



MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES 10 JULY 2025

REDACTED MINUTES FOR PUBLICATION

A meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at Horizons, 60 Queen's Road, Reading RG1 4BS from 12.15-16.15pm on Thursday 10 July 2025.

Present:	Prof. N Braisby (NB) C Costigan (CC) A Denton (AD) J Gill (JG) J Hubert (JH) N Hughes (NH) Prof M Jones (MJ) Dr L Marr (LM) P McCrea OBE (PM) B McManus (BM) D O'Rourke (DOR) J Quinn (JQ) C Thackeray (CT) A Wheaton (AW)	(Vice Chair) (Student Trustee) (Staff Trustee) (Chair) (Student Trustee) (Staff Trustee) (Vice Chancellor)
In attendance:	H Al-Katib (HAK) C Augustine (CA) D Balme (DB) S Bartle (SB) J Fawkes (JEF) Dr W Finlay (WF) L Gaitskell (LG) L Hughes (LH) Prof. A Lee (AL)	(Director of Strategy and Planning, for item 2.1 only) (Board Apprentice) (Chief Operating Officer) (Pro Vice Chancellor Commercial) (Deputy Vice Chancellor & University Secretary) (Pro Vice Chancellor Education & Students) (Board Apprentice) (Clerk to the Board) (Associate Dean Research – for lunch and learn only)
Apologies:	R Kerslake CBE (RK) G Scott (GS) G Ralphs (GR) A Williams (AWi)	(Honorary Treasurer) (Executive Director Innovation & Partnerships)

LUNCH AND LEARN

13566 UNIVERSITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH AMBITIONS

- 13567 Prior to the formal meeting commencing, a lunch and learn session was held featuring a presentation by Dr Wendy Finlay and Prof. Ange Lee on the institution's research ambitions and progress against these. The slide deck for the presentation was shared on the Trustee Portal. Within the presentation, WF/AL highlighted that the focus has been on building capacity in the last few years with RDAP and a REF submission as the long-term goals. Effort has been put into growing the infrastructure required for research provision and growing the academic team capable of delivering on research. Progress is steady but slow as the institution remains focussed on teaching first at the current time. Overall, research income has grown from zero to £250k per annum, despite the University remaining ineligible for UKRI funding. A research repository has been established with 121 outputs in it to date and 22,000 downloads. A Research Strategy has also been adopted which aligns with the institution's Globe aims and the United Nations SDGs.
- 13568 The focus is currently on establishing the research degree provision with the Open University as validating partner. This provision is now likely to commence in 2026. AL highlighted that within the next five year plan the target for research is to deliver 5 PhD students per annum. 30 completions will be required to secure Research Degree Awarding Powers so it is likely to take 7-10 years to achieve. More research active and qualified staff will be essential to deliver on this ambition.
- 13569 University of the Built Environment is also working towards being able to offer Professional Doctorates and to making its first Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission in 2029, which, if successful, would make the University eligible for UKRI funding. Overall, the path ahead is a long one and will require long term commitment but is an essential component of establishing University of the Built Environment as a full university in its truest sense.
- 13570 At the close of the presentation, there was discussion and questions from the Trustees. The Board was impressed by the progress made in the last few years and recognised the journey underway and commitment, particularly financial, that is required over the long term. The Board also welcomed the partnership approach to growing research at the University which will be a key element to success in the REF, recognising that University of the Built Environment is often ineligible to be a lead partner in any projects (again due to being ineligible for UKRI funding).

13571 The Board's commitment to the vision and ambition for research is essential and the continued investment into this area of the strategy will ensure the desired culture around research is developed within the institution as it evolves away from being a teaching only University.

13572 At the close of the discussion, the Chair thanked WF/AL for all their work in this area, which has really started to gain traction in recent years. The Board would like to see progress with research remain on their meeting agendas at regular intervals and suggested AL could hold an additional session with the Chair and any other Trustees who wish to attend to help them better understand research and the UBE ambitions. AL was then invited to leave the meeting.

