PRIFYSGOL ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 12:30 on 24 NOVEMBER 2025, in the Dialogue Centre, Visualisation Building.

Present: Meri Huws, Chair of Council (Chair); Professor Jon Timmis, Vice-Chancellor; Dr Paul Bevan; Professor Sarah Davies; Kate Eden; Kylie Evans; Millie Hackett, Undeb Aberystwyth President; Dr Aloysius Igboekwu; Nanw Maelor, Welsh Culture Officer and UMCA President); Dan Richards; Arwel Thomas; Mark Tweed; Jane Usherwood; and Claire Vaughan

In attendance: Simon Crick, Chief Financial Officer; Jean Jones, Head of Vice-Chancellor's Office; Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language; Steve Thomas, Director of Communications and External Affairs; Julie Archer, Interim Head of Governance (minutes)

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Angela Hatton, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, and Yusuf Ibrahim.

15. MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

16. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Jane Usherwood noted that they are Council's nominee on the board of trustees for AUPAS, the Aberystwyth University Pension and Assurance Scheme.

Kylie Evans noted that they are a member of the AUPAS.

In relation to the item on CELF, Dan Richards noted that he was conflicted and would not contribute to the discussion.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RECEIVED

Minutes of the meeting held on 07 October 2025 (COU2526-015).

Members noted that item 7.7 should be amended to reflect the fact that the Trade Unions are balloting for industrial action nationally, and that this is not a local matter or reflecting the situation in Aberystwyth.

Members noted their appreciation of the detail of the minutes.

RESOLVED

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

18. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

RECEIVED

A log setting out the progress made in taking forward decisions and actions agreed at the most recent Council meeting, and outstanding actions from previous meetings (COU2526-016).

NOTED

The University Secretary will share verbal updates received since circulation.

19. DECISIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

RECEIVED

Report by Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language (COU2526-018)

NOTED

The report detailed the instances since the last Council meeting where matters had been approved by the Chair on behalf of Council, namely the Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellors.

20. CORRESPONDENCE

1. <u>Institutional Risk Review (IRR)</u>

   RECEIVED

   A letter from James Owen, Chief Executive of Medr (COU2526-019), acknowledging the University's continued good performance in the NSS and requesting an action plan in response to the single notably below benchmark outcome.

   NOTED

   Members noted the correspondence and questioned the deadline for providing a response to Medr. Officers confirmed that an extension had been granted until 22 October, and that the collaborative response from Undeb Aber and the University would be shared with Council.

   The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that this response was expected. Medr FOIA s43(2) [redacted] are happy with the University's direction of travel. The University is not required to provide a response.

   Members noted the intention in the letter to publish anonymized results.

21. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by Professor Jon Timmis, Vice-Chancellor (COU2526-020), comprising three key sections: a highlight report; a planning report including student recruitment; and a communications report.

NOTED

1. Student recruitment overall is 1.3% above the target figures used to compile the budget, with most cohorts coming very close to target. The number of returning students was higher than expected. Work is underway to identify which students they are and whether they are due to specific University intervention.

2. The largest positive variance to target were from the international PGT cohort and the number of returning undergraduate students eligible to pay home fees. The largest negative variance to target was from the home PGT cohort. We will continue to analyse this data to inform our actions going forward into the 2025/26 recruitment cycle, and beyond.

3. Included in the recruitment report is a breakdown by Faculty and Department of three years of recruitment data for our main income source, UG Home students, FOIA s43([redacted] As part of activities to improve this position, we have identified champion subject areas, as those where we think we can do most work in the shortest time.

4. These are driven by data, conversion, application volume, market share, and direction of travel. The plan is to commence in January with the six identified subject areas, then assess the whole process. Members questioned what might be involved in promoting champion subjects. The Chief Marketing Officer is leading, with Associate Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellors, with activities including co-creation of marketing materials, leading to external-facing activity. It was noted there is a limited window to change the dial for 2026 entry.

