

Minutes

Meeting title: Council

Date: Wednesday 19 November 2008

Time: 4.00pm

Location: The Council Room, George Thomas Building

Present: Dame Valerie Strachan (*in the Chair*), Professor N H Foskett, Mr A J Jukes, Professor J Kilburn, Mr M Killingley, Mr P Lester, Mr B Purkiss, Dr M Read, Mr M J Snell, Ms A Tanfield,* Mr A J Walker, Professor A A Wheeler and Professor D M Williams

In attendance: The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance, Professor A D Fitt, Professor P A Nelson, Mr A J Strike and Dr K A Piggott

* not present for restricted business

Unrestricted

Section A: Presentations

Members received two presentations:

- 'Investing in the future: Addressing challenges faced by African's young population': Professor Nyovani Madise, Social Statistics, School of Social Sciences
- Report from the Development Trust: Mr Joel Munson (see also minute 35)

Section B: Minutes and Reports

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Members were invited to declare any conflicts of interest. The Director of Finance and the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer each declared an interest as Directors of Manor Centre Limited (minute 20).

14. Obituary

Dame Valerie reported with regret the deaths of the following members of the University and invited members to stand as a mark of respect:

- Mr Dominic Barlow, Year 1, School of Chemistry, in January 2008
- Mr Steven Watson, Year 3, School of Medicine, in August 2008
- Mrs Glen Whittington, Professional Services, in August 2008
- Ms Kerry Standerwick, Year 5, School of Medicine, in October 2008
- Clair Beiotice, Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, in November 2008

15. Standing Orders of Council and Statement of Primary Responsibilities (Agendum 2)

Received (i) The Standing Orders of Council, as approved at the meeting of Council on 25 September 2008, with two further minor amendments; (ii) a revised version of the Statement of the Council's Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters.

With regard to the Standing Orders, the two minor changes were intended to make clear the arrangements for appointing Chairs of the Executive Committees, and to further clarify the position regarding calculating a quorum for Council committees and subcommittees.

The Statement of Primary Responsibilities had been revised to take account of changes to the University committee structure, to ensure that all recent changes to the Statutes and Ordinances were properly reflected, and to correct minor presentational errors. Members agreed that in the list of primary responsibilities point 11 (appointment of key senior officers), the clause 'and to ensure that arrangements are put in place to monitor their performance' which had been deleted because of

duplication with point 13, should be reinserted, as it was appropriate for Council to have particular regard for the performance of senior staff. It was also agreed that in paragraph 3.1 (statutory compliance) it would be inappropriate to use health and safety rather than equal opportunities as an example, as this could send the wrong message. Rather, both examples should be included (the preferred terminology for 'equal opportunities' in this context was 'the equality duty').

- Resolved**
- (i) That the amendments to the Standing Orders of Council be approved.
 - (ii) That, subject to the two further changes above, the amendments to the Statement of the Council's Primary Responsibilities and delegated and related matters be approved.

16. **Minutes (unrestricted) of the meetings held on 10 July, 25 September and 23 October 2008**

Dame Valerie advised that there is one correction to the minutes of the meeting on 23 October. Mrs Wood's name should be added to the list of members present.

- Resolved** That, subject to the addition of Mrs Wood's name to the list of members present on 23 October, the unrestricted Minutes of the meetings held on 10 July, 25 September and 23 October 2008 be approved and signed.

17. **Matters Arising**

17.1 **Financial monitoring statements, Quarter 3 2007/08** ((minute 81)

Professor Wheeler advised that the summary statements regarding staff headcount and research income requested by Council were included in the InEx update circulated as agenda item 14.

17.2 **University budget and financial projections 2008/09** (minute 82)

The Director of Finance reported that Council's request for financial performance to be benchmarked against a selected subset of Russell Group institutions would be taken forward via the Finance Committee. It would be more appropriate to undertake the exercise using 2007/08 information, which would become available in the New Year via the financial statements. A paper should therefore be available for Council in March.

