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Partnership council update – issue 3, 2 December 2020

At an extraordinary meeting on the 2 December 2020, partnership council considered the university's financial strategy and, in particular, the guiding principles issued to it by the university court for reducing financial deficits, developing financial sustainability and the capacity to invest.

Partnership council welcomed the direction provided by the university court. The members reiterated their commitment to collective leadership on a partnership-wide approach to financial savings and reaffirmed their commitment to the workstreams underway to enact these changes. The partnership council also recognised that all these activities would:

- address current deficits
- create resilience for future funding challenges based on reasonable scenario planning and on making a strong case to Scottish Funding Council for our necessary costs
- focus the university partnership's resource effectively on our core purposes of teaching and research
- create the capacity to invest in developing curriculum, the estate and capacity
- increase income

The actions to achieve this aim would need to include reducing non-academic costs through aligned services, seeking to deliver our curriculum more efficiently, and increasing our income. Partnership council also discussed the notional savings target of £20m by 2022-23 proposed by the university court. The members recognised the scale of the financial challenge the partnership faced, but also the importance of having an evidence-driven, achievable target against which realistic plans could be agreed, with expectation of achieving it. The members agreed the following actions to assist them with developing a full plan which would include a specific target for savings as court has requested:

1. To request additional data from across the partnership to provide clarity on the actual deficit facing the partnership, including the scale and impact of the savings already made by individual partners' financial recovery and mitigation strategies.
2. To seek further financial expertise as well as additional senior manager capacity to assist the change management team to enable them to act quickly and effectively as the court directed.
3. To assign clear responsibility and accountability for change activity to ensure timely and transparent progress.
4. To reassess all current and planned projects and investments in light of the court's request where appropriate.

The members recognised that the potential internal alignment options appraisal, consultancy work around potential collaboration with SRUC, and the strategic plan were all crucial ongoing aspects of the wider strategy and that the financial strategy should be fully engaged with, and informed by, these activities. However, the members also noted that they needed an agreed strategic context around which these various change and service alignment workstreams could be shaped.

The members asked that all communications on this work be candid and transparent, and that all stakeholders, including partners, staff, and students, be fully engaged.

Finally, the members agreed to formulate an initial response in time for a meeting with academic partner board chairs and university court on 8 December 2020. This would build on agreed actions and develop a full savings and growth plan, including firm and timebound targets, for the March 2021 university court meeting.

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Ùrachadh comhairle com-pàirteachais - iris 3, 2 Dùbhlachd 2020

Chuir a' chomhairle com-pàirteachais fàilte air an stiùireadh a thug cùirt an oilthighe seachad. Dhaingnich na buill an dealais a thaobh ceannardas coitcheann air dòigh-obrach air feadh com-pàirteachais a thaobh sàbhalaichean ionmhais agus dhaingnich iad an dealais do na sruthan-obrach a tha a' dol air adhart gus na h-atharrachaidhean sin a chur an gnìomh. Bha a' chomhairle com-pàirteachais cuideachd ag aithneachadh gum biodh na gnìomhan sin uile:

- dèiligeadh ri easbhaidhean làithreach
- cruthachadh fulangas airson dùbhlain maoinichidh san àm ri teachd stèidhichte air dealbhadh suidheachaidh reusanta agus air argamaid làidir a dhèanamh do Chomhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba airson nan cosgaisean riatanach againn
- cuimseachadh goireas com-pàirteachais an oilthighe gu h-èifeachdach air na prìomh adhbharan againn airson teagasg agus rannsachadh
- cruthachadh a' chomais air tasgadh a dhèanamh ann an leasachadh curraicealam, an oighreachd agus an comas
- ag àrdachadh teachd-a-steach

Feumaidh na gnìomhan gus an t-amas seo a choileanadh a bhith a' toirt a-steach lùghdachadh air cosgaisean neo-acadaimigeach tro sheirbheisean co-thaobhaichte, a' feuchainn ri ar curraicealam a libhrigeadh ann an dòigh nas èifeachdaiche, agus a' meudachadh ar teachd-a-steach. Bheachdaich a' chomhairle com-pàirteachais cuideachd air an targaid sàbhalaich baralach de £20m ro 2022-23 a mhol cùirt an oilthighe. Bha na buill ag aithneachadh meud an dùbhlain ionmhais a bha fa chomhair a' chom-pàirteachais, ach cuideachd cho cudromach 's a bha e targaid a bhith air a stiùireadh le fianais mu choinneamh phlanaichean reusanta a ghabhadh aontachadh, le dùil gun deidheadh a choileanadh. Dh'aontaich na buill na gnìomhan a leanas gus an cuideachadh le bhith a' leasachadh làn phlana a bhiodh a' toirt a-steach targaid shònraichte airson sàbhalaichean mar a tha a' chùirt air iarraidh:

1. Dàta a bharrachd iarraidh bho air feadh a' chom-pàirteachais gus soilleireachd a thoirt seachad mun fhìor easbhaidh a tha mu choinneimh a' chom-pàirteachais, a' gabhail a-steach sgèile agus buaidh nan sàbhalaichean a rinn ro-innleachdan ionmhais agus lasachadh ionmhais chom-pàirtichean fa leth.
2. Barrachd eòlais ionmhais a shireadh a thuilleadh air comas àrd-mhanaidsear a bharrachd gus an sgioba riaghlaidh atharrachaidh a chuideachadh gus leigeil leotha obrachadh gu sgiobalta agus gu h-èifeachdach mar a stiùir a' chùirt.

3. Uallach agus cunntachalachd soilleir a shònrachadh airson gnìomhachd atharrachaidh gus dèanamh cinnteach gum bi adhartas luath agus follaiseach.
4. A h-uile pròiseact agus tasgadh làithreach agus dealbhaichte ath-mheasadh a rèir iarrtas na cùirte, far a bheil sin iomchaidh.

Bha na buill ag aithneachadh gu robh an luachadh roghainnean co-thaobhadh taobh a-staigh, obair comhairleachaidh timcheall air co-obrachadh a dh'fhaodadh a bhith ann le SRUC, agus am plana ro-innleachdail uile, nam feartan deatamach leantainneach den ro-innleachd san fharsaingeachd agus gum bu chòir don ro-innleachd ionmhais a bhith an sàs gu h-iomlan agus air a fiosrachadh leis na gnìomhan sin. Ach, thug na buill fa-near cuideachd gun robh feum aca air co-theacs ro-innleachdail aontaichte timcheall air an gabhadh na diofar shruthan-obrach atharrachaidh is co-thaobhadh seirbheis sin a chumadh.

Dh'iarr na buill gum biodh a h-uile conaltradh mun obair seo onarach agus follaiseach, agus gum biodh làn chom-pàirt aig gach neach-ùidh, a' gabhail a-steach com-pàirtichean, luchd-obrach, agus oileanaich.

Mu dheireadh, dh'aontaich na buill a' chiad fhreagairt a chur ri chèile ann an àm airson coinneamh le cathraichean bùird com-pàirtiche acadaimigeach agus cùirt an oilthighe air 8 Dùbhlachd 2020. Bhiodh seo a' togail air gnìomhan aontaichte agus a' leasachadh làn phlana sàbhalaidd is fàis, a' gabhail a-steach thargaidean daingeann is ùine, airson coinneamh cùirt an oilthighe sa Mhàrt 2021.