5. Members welcomed the positive research report and the amount of consultancy, both of which fit well with the strategic aim of strengthening Wales.

6. Welsh Government has announced it will follow the UK government's lead and raise the fee cap for 2026/27 entry. The University will be making a strong recommendation that we do, though it was noted that the end result will be a mixed economy in terms of institutions making changes. FOIA s43(2) [redacted]

7. The Chair noted that there may be questions when the annual report is published, as people may be surprised the budget target has been met. Members questioned whether the surprise is likely to be on the part of internal or external stakeholders. Officers confirmed that communication had been well managed internally and is therefore more likely to be external.

RESOLVED

8. Members agreed that a future briefing session on the Green Futures Innovation Park, and the South Wales AI Growth Zone, would be helpful. [**ACTION**: Governance]

9. The Vice-Chancellor's report was noted.

22. REPORT BY UNDEB ABERYSTWYTH

RECEIVED

Report by Millie Hackett, Undeb Aberystwyth President and Nanw Maelor, Welsh Culture Officer and UMCA President (COU2526-021)

NOTED

1. 159 student volunteers have given 3611 hours of their time and have logged 341 developed and demonstrable skills, including teamwork, communication, problem-solving, organisation, mentoring and training. Logging is important for employability as it helps students to recognise the skills they are developing in their daily student life.

2. Aberystwyth hosted a very successful Inter-Coll Dance in November, with over 500 Welsh students over the weekend, from Wales but also from Welsh societies from universities across England.

3. Work on the establishment of an UMCA constitution is in progress, led by a new constitutional sub-committee. UMCA and Yr Undeb have been working closely to develop the relationship between the two Unions, which has been a very positive process so far.

4. In early November, UMCA and Yr Undeb Presidents attended the NUS conference at Coleg Cambria in Wrexham, where discussions took place around Welsh medium education post-16. Members sought further detail around these discussions, and what are the challenges. There are fewer students doing A-levels through the medium of Welsh, though this is not the case for students from the West. Teaching capacity in universities is a problem. The UMCA President noted that they have good relationships with the Assistant Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellors for Welsh, and they are working together to understand the different challenges within each Faculty that affect students' ability to study through the medium of Welsh.

5. UMCA are looking forward to hosting an event in December for Welsh Language Rights Day, marking 10 years since the closure of Pantycelyn Hall in 2015. The event will see the unveiling of new poetry by Mererid Hopwood, Eurig Salisbury and Hywel Griffiths, which will be displayed on the walls.

6. Members questioned whether the audited accounts of Yr Undeb are seen by Council. Officers confirmed that they will be presented to the March meeting of Council.

RESOLVED

7. Members noted the report.

23. OLD COLLEGE

RECEIVED

Report by Professor Anwen Jones, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience (COU2526-035) noting the financial impacts of the agreed financial model for the initial phase of hotel and leisure operational life and key aspects of relationship management with the hotel partner moving forward.

NOTED

[redacted] FOIA s43(2) [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

FOIA s43(2) [redacted]

[redacted]

24. FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Management Accounts update

RECEIVED

Report by Dallas Baker, Interim Head of Financial Management and Reporting, and Stephen Harrison, Head of Financial Operations and Compliance (COU2526-022) including an update on the savings target for 2025-26 and key elements of the financial position at the end of month 2.

NOTED

1. The forecasted year-end deficit remains at £1.9m. The projected deficit is subject to updates following the student numbers census of November 1st, though no significant deviations are expected.

2. Liquidity projections are closely monitored, with cash surplus remaining a risk.

RESOLVED

3. Members noted the report.

2. Performance of the Endowment and other Investment Funds

RECEIVED

Report by Simon Crick, Chief Financial Officer (COU2526-023) setting out the movements in the endowments and other investment funds during the period 1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025.

NOTED

1. The paper had been scrutinised by Investments Committee, which noted the positive news that the University is likely to hit its income target, despite reducing the size of the investment pool.

2. Members sought assurance from officers that the proportion of bursaries and scholarships that are funded from the endowments is not material.