18. **Vice-Chancellor's report**

On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wheeler reported briefly under the following headings:

Additional student numbers (ASNs): Confirmation had been received that the University had been awarded ASNs for 2009/10. This was a significant achievement, particularly as it had been possible that as a result of an instruction to HEFCE from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills the numbers already awarded would be clawed back. The ASNs were mainly in the area of Engineering and Science, and would increase teaching income by £1.7million in 2009-10, plus additional tuition fees.

Student recruitment: both home/EU and international student recruitment had been very good for 2008-09 entry (see also minute 23) .

National Institute for Health Research Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC): NETSCC, based at the Science Park, had been formally opened by the Minister for Public Health. The Centre provided important strategic opportunities for both the City and the University.

University Enterprise Network: The University would be one of six institutions involved in a new University enterprise network funded by a combination of government, regional development agency, and industrial sources.

Philip Leverhulme Prize 2008: Dr Heiko Pälke of the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton had been awarded a 2008 Philip Leverhulme Prize.

Public Lectures: The University could be very proud of its varied programme of public lectures, with distinguished speakers, such as Professor Charles Goodhart, Mr Will Self and Professor Richard Holmes.

Vice-Chancellor designate's visit to the University: The Vice-Chancellor designate had recently visited the University and had had discussions with the Senior Managers, particularly UEG.

Memorial service for Professor Thomas: Discussions were ongoing with Caroline Thomas's family about

the appropriate form for a memorial service; it was likely this would take place early in the New Year.

19. Report from the President of the Students' Union

Received The report from the President of the Students' Union.

Ms Tanfield presented the report, and drew particular attention to:

Employability: This was a priority for SUSU, given the University's poor performance compared with others in the Russell Group. Initiatives included considering how students could make better use on their CVs of the skills gained through involvement with SUSU Clubs and Societies, and discussions with Student Services and the Careers Service to see how SUSU could work more closely with them.

Student Representation: A Representation Development Plan had been implemented to increase student representation and improve communication and feedback.

Drink Awareness: *Drink Awareness:* This was another key issue, as in the media Southampton students had been highlighted as having bad drinking habits. SUSU were therefore putting in place positive procedures and activities to change this. A major campaign had been held. There was particular emphasis on working with sports clubs in supporting non alcohol-based social events, etc.

Finances: SUSU finances were not as healthy as in previous years. Actions were being taken to address this and there had been some slight improvement in the last month.

Private Rented Sector: There were concerns about the number of first year students living in the private rented sector, because such students had less access to the support and social networks available to others through the halls. SUSU had helped host a day for such students and was hoping to undertake further work in this area with Student Services.

Life Membership of SUSU Mr Peter May, who retired as SUSU Senior Treasurer this year, had been awarded Life Membership of SUSU by the Union Council.

Members discussed briefly the issues regarding first year students in private rented accommodation. It was explained that a deadline was set for first year students to apply for halls of residence; places remaining after the deadline were then allocated to continuing students. This meant that first year students who missed the deadline (despite reminders) could find themselves without a place. This approach was necessary for sound business reasons (to avoid voids). There were strategic issues to be addressed about the number of first year students who ideally should be in halls of residence, the appropriate 'mix' of students in halls, and whether the University was well placed to be able to provide this. The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer explained that work would begin shortly on developing a strategy for the residential estate. It was suggested that it would be appropriate to bring a paper on these issues to a future meeting of Council; this should include input from SUSU. The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer also outlined plans for simplifying the structure for the management of halls of residence: responsibility for physical infrastructure/ maintenance would rest with Estates and Facilities and the day-to-day operation of the halls and the 'student experience' would rest with Student Services. This had been discussed at the Audit Committee in response to the Internal Audit report on the management of the residential estate.

Mr Purkiss commented that problems associated with drinking were considered to be of major significance in the local area, and there were particular concerns as to how vulnerable students, eg international students, could be protected. He was pleased to see SUSU taking these matters seriously.

Resolved (i) That a paper on strategic issues relating to occupancy of halls of residence should be presented to a future meeting of Council to prompt a strategic debate.
(ii) To note the President's report.

