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**Minutes of the 319<sup>th</sup> COUNCIL meeting, Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (by teleconference)**

PRESENT:	Dame Yve Buckland (Chair)	
	Professor Alec Cameron	Ranjit Dhindsa
	Danielle Gallagher	Dr Melanie Gibbs
	Professor Helen Higson	Dr Fiona Lacey
	Professor Kevin Morley	Professor Gill Nicholls
	Dr Sue Noffke	Dr Vij Randeniya
	Neil Scott	Professor Kate Sugden
	Dr Mike Wright	
APOLOGIES:	Toby Lewis	Dr Rob Perrins
IN ATTENDANCE:	Richard Billingham	Professor Simon Green
	Saskia Loer Hansen	Harry Sheppard
	John Walter (Secretary)	

**GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

**Welcome**

19/146 RESOLVED:

To join the Pro-Chancellor in welcoming Harry Sheppard, SU President (elect) who was attending his first meeting.

**Declarations of Interest**

19/147 NOTED:

That there were no new declarations of interest from members of Council or from those in attendance with respect to any agenda items.

**Constitutional Matters**

19/148 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/73 on constitutional matters.

**Proposed Terms of Reference for Two New Committees**

19/149 RESOLVED:

To approve on recommendation from the NRC:

- i) The terms of reference for two new committees that would replace the NRC with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020: Nominations and Governance Committee (NGC), and Remuneration and Workforce Strategy Committee (RWSC).

- ii) That the membership of the two new committees should comprise the current membership of NRC, except that Dr Sue Noffke would chair the NGC and Dr Vij Randeniya the RWSC.

### **Schedule of Meetings for the University Council and its Committees**

19/150 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/74, a schedule of meetings for the Council and its Committees for 2020/21, noting that the format of meetings would be determined in the light of the latest government guidance on social distancing and staying safe.

### **MINUTES**

#### **Minutes**

19/151 RESOLVED:

To approve the Minutes of the 317<sup>th</sup> meeting and the 318<sup>th</sup> special meeting of the Council, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

#### **Matters Arising**

19/152 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/75 being a report on matters arising from the minutes of the 312<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

#### **Special Meeting of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee (FIC) (Minute 19/122)**

19/153 NOTED:

That special meetings of the FIC had been arranged on 17<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 to discuss scenarios for the financial implications of Covid-19. Council had received the minutes of these meetings and discussed the scenarios at its special meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

#### **Support for Students (Minute 19/140)**

19/154 NOTED:

That a briefing paper on the support being provided by the University to students, including in relation to careers and placements, during the Covid-19 pandemic had been circulated by email to Council members on 27<sup>th</sup> May.

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

#### **Review of University Strategy (Minute 19/141)**

19/156 NOTED:

That a review of the University Strategy in the light of the implications of COVID-19 and a potentially “new normal”, was being undertaken by the Executive and would be shared with the Council at a meeting in the autumn term.

## **STRATEGIC ISSUES**

### **UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

#### **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

19/157 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/76 together with an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, noting the following points:

#### **Aston's General Response to Covid-19**

- The University's first priority during the Covid-19 pandemic continued to be to protect the health and well-being of students, staff and visitors to the campus. Fortunately, to-date there had been no news of any staff or student fatalities as a result of the pandemic. It was possible, however, that alumni, and family members of staff and students had been or would be lost.
- Most staff were continuing to work from home, and students had completed their tuition and assessments to complete the academic year, pending re-enrolment in September. There continue to be few staff and students on campus, with the exception of staff whose roles required their physical presence (security, some facilities and grounds staff), and some students who were still resident in on-campus accommodation (primarily international and research students).
- The University continued to promote the counselling and other support services being provided for staff and students during this challenging period.
- Following a detailed risk assessment by the Critical Incident Response Team, preparation work for partial opening of the campus had begun, having due regard to the latest public health advice to ensure the health, safety and well-being of students, staff and visitors. It was intended to open some of research laboratories (for relevant academics and research students) from 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Currently, it was intended to welcome taught students on to campus in September, however, it was anticipated that a blended programme would be offered at that time, with on-line lectures in place of large-class delivery, complemented by in-person attendance in small group seminars, tutorials and/or laboratories. It was also recognised that there would be some staff and students who might not be able to return in the first instance, and who would, therefore, require on-line support.
- To test the level of staff satisfaction with the level of support that they were receiving from their managers and Aston whilst working from home, the University had undertaken a staff survey in May. Approximately 1300 of the 1900 Aston staff responded, and a very positive response was generally received (>85% 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied') in response to all questions. The results helped to demonstrate that the Executive's approach of focussing on staff communications during lockdown had been effective, as well as providing an endorsement of the efforts of line managers across Aston in supporting their teams at this time. The Vice-Chancellor was immensely proud of the way in which Aston's staff and students had positively responded to these challenges to-date.
- Council members were reassured that the University was working closely with the SU in terms of providing reassurance and information to prospective and current students.