RESOLVED

3. Members noted the paper.

3. FOIA s43(2) [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

4. FOIA s43(2) [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

FOIA s43(2) [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

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[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

- FOIA s43(2) [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]

5. <u>Annual Report and Financial Statements for year ended 31 July 2025</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Graeme Neill, Communications and Public Affairs (COU2526-026)

NOTED

1. Members offered their thanks to the Chief Financial Officer and team for the report.

2. The report and statements had been considered and discussed at Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and Resources and Performance Committee. It was noted that the accounts are slightly ahead for the year, with income stable but costs reduced.

3. Officers noted the positive shift from 21-31 net liquidity days, while acknowledging that liquidity is still a significant risk.

4. Resources and Performance Committee commented that the tone and imagery were fitting during a challenging period.

5. Audit Risk and Assurance Committee praised both the report's tone and the interplay with the new University's Strategy 2030s. KPMG's report was as clean as you will get, which is testament to good work around the Revolving Credit Facility and endowments. The Finance team had been highly praised, and ARAC members noted the indirect benefit of the credibility of the Finance team with the auditors. The Chair of ARAC remarked that the Letter of Representation to the external auditors is more than a piece of administration, which was acknowledged by Council members.

6. Members noted the importance of acknowledging the University's progress during the last 18 months.

RESOLVED

7. Members approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2025.

6. <u>External Auditors' Management Letter and Memorandum</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Simon Crick, Chief Financial Officer (COU2526-027)

RESOLVED

The External Auditor's Management Letter and Memorandum was approved.

7. <u>Letter of Representation to the External Auditors</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Simon Crick, Chief Financial Officer (COU2526-028)

RESOLVED

The Letter of Representation to the External Auditors was approved.

8. <u>Modern Slavery Disclosure</u>

RECEIVED

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement by Lee Pereira, Procurement Manager (COU2526-029)

NOTED

1. Members noted that it would be helpful going forward for GCC to understand how the statement is working in practice, and whether relevant staff are fully trained.

RESOLVED

2. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement was approved the for publication on the University's website.

9. <u>ASSUR (Annual Sustainability Return)</u>

RECEIVED

Report by David Haywood, Finance Business Partner and Simon Crick, Chief Financial Officer (COU2526-030)

RESOLVED

The Annual Sustainability Return was approved.

10. <u>TRAC Process Oversight</u>

RECEIVED

Report by David Haywood, Research Finance Business Partner (COU2526-031)

NOTED

1. The substantial assurance received following the internal audit.

RESOLVED

2. The process was noted.

11. <u>Transparent Reporting of Income and Expenditure</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Mathew Clark, Tax and Investments Manager (COU2526-032)

NOTED

1. Members identified a typographical error, which will be rectified prior to publication. **[ACTION: Tax and Investments Manager]**

3. The University will review the format of the report for future years.

RESOLVED

3. The report was noted.

12. <u>12 Science Park: Update on Disposal</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Tim Macy, Estates, Facilities and Residences (COU2526-033)

NOTED

1. The disposal was approved in principle by Council in autumn 2023.

2. Three independent valuations were received, and Heads of Terms have now been agreed with a sale price of [redacted], which is higher than the average valuation.

RESOLVED

3. The agreed sale price and the progress towards the sale were noted.

13. <u>Network Rail Wayleave</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Tim Macy, Estates, Facilities and Residences (COU2526-034) seeking an agreement in principle to grant a Wayleave to Network Rail enabling them to install and to maintain a drainage ditch running parallel to the railway adjacent to the University's land at Conker Lane.

1. Members questioned whether it is a permanent or temporary wayleave, as there is usually a financial consideration if permanent.

RESOLVED

2. The granting of a wayleave to Network Rail was approved in principle, to be affixed with the University seal.

25. ANNUAL REPORT ON ESTATES PERFORMANCE

RECEIVED

Presentation by Simon Crick, Chief Financial Officer

NOTED

1. The Annual Report on Estates Performance is a requirement under HEFCW's Financial Management Code, to ensure the governing body receives assurance on the prudent management of the estate.