Section C: Principal items for discussion and decision

20. Final Accounts for 2007/2008 (Agendum 11)

Received (i) The Final Accounts for 2007/2008 (ii) Business Analysis of University Financial Statements 2007/08 dated 11 November 2008 prepared by the Director of Finance.

The Director of Finance presented the financial statements and drew attention to the following:

- The impact of the insurance claim continued to have a significant effect. £25million was received in interim payments during the year, and was recognised as an exceptional item. As the new clean rooms had not been completed or the equipment installed and commissioned by the end of the

- financial year, buildings and equipment depreciation had not been charged in the year. The depreciation charge would increase significantly as the assets came into use in the coming years.
- Research income had increased in real terms for the first time since 2001/02. The effects of Full Economic Costing (FEC) funding from Research Councils could now be clearly seen, and should continue to increase, as currently less than half the University's Research Council grants were based on FEC.
 - Student recruitment (both home/EU and international) had been successful.
 - Salary costs had increased by 8%; given that a 10% increase had originally been predicted, this was evidence that the mitigating actions being taken were having an effect to stabilise the position.
 - The overall cash position was good, particularly given the volume of capital expenditure over the year. Net debt had fallen during the year, which demonstrated a strong cash generative performance.
 - The surplus on normal operations was £7million (between 1-2% of turnover). This was an improvement on 2006-07; however further significant improvements would be needed for the University to be in a sustainable financial position.
 - In summary, the University was in a stronger financial position than last year. However, there were threats associated with salary costs, the final salary pension schemes, the potential for a tightening of public finances, the slow down in the world economy and the publication of the RAE results (the academic results would be available in December and the financial results in March 2009).

The Treasurer thanked the Finance team for all their work in preparing the financial statements to the new timetable under difficult circumstances. He drew members' attention to the Operating and Financial Review, which was now a requirement of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP). This included a statement on major financial risks. The financial position had improved significantly over the previous year – cash flow generated by normal activity was in the region of £10.8million, compared with £3.8million in 2006/07; however this was not sufficient to bring the University to a sustainable position – for this, £30million would be required. Further work was therefore needed, particularly as some improvements might not be sustainable (eg. international student numbers might be affected by the global economic downturn). Dame Valerie commented that what would now be crucial would be to find the best way to communicate this message across the University, while recognising the hard work already undertaken and the improvements made.

The Chair of the Audit Committee commented that the Audit committee had been kept informed about the accounting treatment of the insurance claim, the impairment of Boldrewood and the writing off of the abortive costs of the Faraday project. The Audit Committee agreed with the judgments made, and he would endorse the recommendation that Council approve the financial statements.

In discussion it was pointed out that the financial statements did not specify the extent to which the University was maintaining and improving its asset base, particularly its buildings. The Director of Finance drew attention to the table setting out the net debt and other capital ratios. He reminded members that the current capital plan concentrated on providing some new facilities and withdrawing from Boldrewood (currently a major liability for the University). The next stage of the capital plan was likely to focus on reviewing the University's stock of older buildings to assess whether it was more cost effective to refurbish or rebuild. In response to a query about long-term maintenance Professor Wheeler commented that the budget allocation for this had increased from £3.5million to £5million. Based on the scale of the estate it was probable that a figure closer to £8million was needed, but the University was not in a position to spend at this level. A fundamental re-think was required about the estate and the way it was used, both to reduce liabilities and to 'sweat the assets'. This would however be extremely challenging to address. Members indicated that they would welcome a reappraisal of the level of investment required. Professor Wheeler agreed that this would be a valuable exercise at the end of the current capital programme.

Under this heading the Director of Finance also drew attention to the need for letters of continuing financial support to be provided for four subsidiary companies: Southampton Asset Management Limited, Southampton Innovations Limited, University of Southampton Holdings Limited and Manor Centre Limited. Of these only Manor Centre Limited was a trading company (operating the University post office franchise) and the position of this company would be reviewed.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the Audited Accounts be approved for submission to the Court.
 - (ii) That letters of continuing financial support be written for Southampton Asset

21. **Audit Committee: Annual Report** (Agendum 12)

Received The Annual Report from the Audit Committee for the year ended 31 July 2008, together with the Annual Internal Audit Report, 2007-2008, compiled by KPMG.

