

ICT STRATEGY STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2006

Present: Dr Macmillan (in the chair), President of St John's, Master of St Peter's, Dr Ashbourn, Dr Biggs, Professor Bowman, Dr Davies, Professor Dutton,, Mr Gay, Professor Giles, Mrs Haworth, Mr Herriott, Professor Jeffreys, Mr Kerr, Dr Lee, Mr Marks, Dr Parkinson, Professor Peach, Mr Russell, Dr Trefethen, Mr Worth.

Apologies: Professor Burnett, Professor Clark, Mr Fishenden, Mr Perrow

In attendance: Mr Brett, Dr Fraser, Professor McKendrick, Dr Palmer, Mr Reynolds, Mr Shaw, Ms Treweek.

Ref. CHE/24/42

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2006 were approved as a correct record.

2. **Matters arising not taken elsewhere**

None.

3. **Chairman's comments**

The chairman thanked Professor Peach for chairing the Open Meeting, which had been a successful and worthwhile event.

4. **Brief report on developments since the last meeting**

Around 60 people had attended an open meeting on 18 May, and a constructive discussion had provided further input to the next draft of the plan. Some case studies to test-run the structure had been suggested and more detail had been requested of the proposed post of Director of ICT. The discussion also brought out the importance of developing an Information Strategy. (It was noted that a draft plan had been produced by ASUC in 2004-5 and that this could be revived and developed in the light of the final version of the strategic plan.)

Various other meetings and presentations had taken place. The draft had been supported by the Strategy and OUCS sub-committees of ICTC and ICTC would be asked to approve it on 8 June. Professor Jeffreys had met a group of M.Sc. students, who had stressed the growing convergence of academic and social computing and had encouraged the development of the VLE and further use of IT for learning and teaching. The Medical Sciences Division had wanted to know how the strategy would benefit staff in clinical departments and the Humanities Division had pointed out that college provision was particularly important in the Humanities.

5. **Draft Strategic Plan**

The drafts had evolved in response to comments from across the University. In particular the benefits to local users had been stressed: the 'centre' would provide an environment to support local services but would not be taking them over.

On 6 June, the draft would be considered by the Capital Steering Group, which was developing a five-year capital plan for the University. Divisional priorities had been identified and the group was now attempting to fit these into the funding envelope. A token amount had been included for IT, recognising that this was unlikely to be enough. On the advice of the Director of Finance, it was agreed that the text of the plan should be more cautious with reference to the possible availability of capital. The question was also raised as to whether the proposed new investment was a response to past under-investment or represented the level needed to keep pace with future demand and technical developments. It was agreed that there should be more benchmarking against expenditure in other universities, in the UK and abroad.

A third draft would be submitted on 19 June to PRAC, which in due course would authorise its circulation across the University. (The draft might also be received by Council in July.) Following consultation throughout Michaelmas Term, it was hoped to produce a final draft by the end of the year to be signed off by the Strategy Steering Group (by email or, if necessary, at another meeting) and then submitted to PRAC on 9 January and to Council for final approval. If approved, implementation would follow at that point.

In conclusion, the draft Strategic Plan was approved *nem con*.

6. **Executive Summary**

Members were broadly content with the balance of issues. It was noted that the cost of local flexibility was absent, on the other hand, costing at different modes would be very approximate at best and in any event local units would be able to make their own decisions. The User Forum would help to provide continuing in-pur on behalf of user interests. The range of needs and expectations of different groups of students was considerable. The description of the post of ICT Director needed to be consistent with the description in the Highlights.

There was some discussion as to the reporting line for the ICT Director. There was a clear preference for a single rather than a joint line and on balance members favoured a line to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research, Academic Services and University Collections).

It was agreed that none of the recommendations should be in bold type.

Otherwise, the Executive Summary was agreed.

7. **Highlights**

It was suggested that 'categories of expenditure' rather than 'valuation' was a more appropriate term. It was agreed to include the Architecture Group in the governance pyramid and to add a brief explanation as to who were the central ICT providers.

Otherwise, the highlights document was agreed.

8. **Formal record**

Mr Brett reported that the record was a web document linking existing documents. Members welcomed the record and hoped that it would enable others to benefit from the strategy-development process; with this in mind, it was suggested that the record

should state that it was *not* confidential and was intended to promote discussion, both within the University and externally. It was agreed to add the titles of the Work Task Groups and not to include emails in the report.

9. **Phase Two**

The timetable for consultation during Michaelmas Term and submissions to PRAC and Council early in Hilary Term was noted. Individuals as well as boards and committees would be able to submit written comments but it was not thought necessary to set up a web file for comments. Colleges would be able to respond individually [and it has been confirmed since the meeting that the Conference of Colleges should also be invited to comment]. In addition to divisional boards, faculties and departments, the central administration and OUSU should also have the opportunity to comment. It was likely that comments would be collected by the Planning Secretariat.

Whilst some draft preparations for implementation would be made during Michaelmas Term, implementation would not begin unless and until approval had been given following the consultation process.

It was agreed that the final version of the report, incorporating comments arising from the consultation process, should be circulated for approval to members of the SSG by email and that a further meeting should only be called if substantial changes to the strategic plan were proposed.

The chairman thanked all members of the group, and in particular Professor Jeffreys and his team, for their contribution to the strategy development process, which had been a most productive exercise and would hopefully inform future such processes.

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