#### **League Table Rankings**

- Two league tables had recently been published and unfortunately, Aston's ranking had fallen in both of them. In the Combined Universities Guide Aston had fallen from 34<sup>th</sup> to 43<sup>rd</sup> and in the QS World Universities Ranking, Aston fallen from 442 (47<sup>th</sup> in the UK) to 511-520 (50<sup>th</sup> in the UK).

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

#### **Race Equality Charter and Black Lives Matter**

- Aston made a decision at the beginning of the year to commit to the Race Equality Charter (REC), administered by AdvanceHE, to build on current performance and culture

regarding race equality, and to commit to further improvement. George Floyd's killing in the USA, and the subsequent response in the UK, had led to calls (from a small number of students and staff) for the University to make a statement on this issue. Some staff and students had also linked this to the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the BME communities and health and care staff. As a charitable body, the University was restricted from engaging in political activity, although Aston fully acknowledged that its students and staff would actively engage in politics, and was committed to providing a safe forum for political debate for its very broad constituency, whose members could be expected to hold a diversity of views on most matters. Therefore, the University would not normally issue a public statement on an issue of this nature. However, Aston was keen to support its large BAME community and, therefore, in responding to this issue, Aston had not sought to pass comment on the actions of others, but rather to communicate a positive message regarding the University's support for its BAME students and staff, its intolerance of racism or discrimination of any kind, its commitment to human rights and racial equality and to real action to improve in this regard, including working towards the Race Equality Charter. A mixed response to this had been received on Twitter, with more likes than comments, but the majority of the comments were negative.

### **Aston Students First - Marketing, Recruitment and Delivery**

19/158 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/77 presented by the Provost and the DVC Engagement, which provided an overview of the purpose, focus and work of the Aston Students First initiative. This aimed:

- to provide a holistic life-cycle approach to encourage students to come to Aston, to thrive and to transform their lives.
- to maximise the number of new and returning students enrolled as Aston in 2020/21.
- to be proactive in providing a high-quality student learning and support experience which was fit for the new future in the next academic year and beyond, taking account of the requirements of different groups of students, in different disciplines. The adoption of more consistent processes and systems across the University would enable this to be achieved more effectively and efficiently.

19/159 NOTED:

- Most immediately, it was necessary to attempt to bring some certainty in an uncertain world via a framework to roll out learning and teaching for 2020/21 and to manage expectations of staff and students that a full return to campus in the same way as previously would not be possible for some time to come. Accordingly, the University would be informing new and returning students that it was looking forward to welcoming them from September 2020, and that Aston would deliver a high-quality learning experience in ways that best supported the health, wellbeing and safety of all students and staff.

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

- Work had started with Estates to audit and implement the social distancing, cleaning and hygiene measures required across the campus. A review of laboratory spaces was ongoing; it would be necessary to reduce the capacity in order to meet the social distancing requirements. It was anticipated that activity would restart in laboratories from first or second week in June. The University was working alongside the Unions in relation to the risk assessment and the guidance that was going to be provided.
- Due to Covid-19, the UCAS deadline for students respond to offers of university places in 2020/21 had been extended to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

- 'Aston Live: festival of learning' was taking place this week, which was focused on international and home PGT students. 1376 people had taken part so far and very positive feedback had been received from participants [*Secretary's note: almost 2300 prospective*

*students had engaged by the end of the week*]. There was little doubt that this was having an impact on the positive number of international acceptances this week, as did the positive announcement from the Home Office earlier in the week that the Graduate Route visa would be available to students who commenced their studies online and come to the UK before 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021 or who undertook blended learning in the UK.