The Chair of the Audit Committee highlighted that the committee was pleased with the progress made on risk management and key performance indicators, and with the progress of the InEx project so far in reducing costs and increasing income (this would now be a standing item on the Audit Committee agenda). The work of the Audit Committee was helped considerably by the openness with which University management was willing to discuss issues.

The Internal Auditors had judged two aspects of their work as high risk: (i) *Accounts payable* – this was related to the introduction of Agresso. The Internal Auditors' report made clear that significant progress had been made but that some problems remained, particularly because some parts of the University were not using the system, which would undermine financial control. It had been agreed that some follow-up work would be undertaken by the Internal Auditors later in the year, (ii) *Management of the Residential Estate* (particularly concerns about a lack of clarity in lines of responsibility). These issues were under active discussion (as indicated under minute 19 above), and a management response from the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer had now been received.

Resolved To note the Audit Committee Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2008.

22. **Financial monitoring 2008/9** (Agendum 13)

22.1 **September 2008 Management Accounts**

Received The September 2008 Management Accounts, with a covering paper from the Director of Finance dated 31 October 2008.

The Director of Finance emphasised that it was too early in the year to draw firm conclusions from the figures. However he was pleased to report that invoices had now been raised for £31.9million for international student fees; although there would inevitably be some student 'drop-out' affecting the figures there was an expectation of an income of c. £30million against a £28million target. Control of staff expenditure had continued and it appeared that the growth in salaries has been reduced; however the figures now presented did not take into account the 5% pay award payable from October.

Resolved To note the management accounts as at September 2008.

22.2 **Cash Holdings and Cash Projections**

Received A report from the Director of Finance entitled Cash Holdings and Cash Projections, dated 27 October 2008.

The Director of Finance presented the report and explained that he had prepared the paper in order to reassure Council, given the current financial climate. The University has concentrated holdings into bigger banks and those covered by the Irish Government deposit guarantee, and had had no holdings with Icelandic banks. While the University had not suffered counter-party failure, the situation remained very concerning.

Resolved To note the report on cash holdings and cash projections.

23. **InEx update** (Agendum 14)

Received A paper from Professor Wheeler and the Registrar and Chief Operating officer dated November 2008, headed 'InEx Review: Report to Council on Progress and Request for Determination'.

Professor Wheeler presented the report and highlighted the following:

- He was pleased to advise that progress was being made against each of the InEx targets, as set out in the 'dashboard' presented for Council's information.

- Good progress had been made with regard to international student fee income. In response to a query about comparability with others in the Russell Group, it was explained that it appeared that Southampton had performed similarly with regard to home/EU students but better than others in terms of international students. At present it was difficult to assess why this was the case, although it was clear that considerable efforts had been expended as part of the InEx project.
- The controls on staff numbers were having an effect; however the current freeze on appointments was a crude mechanism, as the impact was determined by which staff were leaving the institution, rather than by any strategic requirements, and fell disproportionately on different areas of the institution. The arrangement was likely to be unsustainable for the longer term and a more sophisticated mechanism was needed.
- Staff costs had declined to 57.2% of income in 2007/08. However, the recent 5% pay award would mean an increase in staff costs in the current year.
- The Communications work stream was now moving to Wave 2. As part of the further development of iSolutions a request for Determination in respect of user communications was being brought to Council under restricted business. Further consultations were ongoing in respect of Data Networking and Telephony Systems Services.
- Since the paper was prepared the Director of Procurement had negotiated a fix on the University's gas contract to 2010 which should result in savings of c£860k.
- The Deans and the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer were leading discussions with Schools and Services as to how the savings between £5million and £15million required to 'close the gap' and work towards sustainability could be achieved. Proposals would be brought to Council in January. It was clear that while the lower level could be achieved through local savings, the higher levels would require business reorganisation. This would be controversial and needed strong management will.