2. The University is maintaining its estate but not improving it. It is moving away from the old Masterplan, and the new Infrastructure plan should be in place in January. There were no issues to escalate from RPC, who were pleased to hear there is a plan for the estate.

3. Members questioned how the plan to achieve its net zero target is impacted by lack of investment in the estate. Officers confirmed that the University is, where possible, including bids for match funding, and is looking at improvement opportunities as funding becomes available.

4. There are a lot of legacy buildings. RPC discussions were focused on space and property management, and how the University can become more efficient in this space. When plans are completed, the Executive will look at inter-dependencies.

5. An update on the sale of Llanbadarn was requested. FOIA s43(2) [redacted] There is nothing to indicate that the sale will not go through, and it is expected that an update will be provided in January.

RESOLVED

6. To deliver a briefing on the updated Infrastructure plan at a future meeting of Council. [**ACTION:** Governance].

26. ANNUAL REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

RECEIVED

Report by Claire Williams, Health, Safety and Environment Manager (COU2526-036)

NOTED

1. The report has been discussed at Governance and Culture Committee and various changes were suggested, which have since been made.

RESOLVED

2. The Annual Report on Health and Safety was approved.

27. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

1. <u>Annual Assurance Return to Medr</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Julie Archer, Acting Head of Governance (COU2526-037).

NOTED

1. The return documentation was scrutinised by ARAC. Statements were subsequently agreed and supporting evidence has been completed. The required documentation is much less than last year, which may indicate a direction of travel for Medr.

RESOLVED

2. The Annual Assurance Return to Medr was approved

2. <u>Nominations</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language (COU2526-038), setting out the process and recommendations for the recruitment of a Pro Chancellor.

NOTED

1. The process for recruitment of a Pro Chancellor's is outlined in the paper and is similar to that for the recruitment of the Chancellor.

2. After consideration of several strong applications, the Selection Committee recommends to Council the approval of the appointment of Aled Rhys Jones for a period of three years.

3. A request had been received by the Chair of GCC to step back from the role for a period. A similar process had therefore been carried as for the interim chair of ARAC in 2024/25. Following an assessment of members' skills, the recommendation is that Yusuf Ibrahim be appointed Chair until end of the current academic year, noting that the current Chair will remain a member of both GCC and Council.

RESOLVED

4. The recommendation to appoint Aled Rhys Jones as Pro Chancellor for a period of three years, commencing on 1 January 2026 until 31 December 2028, was approved.

5. The appointment of Yusuf Ibrahim as interim Chair of Governance and Culture Committee until the end of the current academic year was approved.

3. University Risk Register

RECEIVED

Report by Helen Eustace and Sarah Taylor, Strategic Planning Department (COU2526-039) setting out the new University Risk Register.

NOTED

1. Risks have been allocated across the sub-committees.

2. Members requested that the next report includes which committees will have oversight of the ‘delegated’ risks. [ACTION: University Secretary].

RESOLVED

3. The new University Risk Register was noted.

4. Revisions to the Institution’s Risk Appetite and Matrix

RECEIVED

Report by Helen Eustace and Sarah Taylor, Strategic Planning Department (COU2526-040) setting out current risk appetite levels for the University’s activities.

NOTED

1. The statement and matrix had been considered by ARAC, who viewed it overall as a strong document, using appropriate language. The committee had substantial discussion around the level of financial risk and questioned whether the University is content in the current climate stating that it has an appetite for elevated financial risk. There was some debate about this in the event of questions from a regulator. ARAC members asked the University Executive to further consider the language, and to report back to the committee [**ACTION**: Head of Planning].

RESOLVED

2. The revisions to the institution’s Risk Appetite and Matrix were approved, pending ARAC confirmation regarding language.