- The DVC Engagement reported on the newly created Engagement Portfolio which had been formed to better manage the interest of Aston's three beneficiary groups and to drive a customer focused and market-led approach to working. An Engagement Plan had been developed to drive this work, and has also enabled some swift adaptation to underpin the University's Covid-19 response in terms of supporting the student experience and in driving revenue in challenging market conditions. The Plan was being used to support the University in making short-term decisions on priorities, whilst keeping an eye on the horizon and the longer-term aspirations. Work on the project to deliver a new Aston website, the virtual "shop window" for the University, was proceeding well and was on track to deliver high quality course pages ready for Clearing.
- A member of Council pointed to the increasing government lobbying from industry to relax the 2-metre social distancing rule and quarantine requirements, and how such a relaxation of rules might impact on Aston. The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University needed to conform to the latest government and public health guidance, but had put in place measures to ensure that it could adapt with speed and agility to changing circumstances. For example, the new timetabling system used algorithms which could take into account changes to social distancing rules and the impact these had on the capacity of teaching rooms and laboratories.
- A Council member asked in the University intended to bid for funding that had been announced by the OfS to provide mental health support for students. The Provost reported that the funding was for the provision of a new national online platform delivering targeted and high-quality mental health support, designed to respond to additional pressures caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Council members asked how the University was responding to the challenge of finding appropriate placements for students during the pandemic, given its impact on the economy and employment opportunities. The Provost reported that the University's decisions and actions were underpinned by the knowledge that the placement year transformed lives and was one of the best tools available to level the playing field for students, in terms of attainment and employment outcomes. This was even more important for student groups who had further to travel towards employment readiness, as many Aston students had to do. Aston had agreed to support all 1,054 students who were on compulsory placement degrees (including 104 compulsory overseas placements) in getting a placement, in a collaborative cross-University way. In agreeing this, a more flexible way had been mapped in which Aston could ensure that all those students had a rewarding placement experience. It had been agreed that after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020, those on non-compulsory placement programmes who had not found a job should move into the final year where the University would provide additional employability support. It had been agreed to allow all those who were required to take a placement overseas to undertake a placement in the UK, except where they were on a compulsory language degree. These latter students were being supported to undertake virtual work and study placements, in collaboration with Aston's overseas partners, and to go abroad when this was possible.
- Council members asked if the move to on-line teaching was increasing the challenge for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who might not have access to laptops and Wi-Fi systems or quiet working space at home. The Provost reported that the student hardship fund had been increased and already £52,000 had been deployed in the provision of 130 laptops for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Digital Services staff had been helping to resolve connection queries.

**ACTION:** *DVC Engagement to arrange a virtual presentation(s) on the new Engagement Portfolio for Council members*

## **Report from the SU President**

19/160 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/78 presented by the Students' Union President which provided a summary of how students were responding to the COVID-19 restrictions and the support being provided to them by the Union and the University. The following points were noted:

- Many students and potential students had started to raise questions about the start of the next academic year and Welcome Week arrangements, and the recent University communications about this had been timely and well-received. The SU was starting to plan and prepare for a socially distanced Welcome Week but there was still a good deal of uncertainty about what this would look like in practice (eg whether sports would be possible or whether societies would be able to hold events in meeting rooms on campus). Students and potential students had many questions and concerns, and were continuing to seek guidance and support from the SU.
- The Students' Union building was now providing a food bank for the local community. Ellie Chambers, VP Welfare and Christina Mathews, Head of International Student Services, in particular were to be congratulated for their sterling efforts in coordinating this project. The initiative was part of #Brum Together, a network of more than 60 partners working together to provide those most in need with essential support and services. This included coordinating deliveries of large quantities of food parcels, hot meals, hygiene products, baby supplies and children's activity packs to families. The foodbank had been featured in a report to a BBC West Midlands regional news programme.
- The SU's approach to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign had been to provide a platform for its members to have a voice. THE SU organised a virtual march in response to the peaceful protests in Birmingham in support of BLM, as many students felt frustrated they were unable to attend physically. This provided a safe, virtual alternative and a platform to feel connected. The SU had worked with the African Caribbean Society (ACS) at every stage of this campaign ensuring that the SU solidarity statement and main objectives were in line with the needs of students and the BLM movement.

## **Financial Matters**

### **Period 9 Management Accounts**

19/161 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/79 being the Management Accounts 2019/20 for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020, which showed a £3.1 million favourable variance versus budget.