ACTION: Organise a further session for the Chair (and any other Trustees who wish to attend) with AL to better understand research and UBE's ambitions. [LH]

1) GENERAL BOARD GOVERNANCE

13573 1.1) DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

13274 There was a conflict of interest reported for Chrystal Augustine for agenda item 4.1 and she will leave the meeting for the discussion. There were no other conflicts of interest reported.

13575 1.2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

13576 There were apologies for absence from Graeme Scott, Ros Kerslake CBE, Gareth Ralphs and Aled Williams.

13577 The Chair reminded the Trustees that this was the first meeting of the Board of **University of the Built Environment**, which was warmly applauded.

13578 1.3) CHAIR'S ACTIONS

13579 The Board **NOTED** the Chair's Action approved via email on 1 May 2025 to agree an extension of the permission allowing the Transfer Agreement between UCEM/LSA to be executed by the Vice Chancellor/Deputy Vice Chancellor up to and including 15 May 2025. The Transfer Agreement was duly executed on 7 May 2025 in accordance with the Board authority provided.

13580 The Board **NOTED** the Chair's Action approved via email on 12 May 2025 to submit the proposed variation request to the UCEM and LSA Access and Participation Plans post-merger to ensure ongoing compliance with the Office for Students Conditions of Registration. The Variation Request was

duly submitted on 12 May 2025 in accordance with the Board authority provided.

- 13581 The Board **NOTED** the Chair's Action approved via email on 23 June 2025 to approve the minutes (and proposed redactions) of the Board of Trustees meeting held on 3 April 2025 as a true record and to be signed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees / published on the University's governance webpage.

13582 1.4) MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS SUMMARY

- 13583 The summary showing the outcomes of actions from the meeting held 3 April 2025 (paper 1.4) was taken as read with updates on listed actions duly **NOTED**.

- 13584 The Board **NOTED** paper 1.4a which provided the requested Board crib sheet on the University's core external messaging. The summary was considered highly useful, and it was agreed it should be updated at least every six months going forwards. The Board thanked Mike Speight for having prepared the document. REDACTED

ACTION: Ensure the Board crib sheet is regularly updated in the future. [LH]

13585 1.5) APPOINTMENT OF LUCY CARMICHAEL TO THE BOARD

- 13586 The University Secretary updated the Board on the rationale and process for the appointment of Lucy Carmichael, Chair of the Board at LSA, to the University of the Built Environment Board of Trustees. This followed on from the Nominations and Governance Committee's consideration of the matter via Chair's Action in June 2025 (paper 1.5). According to the terms of the Transfer Agreement, Lucy is to be appointed for a period of 12 months from the Transfer, initially as a non-voting observer (until the remaining LSA Chairty, Beechwood Architecture, is wound up) and then as a full Trustee for the remainder of the twelve-month period (this is up to 7 May 2026). The Nominations & Governance Committee was happy to support and recommend the appointment to the Board provided all standard appointment checks are completed satisfactorily.

- 13587 The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Lucy Carmichael as a non-voting observer on the Board for the immediate future (until Beechwood Architecture is wound up) and as a full Trustee for the remainder of the twelve-months once the winding-up is completed, as per the terms of the Transfer Agreement signed between UCEM and the LSA on 7 May 2025. The appointment remains subject to references being sought, ID checks completed, and induction/onboarding process carried out satisfactorily

and prior to Lucy joining her first University of the Built Environment Board meeting in September 2025.

ACTION: Initiate appointment checks for Lucy Carmichael and ensure induction and onboarding is completed before September 2025. [JEF/LH]

13588 1.6) PRIVY COUNCIL UPDATE ON LEGAL NAME CHANGE TO UNIVERSITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

13589 Jane Fawkes gave an update on the legal and regulatory processes now being followed to complete the **legal** name change from UCEM to University of the Built Environment with the OfS and the Privy Council (paper 1.6). There has been some confusion between the Office for Students, the Department for Education and The Privy Council on the process to be followed and which body has ultimate decision-making power. This is being considered by the various legal teams currently. Until this is resolved, the process of updating the Royal Charter and changing the name legally cannot be completed. JEF will update the Board again when more is known.