5. Risk Policy

RECEIVED

Revised Risk Management Policy by Helen Eustace and Sarah Taylor, Strategic Planning Department (COU2526-041)

NOTED

1. The revised policy was considered by ARAC. There were again discussions around language, but overall, the committee was content.

2. ARAC noted that Annex C scores risks but not necessarily in the same way as the risk appetite and members questioned whether the methodology needs to align across the policy and the appetite. The committee again asked the University Executive to reflect on language and how easy it is for things to get out of sync.

3. Annex A sets out areas of responsibility and accountability, which is a process that is currently being trialled. If the trial is successful, this will be absorbed into the policy to ensure transparency.

4. This topic is on the agenda for the next Chairs' meeting.

5. Noted that the Chief Financial Officer is currently responsible for risk, but that it will be moving to Governance in January.

RESOLVED

6. The Risk Management Policy was approved.

6. <u>Annual Reports of sub-committees to Council</u>

RECEIVED

Reports by Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language (COU2526-042) detailing the business of the sub-committees of Council during the preceding year.

NOTED

1. ARAC is required by the funder's Financial Management Code to submit a report to Council.

2. The Committee saw a busy year with strong attendance. Arwel Thomas stepped in as Chair for several meetings. The internal audit plan was delivered, with one exception, which has been deferred. The external audit process passed much more smoothly this year and there are good relationships with both KPMG and TIAA. Significant work on the risk register was undertaken, and the risk deep dives were strong. There was a positive move away from discussions around frameworks into actual risks.

3. Remuneration Committee has overseen senior pay decisions, including reviewing benchmarking data for the sector. It should be noted that the period saw no pay increases for senior staff and, in fact, there were voluntary reductions. The committee issued a note of caution that that is not a sustainable option. The committee also proposed a draft Annual Statement on Senior Remuneration for publication.

4. Remuneration Committee members asked the Chair to provide feedback to the Vice-Chancellor and senior team around their transparency, openness, and engagement. The committee was full of praise and wished this to be placed on record.

5. Governance and Culture Committee receives many reports and is aiming to steer discussions back towards culture, planning, and sustainability. It was a very busy year with a huge amount of work from members and officers. There were

challenges with continuity and attendance at times. The current Chair expressed their gratitude to Yusuf Ibrahim for stepping in as Chair for the remainder of the academic year.

6. The Chair of Resources and Performance Committee thanked members for their substantial contribution and offered thanks to the Chief Financial Officer and team for the comprehensive financial reporting, particularly during challenging times and with limited resources. Some adjustments were made to the committee in-year, including extending the length of time for meetings and bringing Hen Goleg higher up the agenda. Looking forward, as that project moves into its operational phase, there is a need to ensure that RPC is the right vehicle for that phase.

RESOLVED

7. Members approved the report from ARAC.

8. To record the Chair's thanks for the contribution and engagement of Chairs of sub-committees, noting that the Chairs' group is working very well.

7. <u>Serious Incidents reported to the Charity Commission</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary (COU2526-043)

NOTED

1. No serious incidents have been reported to the Charity Commission since the last meeting of the committee in June.

2. Due to the very low numbers of serious incidents in the past 12 months, a review of the current arrangements for reporting and the escalation process has been undertaken with Student Journey, to provide assurance around the nil return.

RESOLVED

3. The report was noted.

8. <u>Annual report on the declarations of interests and gifts received</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Julie Archer, Acting Head of Governance (COU2526-044)

NOTED

1. All returns have now been submitted.

2. Members questioned whether this topic is one which is discussed enough by Council, though noted that it is a standing item on Council agendas.

3. Officers reported that the questions asked are under review to ensure to ensure clarity of process. Further work will then take place around the University Executive and senior leadership.

Aloysius Igboekwu returned to the meeting.