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

### **2020/21 Budget and Strategic Financial Forecasts for 2020/21 to 2024/25**

19/162 RECEIVED:

- i) Paper CO/19/80, being the draft 2020/21 Budget and Strategic Financial Forecasts for 2020/21 to 2024/25.
- ii) An oral report from the Chief Operating Officer setting out the context and process for the preparation of next year's budget and the financial forecasts, which had been discussed in detail and endorsed by the FIC.

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

19/163 RESOLVED:

- i) To approve, on the recommendation of the Executive and the FIC, the draft 2020/21 Budget and Strategic Financial Forecasts for 2020/21 to 2024/25 and their submission to OfS.
- ii) To review the financial position of the University in the light of student recruitment at the 14<sup>th</sup> October meeting or if possible, at an earlier Council/Executive away day (to be arranged) focused on the University strategy going forward post Covid-19.

**ACTION:** *COO to take forward the implementation of the Budget and financial forecasts and to submit them to the OfS*

**Council's Key Performance Indicators**

19/164 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/81, presented by the Chief Operating Officer, setting out updated forecast measures for the 10 beneficiary KPIs to measure performance and three financial KPIs in the 2019/20 reporting cycle. Each Executive KPI sponsor had also been requested to provide targets for the KPI 2020/21 reporting cycle, to allow Council to consider the proposed KPI targets in conjunction with the budget and five-year plan projections.

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

**ACTION:** *COO to co-ordinate the development and monitoring of the KPIs*

**University Strategic Risk Register and Risk Appetite**

19/166 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/82, presented by the Chief Operating Officer, which contained:

- i) University Strategic Risk register which had been revised and considered by the Executive.
- ii) Risk appetite statement.
- iii) Strategic Risk Register which had been updated and revised by Executive risk owners, key changes included:
  - Risks 1 to 6; updated and revised.
  - Risk 7: a new risk to reflect issues concerning the Aston website
  - Risk 8; a new risk to reflect Covid-19 challenges to return to 'business as usual'.

19/167 NOTED:

- That the above documents relating to Strategic Risk had been the subject of the Audit and Risk Committee's in-depth discussion (10.6.20).
- The Vice-Chancellor had provided ARC with an overview of the mitigating actions that the University was undertaking in response to the risks arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ARC members had asked if the other seven risks had been reviewed and updated in the light of the Covid-19 risks. Executive members reported that Covid-19 was impacting on all aspects of University business and the other risks had been updated to reflect this. For example, Risk No. 4 : Missing Student Recruitment Targets, was exacerbated by Covid-19, particularly in relation to international student recruitment, and was being mitigated by the "Aston Students First" initiative which aimed to provide programmes in a variety of modes and entry points to accommodate as the requirements of potential students impacted by Covid-19 in different ways.

- ARC members had suggested that it would be very helpful to aid their understanding if, in future, they were to receive a short narrative summarising the current position and any significant movement of risks, outlining the causes for movements and actions taken in response.
- ARC members had asked what could Aston learn from the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the University operations. The Vice-Chancellor had reported that the Executive continued to scan the operating environment for potential new risks. The University was now much more aware of the potential large-scale impact of a pandemic and owing to the measures being taken to mitigate the impact of Covid-19, would be better able to cope and be more resilient in the face of another type of pandemic. Following the Covid-19 lockdown, the University had moved to on-line provision and the majority of staff working from home within a 48-hour period. Covid-19 had highlighted the need for the University to develop a more flexible workforce which could be adjusted with agility and speed to meet future challenges and opportunities; this would entail reviewing the current generous terms and conditions of employment and pension arrangements, and salary protection and redundancy agreements, as well as the mix of staff on permanent contracts versus contingent contracts.
- ARC members had asked the Executive to review the proposed mitigating actions for each of the risks in the risk register in terms of whether they would actually deliver their intended outcomes.

### **Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021**

19/168 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/83 and a presentation by Simon Green on preparations for the REF 2021.