13590 The Board **NOTED** the update on progress with the legal name change of UCEM to University of the Built Environment and that it is likely to take additional time and legal fees/advice before it is successfully concluded.

2) UNIVERSITY UPDATE

13591 2.1) CX STRATEGY 2025-2030

13592 Hannah Al-Katib, Director of Strategy and Planning joined the meeting for item 2.1.

13593 HAK presented paper 2.1 as a reminder to the Board of the institution's strategic priorities for 2025-2030 from within the wider CX strategic ambition, vision and core purpose. The wider CX Strategy will take the institution into the 2050's to achieve but at that point University of the Built Environment will be the destination of choice and the voice for the sectors it serves. Sustainability has been added to the core visual for the strategy, alongside organisational health, both of which are essential and must be fully embedded.

13594 HAK reported that the second strategic period (2025-2030) which commences this summer will start to balance the focus of the institution between impact and influence, where it has been more focussed on impact in the first strategic period up to 2025. There will also be a focus on building on the strong foundations established and becoming more productive. The headline objectives were all developed out of the guiding principles that the

Board agreed during 2023 and 2024. Some of the key areas of activity to come include leveraging the opportunity now available to the institution through its rebranding, securing TEF/Ofsted (or whatever their successors become), growing professional training and securing good student number growth, particularly in new subject areas.

13595 The Board **NOTED** the core elements of the approved CX Strategic Plan 2025–2030, which were considered balanced but achievable, and welcomed the timely reminder of the plans for the forthcoming strategic period.

13596 The Chair thanked HAK for her contribution and invited her to leave the meeting.

13597 2.2) STRATEGIC MERGER WITH THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE – INTEGRATION UPDATE

13598 JEF/DB presented paper 2.2 to the Board which provided an update on the work to integrate the LSA into the University, including a planned two-phased approach to this project and the monitoring of associated risks.

13599 The Board welcomed and thanked the team for the level of detail provided in the report, which was important on this first significant post-merger reporting occasion to the Board. The progress since the merger, just two months ago, was acknowledged and the now fully detailed plans and structured approach for managing the integration were praised. There continues to be challenges and issues that emerge but within the context of this plan they are being managed and resolved. The aim is to bring stability and prepare for delivery for September and then to work through the full integration thereafter, through five specific workstreams and a project management framework which will allow for regular reporting against progress. Grateful thanks were extended to the leadership team for managing this process.

13600 WF reported that Head of School interviews start this week, and a strong field of 9 candidates have been shortlisted for the process.

13601 SB presented paper 2.2a which gave an overview of student recruitment for the LSA programme vs target for the autumn 2025 intake. SB reminded Trustees that the programme is not an apprenticeship but is similar in that it requires students to have a paid work placement for 3 days a week during their first year of study in order to complete the programme. REDACTED. As soon as Autumn 2025 recruitment concludes, focus will turn to Autumn 2026 to ensure the volume of placements required then will be available. SB welcomed offers of support from the Board and through their networks to help secure more placements.

13602 REDACTED

13603 REDACTED

13604 The Board queried the status of required IT and cyber security improvements at LSA. DB assured the Board that work was well underway, including new Wi-Fi provision and IT infrastructure being put in place.

13605 REDACTED

13606 The Board **NOTED** the overall progress update on LSA's integration into the University and the structured, two-phased approach to this work that is now in place, which will allow for lessons to be learnt for the future. The Board also **NOTED** the performance vs target on new student recruitment to the LSA programme for autumn 2025. The Board welcomed the level of detail provided for this first report on progress but agreed that this was not required for future reporting. Finally, the Board proposed that a future Board meeting might be held at Beechwood Road to allow all Trustees to better understand the site constraints and how the programme works.