It was agreed that while valuable the inEx project and activities within individual Schools could take developments only so far – structural rethinking would be necessary, to implement larger-scale business restructuring. Would an external facilitator be helpful, or perhaps input from a group of Council members from business backgrounds? The latter suggestion was gratefully received. Professor Nelson commented that although discussions were being held with individual Schools about their research income targets, any more significant discussions about academic restructuring would be inappropriate before the financial results of the RAE were known (although considerable amounts of comparative data were being collected in the meantime).

Was there a point at which the University would run the risk of making so many cuts that quality would be undermined? It was recognised that this was a cause for concern but that the University was aware of the potential difficulty, even though it would be difficult to draw up a metric to assess when this point might be reached. Schools were approaching 'closing the gap' in different ways. Performance management potentially offered a way to reduce costs or improve income. It was however also important to think structurally (the new School of Health Sciences was an example of this). What was important was for Schools to consider how they could sustain quality while also seeing the scope for economies.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to have an overview of the University's position compared with other members of the Russell Group. The Director of Finance commented that, as indicated under 'matters arising' this would be taken forward via the Finance Committee, and should be available for Council in March. It would however be difficult to provide comparative information about staffing, given the difference in structures across institutions.

Members noted the good progress so far but reiterated that the University should do all it could to seek to achieve the maximum level of additional savings.

Resolved That the good progress being made by the InEx project be noted; and that the University should continue to work towards attaining savings of £15million.

24. **Lloyds Register (LR) Developments** (Agendum 15)

This item is commercially confidential and is covered in a confidential minute for Council members only.

25. **Future Corporate Strategy Development** (Agendum 16)

Received A paper from Professor Wheeler and Mr Staniczenko headed "Creating our future' – Corporate Strategy Development', dated 12 November 2008.

Professor Wheeler presented the paper, which set out an outline project plan for undertaking the analysis and scenario planning to inform the development of a new Corporate Strategy, with a timetable for key activities over the next 18-24 months commencing in January 2009. The project would run in parallel with InEx. Members welcomed the clear plan and timetable. The possibility of using a 'red team' of lay members to input to this process (as initially mentioned in connection with agenda 14) could be integrated into the plan.

A query was raised about the potential for the University to further increase its research income, and what the institution's aspirations should be in this area. Professor Nelson commented that in his view there was great potential for increase – in the recent past efforts had been directly to securing good RAE results rather than specifically towards increasing income, but this was now changing, particularly as research income was likely to be a key driver in the Research Excellence Framework. This would be covered as part of the preparation of position papers, in phase 1.

With regard to the University values (appendix 4) Mr Snell raised three issues:

- Whether one of the driving principles should be to think in terms of structural collaboration (or at the least to keep an open mind on such possibilities)?
- Whether the term 'inclusiveness' was sufficient to encompass the concepts of equality/diversity?
- Whether the focus on '[contributing] to and [drawing] upon the strengths of the Southampton City region' might be regarded as limiting the University's ambition? (Ms Wood, although unable to attend the meeting, had raised a similar point in her absence).

Resolved That the proposed activities and timetable for the development of the next corporate strategy be endorsed; and that members should feed any further comments directly to Professor Wheeler before the Christmas break.

26. **Textile Conservation Centre** (Agendum 17)

Received A paper from Professor Foskett informing Council of the latest developments in relation to the possible transfer of the Textile Conservation Centre to another HEI.
(This paper was circulated to members of Council as commercial in confidence).

Members were advised, with regret, that since the paper was circulated the news on this development had become less positive; the University would however seek to keep the possibility of transfer of the TCC to another HEI open as long as possible.

Resolved To note the current situation regarding the transfer of the Textile Conservation Centre.

27. **Vice-Chancellor's Annual Health and Safety Report 2007** (Agendum 18)

Received The Vice-Chancellor's annual health and safety report 2007.