19/169 NOTED:

- REF was a national peer-review exercise to evaluate research of UK Universities, graded from 4\* (world leading) to 1\* (national standard). The REF was critically important to the University, as the results would determine how much research funding it would receive for 5-7 years, would influence Aston's international reputation and would be used in the formulae for league table rankings.
- The University was on track this year to achieving the highest ever level of research grants and awards, although this might be impacted by the Covid 19 restrictions slowing the finalisation of contracts. Of particular note was the University's success in winning the highest ever level of UKRI funding, and in increasing the number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP). There were now KTPs in all Colleges which would help to cement links with business.
- The University had adopted a series of measures to support the sustainability of the research portfolio, with the research contribution rate being critical to ensure that activity was viable going forward. There was a need to focus in future on securing a higher proportion of funding from UKRI/research councils and industry as such funding properly covered University overheads.
- It was anticipated that owing to Covid-19 the REF submission deadline was likely to be deferred to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
- Preparation of a very strong REF submission was on track. Aston's result would be a percentage profile of research by grades. In turn, the profile would comprise outputs (60%), impact (25%) and research environment (15%).

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

- The Council thanked Professor Green, staff in RKE and in Colleges who were contributing to the excellent progress in preparing the REF submission.

## STRATEGY REPORTS

### References from Committees

#### **Report from the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)**

19/170 NOTED:

That a report of the ARC meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 would be submitted to the next Council meeting.

**ACTION:** *Secretary*

#### **Report from the Finance and Infrastructure Committee (FIC)**

19/171 RECEIVED:

Papers CO/19/85 and an oral report from the Chief Operating Officer which summarised issues considered at the FIC meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (the full minutes of which were contained in the Resources and Background Material). Matters considered by FIC included:

- Following a detailed discussion, FIC recommend that Council approve the draft Budget for 2020/21 and Strategic Financial Model Financial Projections for 2020/21 to 2024/25 be approved and used as the basis for the return to OfS in July 2020. The University's financial performance should be reviewed in the light of student recruitment in September/October 2020 (refer to minute 19/162).
- FIC members were impressed with the plans which would deliver an iconic New Building in the centre of the Aston Campus. However, they suggested that FIC and Council would need to consider in due course whether the increased expenditure to deliver such an iconic building was justified in the light of the other financial challenges and priorities faced by the University. FIC approved the Tipping Foundation as the preferred site location and the Pavilion design for the New Building. FIC also approved the future cash flow requirements for design which would take the total expenditure up to £1,310,000 to support a planning application in early October 2020. FIC members agreed that it would be appropriate to invest in the finalisation of the design of the new building, even though the start date for the programme had been deferred. A Progress Report on the New Building was included in the Resources and Background material for the Council meeting (paper CO/19/93).
- FIC approved the investment of £1.64 million in the workplace transformation of MB7th floor as a prototype space for future working at Aston University. This would encompass the move to a more agile way of working, incorporating the use of new technologies, cultural change and a modern and fit-for-purpose physical space. Council received a report on this (paper CO/19/86).

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

- FIC approved revised Financial and Legal Authority Limits.
- FIC received a report on progress with the development of the Aston Campus Masterplan. The Estates Strategy Programme Board had finalised the Masterplan with support from Turleys, the appointed consultants, taking account of feedback received to-date, including informal comments from the BCC planning team, who had been positive and had encouraged Aston to be more ambitious in terms of the potential scale of developments. This document would now be shared formally with internal and external stakeholders, and provide the blueprint for detailed development of the Campus. The key outputs of the masterplan process were to:
  - determine the location of the New Building.
  - the development opportunities for the north and south parts of the campus.
  - test with the planners the potential scale and massing of any future developments.

- determine and the future movement and connection of the campus to the changing city.

These outputs had been achieved. A copy of the Masterplan was included in the Resources and Background material for the Council meeting (paper CO/19/94).

- FIC received a progress report on the implementation and development of the Digital Aston Strategy. Council received a report on this (paper CO/19/87). It was agreed that the Digital Strategy should be included in the review of the University strategy at the Council/Executive away day.
- The Director of Health and Safety and Business Continuity had provided FIC an update on progress with resolving outstanding issues arising from the fire safety assessment of Aston Student Village. FIC was assured that all of the outstanding actions from the fire risk assessments had been completed by Unite Students or were in progress to be completed by the end of June 2020 owing to restricted access to occupied areas. The cladding test results had returned a positive flammability rating for the cladding make-up; consequently, Unite Students were in a local authority planning process to design a replacement scheme for the cladding which was projected to commence in November 2020 on a 28-week programme. Until this replacement cladding work had been completed there were special measures in place, including daily fire inspections, a modified cause and effect for evacuation, and increased monitoring of fire doors and other passive fire protection measures. With regard to non-residential buildings on campus, all buildings had been subject to a fire safety review and detailed compartmentation surveys had been undertaken for older buildings. Findings from these surveys and reviews had led to a programme of prioritised works for which cost-estimates had been obtained. A paper would be submitted to the Executive seeking approval for the programme and costings.