13607 2.3) VICE CHANCELLOR'S OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS 2024-25 AND GENERAL UPDATE

13608 A University progress update was provided by the Vice Chancellor (paper 2.3). The coloured RAG ratings in the report reflect the status of the objective at almost the end of the 2024-25 financial year, providing the near-final perspective on performance against the top level CX9 goals for the year, project activities and some additional commentary on internal and external work taking place at the current time. The Vice Chancellor reminded Trustees that the LSA project undertaken over the last six months does not feature in the CX9 metrics as it had not emerged as an opportunity at the outset for the year. As a result it has been absorbed over and above the performance delivered targeted within this plan.

13609 The Board was advised that the national Qualification Achievement Rate referred to in the report is 23.6% not 32.6% as written in the report in error. QAR remains a huge challenge for the sector and for the institution itself. The Vice Chancellor continues to lobby for an integrated End Point Assessment for the standard. The issue of RICS capacity within the APC is largely now acknowledged as a core issue and actions were agreed to support capacity in the system until an integrated EPA can be agreed. The performance vs target for this metric will, however, remain red all year.

13610 The Board queried whether University of the Built Environment will experience increased competition if the standard becomes integrated in

the future. The current trend is for market exit from delivery on the Chartered Surveyor standard and as delivery is likely to remain challenging in other areas, it is unlikely a huge increase in competition would be seen.

- 13610 The Vice Chancellor reported that module success rates have again improved and are the best ever pass rates and results despite not having delivered this on **all** modules as targeted.
- 13611 New student recruitment has been strong and is overall ahead of target, though numbers on new programmes have not performed as well as hoped. Initiatives are in place to improve the institution's go-to-market strategies. Challenges remain with securing new students to programmes that cannot be accredited until a cohort of students has successfully completed the course (RTPI in particular). Trustees queried whether an uplift has been experienced as a result of the new name/brand, but SB reported it was too early to assess the impact.
- 13612 The Vice Chancellor reported that the NSS scores for the year were released on 9 July 2025 and show a headline reduction in overall satisfaction of 0.9% for the institution which is below target for the year. Overall, scores from apprentices have reduced for the University but for non-apprentices the satisfaction score sits at 86.4%, which would rank the University 15 out of 142 institutions – an exceptional result for an online provider. The scores for the mental wellbeing support services provided by the University also remain exceptional at 90.9%. Within each question some scores have improved, and some have reduced but further detailed analysis will now be undertaken and an action plan for the year ahead agreed. Whilst the Board was understanding of the result, Trustees encouraged the institution to address satisfaction scores for apprentices given they are now the majority of UBE students. It was commented that making enhancements in this area requires a tri-partite approach with employer support being fundamental to the success of an apprenticeship.
- 13613 The Vice Chancellor reported that the Employee Engagement Survey outcome for June 2025 remained at 3.9 – flat compared to November 2024. This will be further discussed at agenda item 2.4.
- 13614 The Vice Chancellor expressed his thanks to all University Teams for delivering on the launch of the new brand by June of this year. New external signage on Horizons will be installed next week.
- 13615 The final part of the report provided information on the external influencing activities the Vice Chancellor has been undertaking, the highest profile of which involves having secured a place on the Construction Skills Mission Board, which first met on 26 June with the Deputy Prime Minister chairing the meeting. The core aim of the CSMB is to facilitate new and skilled workers into the sector over the next five years. The Vice Chancellor is now

following up with all Professional Bodies in the sector to engage them in the mission, the response to which has been unprecedentedly positive from all. It is likely solutions will focus on pre-degree level, and the University would be able to support with Level 4 qualifications. The concept of stackable apprenticeships built by level and with exit qualifications at each level is also being explored.