In the Vice-Chancellor's absence Professor Nelson presented the report. He drew particular attention to the Vice-Chancellor's observations that increasing demands were being placed on the central Safety Office because of both internal and external requirements; and that the HSE's expectation that a more consistent approach should be taken across the University would require a culture shift.

Members were advised that the University had commissioned a consultant to review health and safety management, the outputs from which should be available very shortly and would be presented to Council in January or March. Members commented that this was of crucial importance and should therefore be brought forward in January and given high priority on the agenda.

In discussion it was suggested that what was most needed to progress work in this area was culture change, and management attitudes which sought to address issues before they became significant problems. Training for senior managers should focus on attitudes as well as policy. Professor Nelson commented that it was recognised that appropriate documentation did not of itself automatically make the University a safer place, and that there was a tension to be managed. However there was a clear expectation that procedures and policies should become more centrally driven, to ensure compliance.

Ms Wood, although unable to attend the meeting, had raised a query in her absence about the discrepancy between the number of accidents reported by staff and by students, questioning whether

this might show an element of underreporting in the student community. This would be pursued through the Safety and Occupational Health Committee.

- Resolved** (i) That the report from the review of health and safety management should be brought to the January meeting of Council.
(ii) That the Vice-Chancellor's annual health and safety report 2007 be noted.

28. **Key Performance Indicators: update on 'Red' KPIs** (Agendum 19)

Received A paper from the Head of Corporate Planning headed 'KPI 2008 - update', dated 11 November 2008.

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer reminded members that it had been previously agreed that an update on progress with 'red' KPIs would be presented to each ordinary meeting of Council. On this occasion issues raised in the report had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Resolved To note the update on 'red' KPIs.

29. **Amendments to Ordinances** (Agendum 20)

Received A paper from the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer dated 7 November 2008 and recommending amendments to Ordinance 1.5 *Associate Deans of the Faculties*, Ordinance 5.1 *Affiliated Institutions* and Ordinance 5.2 *Accredited Institutions*.

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer presented the paper and reported that, as required by Statutes, Senate had been consulted about the proposed changes at its meeting on 12 November, and had endorsed them without specific comment.

Resolved That Ordinance 1.5 *Associate Deans of the Faculties*, Ordinance 5.1 *Affiliated Institutions* and Ordinance 5.2 *Accredited Institutions* be amended as set out in the circulated paper.

Section D: Reports from Committees

30. **Reports from the University Executive Group (UEG)**

30.1 **1 October 2008** (Agendum 25.1)

Received The report from the above meeting of the University Executive Group (reporting directly to Council for the first time under the new committee structure).

In the Vice-Chancellor's absence Professor Wheeler presented the report and drew particular attention to item 3 *Independent review of the Careers Service*.

Resolved That the report from, and the decisions taken by, the above meeting of the University Executive Group be noted and endorsed.

30.2 **11 November 2008** (Agendum 25.2)

Received The report from the above meeting of the University Executive Group.

In the Vice-Chancellor's absence Professor Wheeler presented the report and sought endorsement of the specific recommendation relating to authorised signatories for the University's HSBC investment account (*Report from Finance Policy Committee*, item 14). (Note, under the revised Statement of Primary Responsibilities, the approval of authorised signatories has in future been delegated to UEG).

Attention was also drawn to item 12 *Appointments to committees in the new committee structure and changes* which had been agreed to membership and terms of reference for the following committees:

- Audit Committee: changes to terms of reference and membership
- Infrastructure Committee: change to terms of reference and membership
- Safety and Occupational Health Committee: change to membership (Chair)
- Consultative Group for Safety and Occupational Health: change to terms of reference.

A query was raised about item 15, *report from the Infrastructure Committee*, regarding the

recommendation that a review be carried out of the proposal to establish two data centres on different sites. Members were advised that some work was being undertaken by iSolutions regarding outsourcing, but this was likely to prove extremely expensive because of the high energy costs associated with the activity. The data centre situation was high risk for the University, but currently there was no budget set aside for this work.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the Registrar and Chief Operating Office, the Director of Finance, the Deputy Director of Finance, and the Director of Corporate Services be confirmed as authorised signatories of the University's HSBC investment account.
 - (ii) That the report from, and the decisions taken by, the above meeting of the University Executive Group be noted and endorsed.