#### **Report from the Nominations and Remuneration Committee (NRC)**

19/172 RECEIVED:

A brief oral report from the BRC Chair of NRC's meeting held prior to this Council meeting.

19/173 NOTED:

- That the NRC (17.6.20) had discussed a longlist of candidates for consideration as potential independent Council members with Mallory Partners, search consultants, and had requested that a shorter and prioritised list of appropriate candidates (ie capable, with capacity and able to attend) be prepared for discussion in the first week of July. [FOI exempt/commercially confidential]
- That NRC had considered an action plan to address the recommendations from the report of the external effectiveness review of Council and its sub-committees undertaken by Shakespeare-Martineau last year. The NRC had agreed that the Pro-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Governance should finalise the proposed changes to the University's statutes, ordinances and operational procedures for presentation to Council for approval at the next meeting.
- That members of NRC and the Vice-Chancellor would tomorrow be interviewing a very strong and highly motivated candidate for possible appointment as an independent Council member. Biographical details of the candidate would be circulated to Council members following this meeting.

19/174 RESOLVED:

To delegate authority to the Panel, comprising members of NRC and the Vice-Chancellor, to appoint an independent member of Council for a three-year term commencing 1st August 2020.

## Report from the Senate

19/175 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/88 which summarised issues considered at the Senate meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 (the full minutes of which were included in the Resources and Background Material).

### Senate Effectiveness Review: Proposed Scope and Methodology

19/176 RECEIVED:

Paper CO/19/89, setting out a proposed scope, methodology and timescale for an externally chaired effectiveness review of Senate and its sub-committees to report to Senate and Council in November 2020. Such a review had been recommended in the report of the Council's effectiveness undertaken last year by Shakespeare-Martineau. Professor Gill Nicholls, HE Advisor to Council, had been consulted and provided advice on the scoping document. The review panel would meet with Council members to ascertain their views on the operation of Senate and its interaction with Council, and how these might be made more effective going forward.

19/177 RESOLVED:

To approve the proposed scope, methodology and timescale for an externally chaired effectiveness review of Senate and its sub-committees as set out in Paper CO/19/89.

**ACTION:** *Provost and Secretary take forward the Senate effectiveness review*

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19/181 NOTED:

That the Council would next meet at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020. A date for the Council/Executive Away Day would be identified.

### VALEDICTORY REMARKS

19/182 RESOLVED:

To join the Chair in thanking the following retiring members for their outstanding service to Council and the University:

- i) **Professor Kevin Morley**, who would be standing down at the end of his term of office on 31<sup>st</sup> July. Kevin became an independent member of the Aston University Council on 1st August 2015 and served as a member of the Audit and Risk Committee from June 2018 to October 2019, when he then agreed to move to the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, where he has served to-date. Kevin had been a longstanding and engaged member of the University Development Board and the University very much hoped that he would agree to continue to help and support Aston in this increasingly important area going forward.
- ii) **Dr Fiona Lacey** who would be standing down as the Academic Assembly Representative on Council on 31<sup>st</sup> July having served two 2-year terms of office on Council.
- iii) **Professor Kate Sugden** who would complete her first 2-year term of office as the Senate representative on 31st July.
- iv) **Danielle Gallagher** who would complete her one-year term of office as the Students' Union President. The Pro-Chancellor thanked Danielle for her contribution to the SU and

the University, particularly in relation to overseeing the successful transfer of operations to the new SU Building, and for the high profile and level of support provided by the SU generally for students and their welfare and engagement, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Danielle had established excellent working relationships with members of Council and the Executive, and her confident contributions had continued to bring the student interest to the heart of Council meetings. Council members wished Danielle every success in her new role with Amazon.

#### **REVIEW OF 318<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

19/183 NOTED:

The Pro-Chancellor invited members to submit comments on the meeting to her or the Secretary, particularly in relation to arrangements for the virtual meeting.

#### **BREIFING FOR INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

19/184 NOTED:

That the Pro-Chancellor would be providing a briefing for independent Council members on topical issues immediately after this meeting.

JGW/25.06.20