13616 The Vice Chancellor advised the Board that conversations have been held with PR agencies, including ING Media, on the University's brand profile and seizing the opportunities afford by the rebrand. This will require enhanced focus in the coming year.

13617 REDACTED

13618 The Board thanked the Vice Chancellor and the Executive Team for delivery of the CX9 and the broadly positive performance for the year. The Board **NOTED** the final performance against the CX9 goals for the 2024-25 as RAG-rated in the report and verbally updated on in the meeting.

13619 The Board requested that in future reports the RAG rating is left grey or empty if targets are not yet measurable. For example, the NSS score had been reported as green when it was published to the Board prior to the results being announced and this is potentially misleading.

ACTION: Ensure RAG reporting of performance is left grey/empty until measurements are accurate/known in the year in future reports. [AW/LH]

13620 2.4) EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

13621 The Chair introduced this item which was based on the Board's desire to have a broad and in-depth discussion on employee engagement given the dip in the overall engagement score experienced in the winter 2024 survey results (paper 2.4).

13622 The Vice Chancellor announced that the result of the most recent survey (which only closed on 4 July 2025) was an overall weighted average score of 3.9 – so flat from November 2024 survey and missing the 4.25 metric in the CX9 for the year. DB presented the data currently available to the Board (the slides were placed on the Trustee Portal for reference). Overall, the Executive accepts the results and that there is some good and bad within the scores, reflecting the stress the institution has been under for some time in terms of resourcing. The team believes it is clearly now time to invest back into the institution.

- 13623 DB advised that participation in the latest survey stood at 89% with an increase in the overall number of responses due to a larger workforce. The total eligible to participate includes those on holiday, sick leave or maternity leave. The total participation rate allows for data confidence in that significant numbers of staff are engaging with survey. DB then showed data trends over time. Survey questions are responded to within three categories – individual, team and organisation. In November the organisation level scores fell from 82% to 61% and they have increased to 66% in the latest result. At that time the sickness consultation policy consultation was being held and impacted negatively. The bounce back is a positive start to recovering this score. Communication clearly remains a challenge, but it will always be so because some initiatives simply cannot be communicated to staff as early as they would wish. The underspend this year on staff development may also be reflected in these scores.
- 13624 The latest Employer Net Promoter Score has increased from -5 to 6 but has not recovered from the huge drop it took in November 2024 to the target of 40. Small drops were seen at individual and team levels and the responses likely link to line management challenges across the institution as well as workload.
- 13625 Overall, the scores reflect an institution that is growing and changing and feeling the pain of this across some areas of the business. The Executive Team will be working hard to ensure staff can embrace this journey in the future and to invest in core areas of the business/productivity initiatives that will make a difference to workload.
- 13626 The Board then discussed the results and the trends over time. Comments included:
- Individual and Team results have been consistently reducing over the last two years, and this cannot be attributed to the name change, LSA or senior level organisational and structure changes which all took place across the first six months of 2025. The Executive Team believe this correlates to five years of work to drive a surplus on income and a consequent lack of investment back into the business to help staff in their roles. There has also been a change in ways of working across this period in a post-Covid working environment. The impact on institutional culture is being felt.
 - The results reinforce the importance of the newly developed HR and Technology Strategies to the institution. A 'you said, we did' communications approach on the back of the survey results might be required in the future.
 - The institution is now operating in unfamiliar levels of complexity with new apprenticeship standards and programmes coming on board, the development of research and new ways of working where prior to these it had been very static. The new areas of work are

challenging staff and without the foundations in place to support some of the changes it is compounded.

- The institution also collects qualitative comments in the survey and secures feedback through exit interviews and the staff meetings the COO undertook with the Director of HR following the last survey results. All of this feeds into the action plans to address employee engagement scores.
- The current company used for the Employee Engagement Survey can not provide any benchmark data as the University is its only education provider client. Benchmarks to other sectors could be provided though.
- The University has no specific internal communications role/resource, and it is planned for this to be part of the solution with a role budgeted for in the DVC department.

