni and others connected with the University. This was an example of projects coming out of the refreshed alumni strategy.

Resolved: Council endorsed the development of the Cranfield Seed Fund.

6.3 Nominations Committee

6.3.1 Council formally recorded matters it had agreed ex-committee in January 2021 as follows:

- co-option of Peter Watkins; and
- appointment of Alice Hynes and Caroline Carter (each for a second three-year term commencing 1 August 2021)

6.3.2 In March 2021 Council noted that Nominations Committee had confirmed the panel members for the Joint Appointment Committee for the role of Vice-Chancellor.

6.4 Remuneration Committee

The Chair of Remuneration Committee had been in regular contact with the Director of Human Resources over the period since the last committee meeting. The Committee had not been required to make any decisions since their last report but had met to consider sector wide issues including pensions; and

Cranfield specific matters including approaches to support the wellbeing of staff and updates to health & safety and future planning.

7. Report from University Executive

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-07 being the quarterly report from University Executive.

Noted: The report was taken as read. Regarding the research ethics report it was noted that the Human Tissue Committee had been established to enhance processes around the compliance, storage, labelling and tracking of the use of archived tissue samples in the Cranfield Forensics Institute.

Resolved: Council received:

- the annual report from Cranfield University Research Ethics Committee; and
- the Cranfield Students' Association Audited Accounts;

Council approved:

- the Annual Research Integrity Statement for publication;

Council noted:

- the quarterly environment report; and
- the requirement to download the University's Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) app.

8. Emeritus Professor

Received: Paper 2021-04-14-08 setting out a proposal to confer the title of Emeritus Professor on a former staff member.

Resolved: Council approved the conferral of the title of Emeritus Professor on Professor Mark Jenkins.

9. Any other business

There were no further items of business.

Julie Morris
Governance Officer
April 2020

Appendix A

Towards an Operating Plan 2021/2022

Council received the following to support discussion:

Papers: (i) Plan on a page
(ii) Planning timetable

Presentations: Cranfield Learner Framework
IT Strategy

The following was noted:

1. Plan on a page 2021-2022

- a. The Cranfield REF2021 submission had been made in March 2021. There was an anticipated increase in QR from 2022/2023. The REF target would be reviewed in the new Corporate Plan.
- b. The target for net fee income streams remained unchanged from the 2020/2021 forecast. With the continuing uncertainties relating to the Covid19 pandemic this was considered appropriate.
- c. It was noted that the doctoral and International student targets and professional development would be challenging.
- d. The 2021/2022 research and consultancy target should read £2M less than shown in the paper. It was thought that the higher target had been an appropriate stretch target before the government announced the reduction and freezing of research funding. The target had been reduced to take account of the impact on the economy.
- e. The Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor confirmed that transition to 'new normal' for student/staff experience, productivity and customer satisfaction was being addressed under phase 5 of the University's Sites Operating Procedures. These would also be reflected in the new Corporate Plan.
- f. CDS repositioning was a key priority. Peter Watkins and Claire Stokes would play an integral part in supporting the University Executive in growing the business. It would also set Cranfield on a path to re-compete for the Defence Academy Academic Provider contract which expires in 2028.
- g. The turnover target figure should be considered as draft at this point; the current working assumption for the operating surplus/deficit was that it would be negative within the range of £1M - £5M.
- h. Council thanked the University Executive for the plan on a page which captured the strategic and operational challenges. Areas where costs could be flexed to achieve targets were noted as: associates for course delivery; equipment maintenance for a short period; renewals of equipment; and the travel budget which would be reviewed once restrictions due to the pandemic were relaxed. Cost management was embedded in every single planning stage.

2. Cranfield Learner Framework

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Education led the presentation on the Cranfield Learner Framework. The following was noted in discussion

- a. The Covid 19 pandemic had prompted significant changes to Cranfield's operations and as such opportunities had emerged for the future of higher education. In developing the Cranfield Learner Framework, it was important to take note of these recent experiences and build on the immediate and medium-term plans and prepare the groundwork for a new Corporate Plan and its underpinning strategies.
 - b. A review of Cranfield's portfolio had taken place about five years ago which resulted in a more streamlined market focused offering. In moving forward and doing things differently Cranfield would again review its portfolio size and complexity and re-evaluate its distinctive educational value proposition. The framework would provide a common basis on which Cranfield could do this.
 - c. The characteristics of Cranfield's distinctive postgraduate and postexperience education offered students:
 - *Practice-based* learning in near-real world environments;
 - *Co-produced learning* and coaching by industry and opportunities to co-design their learning pathways;
 - *Social learning* with modules built around engagement not delivery, group-working, and peer-to-peer learning;
 - *Career-readiness* with professional skills embedded, assessed and credentialed; and
 - *Professional recognition* with courses being accredited by a professional institution.
 - d. As with all new approaches there were a few 'knotty' problems that would need to be addressed including for example credit frameworks PGT award classifications.
 - e. It would be important also to align the framework to Cranfield's emerging thinking on strategic risks; and take a strategic approach to its investment and disinvestment planning.
 - f. The next steps were to inform development of the new Corporate Plan including refreshing the Education, Research and International strategies; building the school plans; and developing the underpinning strategies such as IT; Estate plan including learning spaces; and academics and academic support.
 - g. Council discussed the benefits of reviewing its portfolio at University level and commented that the Risk and Resilience workshop had drawn out the importance of Cranfield being able to monitor where it fits within the competition noting that the pandemic had also broadened the competitor set.
3. IT Strategy
- a. The IT Strategy Committee had been established in March 2020 with the aim of turning around the approach to Cranfield's information technology.
 - b. The pandemic had diverted the Committee's attention to addressing Cranfield's response to online teaching and services and a range of interventions had been introduced including live-online teaching booths; embedded digital learning support and buddy system; online laboratory teaching; PC lab policy; lecture recording; remote access to engineering software; and additional support over extended time zones.

- c. It was again important to draw upon the lessons from the pandemic when developing the IT Strategy. In consultation with key stakeholders the IT Strategy Committee had identified the IT Key Service principles and university priorities and developed a ten-year IT investment plan. The immediate investment priorities for 2021/2022 included an upgrade of outdated AV equipment in 21 key lecture rooms; rollout of 2-factor authentication security; and replacement of the existing Data Centre given its risk to the availability of critical IT systems.
 - d. The IT Strategy had been and would continue to be aligned with the Cranfield Learner Framework and the University's governance requirements.
 - e. Council welcomed the development of the IT strategy. In terms of investment, Council queried whether Cranfield had considered outsourcing some of the IT services to third parties? It was reported that PA Consulting's review of outsourcing in the sector had shown a variety of practice but a trend towards insourcing.
 - f. Regarding specialist cyber security support Council, the Chief Operating Officer advised that Cranfield was well connected across the security sector enabling the University to keep up to date with its cyber security news and actions. The National Security Services Group chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor CDS reported into University Executive. Part of the Committee's remit was to ensure that Cranfield was appropriately accredited for the work it did and through the Information Security team maintained a regular programme of penetration testing across its systems.
4. Operating Plan schedule
The Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor summarised the next steps highlighting that Council would receive the Operating plan 2021/2022 for approval at their July meeting, together with appendices from the five main budgetary groups. The Budget would be reviewed by Finance Committee in June and by Council in July.

Julie Morris
Governance Officer
April 2021