RESOLVED

4. The report was noted.

9. <u>Document affixed with the common seal.</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Helen Davies, Governance Officer (COU2526-045)

NOTED

1. Noted that the seal had been affixed to the transfer of title of Maes Elwyn, Morfa Mawr.

RESOLVED

2. The report was noted.

10. <u>NCAGW: Arts Centre application</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language (COU2526-046)

NOTED

1. Daniel Richards and Kate Eden each indicated a conflict of interest with this item. Kate was a Council member at the Arts Council Wales when these funds were being decided upon, albeit via a separate process and board. She is now Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru's Board of Trustees. CELF is embedded within Amgueddfa Cymru, so there is an ongoing relationship as one of the 9 partners. Daniel Richards is a current Trustee of Amgueddfa Cymru.

2. As part of the CELF (National Contemporary Art Gallery Wales) project, Aberystwyth Arts Centre received capital funding, which was subsequently spent. The Arts Council Wales determined that, in order to take security over the grant, they required Aberystwyth University to accept the grant as the registered freeholder of the Arts Centre. The resultant deed of covenant was not escalated to Council as required.

RESOLVED

3. The deed of covenant, including the use of the University Seal, was retrospectively approved.

11. <u>Honorary Awards</u>

RECEIVED

Report by Dr Gwawr Taylor, University Secretary and Director of Welsh Language (COU2526-047) listing nominees for honorary awards as proposed by Honorary Awards Group.

NOTED

1. The initial list of nominations received was short, therefore further applications were sought. The shortlist agreed by Honorary Awards Group was considered by Senate last week, where a concern was raised that none of the nominees will be familiar to the student body. A subsequent discussion took place regarding the potential risks of making awards to celebrities.

2. It was agreed that the process needs to be reviewed, including encouraging greater Undeb engagement. [**ACTION**: Governance to share the request for nominations with Yr Undeb as well as via the weekly student bulletin].

3. Regarding the designation of Aberystwyth Ceredigion as Dinas Llên, Wales' first City of Literature, it was agreed that it does offer an opportunity for allied nominations, but more appropriately for consideration next year. [**ACTION:** Governance].

RESOLVED

4. The shortlist of nominees proposed by Honorary Awards Group was approved.

28. ANNUAL PAY STATEMENT

RECEIVED

Report by Sharon Lilley, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (COU2526-048)

NOTED

1. The report was scrutinised by GCC. A discrepancy with some figures in the appendix was noted, which will be corrected prior to publication.

RESOLVE

2. The Annual Pay Policy statement was approved.

29. ANNUAL REPORT ON RESEARCH ETHICS AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

RECEIVED

Report by Lisa Fisher, Research Governance and Due Diligence Advisor (COU2526-049)

NOTED

1. GCC had sought assurance as to whether research activity is considered through an EDI lens, and that research application processes do not present barriers to particular groups.

RESOLVED

2. The report was noted.

30. QUALITY ASSURANCE STATEMENT

RECEIVED

Report by Kim Bradick, Deputy Registrar (COU2526-050) to provide Council with appropriate evidence that the University has met its quality assurance obligations, as required by Medr.

NOTED

1. Officers noted that the report had been considered by Senate, where no issues were raised.

2. Members questioned whether the statement is the best mechanism to gain assurance, and officers confirmed that this will be considered as part of the review of academic governance.

RESOLVED

3. The statement was noted.

31. ANNUAL REPORT ON COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

RECEIVED

Report by David Moyle, Assistant Registrar (Partnerships) (COU2526-051) covering 'high' and 'medium' risk academic partnership activities overseen by the Academic Registry.

NOTED

1. Officers noted that report had previously been considered by Senate.

RESOLVED

2. The report was noted.

32. WELSH LANGUAGE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT INCLUDING COMPLIANCE REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by Dr Gwawr Taylor, Dylan Hughes and Lowri Jones (COU2526-052) in line with duties under the Welsh Language Standards.

NOTED

1. The report was considered by GCC and was updated following discussions there. The report will be published on the University's website in January.

2. Members questioned how the professional services review has affected Welsh speakers. Officers confirmed that numbers have decreased but noted that there has been an increase in C1 and C2 levels, and a decrease in A0, resulting in little overall change. Officers noted that a Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been carried out on all business cases.