13627 Charlotte Thackeray and Jon Hubert, the Staff Trustees, presented the Staff Trustee report (paper 2.4a) also focussed on employee engagement. It provided a SWOT analysis of staff feedback based on significant areas of work/the business in the year to date – the LSA merger, the organisational restructure and the University Title / rebrand project. The paper was based on conversations held with 16 different teams across the institution. The core issues raised were communication and workload.

13628 The conversations have highlighted that communications is a weakness but there are polarised views within the institution which might come from different levels of staff, longevity of service and age. It was felt the core issue stems from the additional requests made of staff to fit in unanticipated project work on top of BAU. The tension is coming from the growth of the institution which is seen positively but some staff need reassurance about change and greater levels of support through the transition and adjustment.

13629 The Board requested sight of the qualitative comments in the survey once they are available, given that the overall trends in the result remain negative or flat. The Board also requested that the next survey is choreographed to ensure the full results are available for the Board meeting on 4 December 2025 and not just partially available.

ACTION: Share the qualitative comments from the Employee Engagement Survey with the Board when they are available. [JEF/DB]

Ensure the next survey in November 2025 is carried out in enough time to allow the full results to be presented to the Board on 4 December 2025. [JEF/DB]

- 13630 It was acknowledged that it can be hard to effect change in a short period of time, and the Board suggested the frequency of the surveys be considered as twice a year may be too often. DB confirmed the contract for the survey is being reviewed currently and this is part of what will be considered.
- 13631 JEF proposed possible Terms of Reference for a Board People and Culture sub-committee that could be formed in order to ensure the Board feels sufficiently engaged with staff views and people matters in the future (paper 2.4b). If this were something the Board wished to pursue, the specific remit and membership would be determined by the Nominations & Governance Committee.
- 13632 The overall view was that establishing this as a permanent committee was not considered appropriate to the Board, as this is more relevant for management to address. The Board preferred to retain the discussion at Board level in meetings each quarter to ensure the focus and oversight of the Board is secured; whilst enabling the internal remedial actions to be taken by the management team as appropriate.
- 13633 The Board **NOTED** the result of 3.9 in the summer 2025 Employee Engagement Survey.
- 13634 The Board **AGREED** it would not establish a People and Culture Committee but would retain Employee Engagement as a substantive agenda item at the Board for the medium-term future to ensure the trends in the data start to improve.

ACTION: Ensure Employee Engagement remains a substantive agenda item at Board meetings across the coming year until the scores and trends are improved. [JEF]

13635 2.5) BUDGET FOR 2025-26

- 13636 DB presented paper 2.5 to the Board which provided the proposed budget for 2025-26. Initially reviewed by Finance Committee in June 2025, it was noted that the proposals had been substantially altered based on feedback from the Committee REDACTED.
- 13637 DB explained the impact of the reduction and what would not be delivered this year as a result of the lower level of investment. Broadly this was summarised as Shinfield Grange and LSA remain in the budget as originally planned but there are reductions within the research, strategic and productivity items which were outlined in the paper. REDACTED The Board noted that RK (in absentia) had provided her support to adding these items back into the budget now, rather than waiting until later in the year.

13638 REDACTED

13639 Other matters raised in the discussion included:
REDACTED

13640 The Board **APPROVED** the proposed budget for 2025-26 of £790K deficit. The list of prioritised spend was agreed to be an Executive decision within the approved budget. Total budget for the year will be reviewed once initial performance is known.

13641 The Board **ENDORSED** the work now required to cost the new strategy in full to help inform future investment decisions, which they asked to be presented to the next Finance Committee in November 2025.