31. **Report from the meeting of Senate 12 November 2008** (Agendum 26)

Received The unrestricted report from the above meeting of Senate (tabled).

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer advised members that it had been agreed that it would be appropriate to table this report as it was for information and required no decisions by Council.

Resolved To note the report from the above meeting of Senate.

32. **Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee**

32.1 **16 October 2008** (Agendum 27.1)

Received The minutes of the above meeting of the Audit Committee.

Members were reminded that under the new committee structure Council would now receive the full minutes of the Audit Committee (which had previously been circulated formally to Standing Committee and then to Council members outside the formal agenda).

Resolved That the report from, and the decisions taken by, the above meeting of the Audit Committee be noted and endorsed.

32.2 **10 November 2008** (oral report)

The Chair of the Audit Committee indicated that there were no issues to draw to Council's attention which had not already been raised (annual accounts, annual audit report and issues relating to the maintenance of the residential estate). The minutes would be circulated to the January meeting.

33. **Report from the Safety and Occupational Health Committee 20 October 2008** (Agendum 28)

Received The report from the above meeting of Safety and Occupational Health Committee (reporting directly to Council for the first time, under the new committee structure).

Professor Nelson presented the report and drew particular attention to item 4 '*Leading Health and Safety at Work*' – (UCEA publication) and the focus on Council's role with regard to health and safety. The intention was to establish a small group, to include a lay member of Council, to review the gap analysis prepared by the University Safety Adviser and draw up an action plan.

Professor Nelson reported that at its meeting in October SOHC had signed off minor revisions to the single page health and safety policy; however this was an error as the policy required formal review and approval by Council. The policy would therefore be presented to Council at the January meeting.

Some members commented that they would have expected to see more references in the report to issues related to training and communication, as these were critical for success. It was explained that a decision had been taken to focus on the report on key issues/areas of interest for Council, rather than on matters which were regarded as 'business as usual' (which would include training and communication); however these matters could be addressed in future reports.

Resolved (i) That the single page health and safety policy would be presented to Council for approval in January.

- (ii) That the report from, and the decisions taken by, the Safety and Occupational Health Committee be noted and endorsed.

34. **Report from the meeting of Standing Committee of Council held on 23 October 2008** (Agendum 29)
(This item was circulated to members of Council as commercial in confidence)

Received The report from the above meeting of Standing Committee.

The issues covered in this report had been addressed under agendum 15, minute 24.

Resolved To note the report from Standing Committee of Council.

Section E: Other items for note and formal approval

35. **Annual Report from the Development Trust** (Agendum 33)

A presentation which had formed the annual report had been given as part of Section A of the meeting. Members agreed that the Development Trust accounts, which were currently being audited, should be brought to Council in January with a fuller written report. It was noted that it had been agreed that performance in this area would be monitored regularly through the Finance Committee and UEG.

Resolved That the audited accounts of the Development Trust, together with a fuller written report, should be presented to the January meeting of Council.

36. **Sealing of Documents** (Agendum 34)

Received A paper listing the documents sealed between 2008.

The Registrar and Chief Operating officer explained that the list of documents signed under seal had previously been submitted to Standing Committee of Council but would now be presented at each Ordinary meeting of Council for note.

Resolved To note the list of sealed documents.

37. **Refurbishment of Birchwood** (Agendum 35)

Received A paper from the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer headed 'the refurbishment of Birchwood', dated 14 November 2008.

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer presented the paper for note. He emphasised that Birchwood would continue to be used as a University facility, for senior management meetings etc. The amount of spend, while relatively large, was not of a level that required Council approval, but under current financial circumstances it was felt appropriate that Council should be made aware formally of the decision. He emphasised that the sum proposed was an upper limit.

Resolved To note the report.

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