3. Work is ongoing to assess where those Welsh speakers are and where the levels have changed, as the impact on compliance with the standard may be more significant. Human Resources officers are speaking with Heads of Department to assess the impact of the professional services review, and the Welsh language is part of that.

4. Members recommended the addition of some wording to contextualise that prior to publication. [**ACTION**: Welsh Language Services Manager]

RESOLVED

5. The report was approved, subject to the recommended changes being made prior to publication.

33. ANNUAL REPORT FROM AIEC LTD

RECEIVED

Report by Rhian Hayward, CEO AIEC (COU2526-053)

NOTED

1. The report was considered by the University Executive some time ago.

2. AIEC does not make a large amount of money, but it does contribute and is strategically important. The strategic significance can be explained in further detail during the March briefing on the Green Futures Innovation Park.

RESOLVED

3. The report was noted.

34. PREVENT ANNUAL REPORT

RECEIVED

Report by Ian Munton, Director of Student Journey (COU2526-054)

NOTED

1. It was noted that the report was considered by GCC, where members sought assurance around relevant University risks, as well as risk assessments undertaken for students. A discussion also took place around training completion rates and how they, and the general visibility of Prevent, can be improved.

RESOLVED

2. The report was approved.

35. REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

RECEIVED

Verbal updates by Chairs of sub-committees

NOTED

1. Investments Committee: the next meeting will be the 2-year review of the Investments Policy. Quantum Advisory Services have been asked to provide various data points. There will potentially be a smaller asset pool, so what changes will need to be made as a result of that. Members noted it may be helpful to ask Quantum about the AI bubble. [**ACTION**: Tax and Investments Manager].

2. Members sought clarification on the approval process for the Investments Policy. Officers confirmed that it is expected to be presented to Council for approval in the summer.

3. Governance and Culture Committee: received a report on activity in the culture space, including KPIs for both the Our People and EDI plans. Discussions took place around pay, including the ongoing implementation of the Real Living Wage, and potential impacts of the relatively low pay award.

4. Members requested an update on committee membership, noting that there is currently one independent member vacancy. Officers confirmed that Odgers have been appointed to undertake a search, and that there is a need to consider succession planning as part of that recruitment process. Any recommendation from Nominations Committee is likely to come through in between meetings of Council.

RESOLVED

5. Members agreed that a written report from Investments Committee should be included in future [**ACTION:** Head of Governance].

36. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, MEETING REVIEW, AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Rhuanedd Richards left the meeting

RECEIVED

A proposed information sharing protocol from the trustees of the Aberystwyth University Pension and Assurance Scheme (AUPAS).

NOTED

Jane Usherwood did not contribute to the discussion.

Officers explained that they have been in correspondence with AUPAS trustees, aiming to evolve the relationship. The University is underwriting the pension scheme and is providing additional funding every year with the intention of reducing the scheme deficit. The deficit has arisen due to pensioner longevity and investment performance. It is likely to take several years to clear that deficit, at a rate of c£1.5m per year, agreed with the pensions regulator.

The trustees have asked the University for more timely information. Officers had stated that it was not appropriate to provide information that had not yet been seen by the governing body, which members reiterated. Trustee meetings will therefore now follow meetings of University Council.

Members questioned whether it should be the responsibility of the trustees to define what is 'material'. Members and officers suggested that no additional documents should be created to fulfil this requirement, and that we need to work towards an information sharing protocol setting out what can be shared and when.

RESOLVED

Members agreed that officers should have further conversations around the proportionality of the level of detail being sought by the scheme trustees, and that any decision on an information sharing protocol should be delayed until January **[ACTION: Chief Financial Officer]**.

Members agreed that the University will share the information that is provided to Council as well as a pre-defined set of 'reportable events'.

A briefing morning and potentially a special meeting will be held on 30 January, and the next meeting will be held on 23 March 2026.

The meeting finished at 16:29