ACTION: Undertake work to fully cost the strategy for the Finance Committee to assess. [DB]

13642 2.6) CX9 TARGETS FOR 2025-26

13643 DB presented the proposed CX9 targets for the 2025-26 academic year (paper 2.6). Whilst some targets, such as employee engagement, were acknowledged to be very challenging to achieve, DB re-stated the Executive's commitment to the goals as set out. It was suggested an addition 'P' theme on 'people' could be a useful addition to the focus for the year in this context. Where some targets look different to those of 2024-25, such as student outcomes, it was noted that the metrics had changed this year. The reductions in Qualification Achievement Rate and Professional Training income were also noted which were as a result of realism in the case of QAR and de-prioritisation in the context of the LSA workload for professional training.

13644 The Board **APPROVED** the CX9 metrics for the 2025-26 financial and academic year, noting that rollout has already commenced in order to tie in with the performance review and objective setting processes underway through July and August 2025.

13645 2.7) RE-INTRODUCTION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION (FREEDOM OF SPEECH) ACT 2023 AND POTENTIAL NEW OFS GOVERNANCE CONDITION OF REGISTRATION

13646 JEF introduced paper 2.7 which provided an overview of the implications of the re-introduction of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 on the institution and gave a briefing on the potential introduction of a new governance Condition of Registration with the OfS. The paper clearly set out to the Board how the University plans to ensure compliance with the Act. The paper also clearly demonstrated that if the new Governance condition

were introduced by the OFS to existing providers, the University would be able to ensure compliance without issue.

- 13647 The Trustees did query how the Act might apply to the institution's UCEM Asia Ltd operation in Hong Kong and JEF agreed to report back to the Board any implications of this on the institution at the next meeting.

ACTION: Report to the Board on any implications with regards to the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 for the institutions Hong Kong operations. [JEF]

- 13648 The Board **NOTED** the requirements of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and the potential new OfS Condition of Registration E7. The Board also **NOTED** that a Task and Finish Group will be convened to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act.

13649 2.8) STUDENT TRUSTEE UPDATE

- 13650 Adam Denton and Ben McManus, the Student Trustees, provided the Student Trustee report (paper 2.8) focussed on the student learning experience both academically and from a study support perspective.

- 13651 The strengths of the academic provision are considered to be flexibility and the ability to relate studies to activities undertaken in the workplace, providing real world context. There were considered to be opportunities to enhance the academic experience by creating a library of exemplar assessments and in encouraging more student collaboration in group projects.

- 13652 In terms of the study support provided by the University, the Apprenticeship Outcomes Officers were considered to play an invaluable role but that some meetings should take place without line managers present. Students also query whether hybrid delivery would also better support students with general social and workplace skills that also need to be developed. There were also suggestions regarding assessed Q&A sessions and EPA supervision provision. It was noted that there is opportunity for the University to lead the way in digital approaches and the Digital Campus project that is commencing at the University was welcomed.

- 13653 The Board **NOTED** the Student Trustee update and thanked AD/BM for their work to collate regular feedback from students to the Board.

- 13654 The Board also congratulated BM on having recently passed his APC to secure MRICS status.

3) STRATEGIC DISCUSSION

13655 3.1) FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

13656 The Vice Chancellor/JEF introduced a strategic discussion item focussed on the challenges and opportunities of financial sustainability across the Higher Education sector at the current time (paper 3.1). The paper included contributions and thoughts from the Higher Education Trustees on the Board – Prof Michelle Jones, Jyotveer Gill, Dr Liz Marr and Chris Costigan.

13657 The sector was universally acknowledged to be in huge financial difficulties and in need of fundamental change in order to survive into the future. In addition to the thoughts set out in the paper, it was highlighted that announcements were made about the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) by Government on 9 July and that these provide opportunities for the University in the future – Trustees were recommended to undertake further reading on this. The aim of the LLE is to raise the levels of available funding for learners via the Student Loan Company but to distribute it across bite-sized learning and a longer time frame – which clearly might align well with University of the Built Environment's delivery model and ambitions for professional training and the building of stackable awards that recognise prior learning. These could be developed within consortia and partnerships at levels the University does not currently operate at. The focus was very much on collaboration, joint provision and the post-16 demographic. It was noted that funding is largely available at sub-degree level so the University could scale up at Level 4 within such a model, thereby creating flow into its higher levels of study thereafter.

13658 Despite the clear opportunities for the University, which clearly buck the trend across higher education currently, the Board also expressed caution about balancing the opportunity for expansion with the limitations of the University's systems and institutional capacity at the current time. Fixing of the fundamentals that support operational delivery is required before further opportunities can be capitalised upon.

13659 Finally, MJ encouraged Trustees to read the Executive Summary/lessons learnt of the [Gillies Report](#) into the financial management of the University of Dundee which was published in June 2025. In particular, the report highlights just how quickly things can go wrong. The University of Dundee would have gone insolvent without the support of the Scottish Government.

4) PROPERTY UPDATE

13660 4.1) REDACTED

13661 REDACTED

13662 REDACTED

13663 REDACTED

ACTION: REDACTED

13664 REDACTED

13665 REDACTED

5) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13666 5.1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES FROM BOARD SUB-COMMITTEES

13667 The Chair reminded Trustees that significant business is undertaken on behalf of the Board by its sub-committees and that it is important for the wider Board to be aware of the business discussed and the decisions taken. Meetings of two Sub-Committee that have taken place since the last Board meeting in April. Chairs were invited to provide an overview of the outcomes of those meetings to the Board (noting that some items had already been covered in detail under substantive items in this Board meeting).

13668 CC provided an update on the outcomes and decisions of the Audit Committee, held 22 May 2025, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 5.1a. Outside of those matters already covered by the Board in this meeting, the Board **NOTED** that some of the key items discussed were: ongoing risk management of the merger with the London School of Architecture; apprenticeships funding compliance; and, the establishment of an internal audit service in 2025-26 to be led by RSM. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting will be available for reference on the Trustee Portal.

13669 DOR (Vice Chair of Finance Committee) provided an update on the outcomes and decisions of the Finance Committee, held 12 June 2025, as presented in the Executive Summary of the meeting at paper 5.1b. Aside from those matters already covered by the Board in this meeting, the Board **NOTED** that some of the key items discussed were: agreement of student fees for 2026-27 onwards; and, agreement that LSA financials will be presented as a separate P&L through 2025-26 to allow for performance tracking against the initial budget agreed for the merger. The Board also **NOTED** that the full minutes of the meeting will be available for reference on the Trustee Portal.

13670 5.2) MATTERS FOR NOTING, APPROVAL AND REPORT

13671 The Board was invited to make comments on the additional Board paper of matters for noting and approval (items 6, 7 and 8). Particular attention was drawn to the Degree Outcomes Statement at Paper 7.2b which demonstrated significant progress having been made in the award of good honours degrees at the institution. No other comments were made so all matters were deemed approved and noted (as below).

13672 5.3) THANKS AND FAREWELL TO GARETH RALPHS, INDEPENDENT TRUSTEE

13673 The Chair formally expressed the Board's thanks to Gareth Ralphs for his service on the Board as an Independent Trustee for the last three years. A gift and card prepared for the occasion would be sent to Gareth who was absent from the meeting.

13674 5.4) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13675 JEF advised the Board that the University needs to submit a Reportable Event to the OfS and as per the terms of the Reportable Event Policy, this will require Board approval. The reportable event would notify the OfS that:
The learning provision sub-contract that the University had with South Hampshire College Group is coming to an end on 31 July 2025, as all students on the programme have now completed their final EPA submission opportunity. This means that the information contained in our entry in the OfS register needs to be updated, whereby 'Does the provider deliver sub-contracted provision on behalf of another provider?' is amended to 'No'

13676 The Board **APPROVED** the submission of a Reportable Event to the OfS amending the register entry relative to sub-contracted provision when that provision formally concludes on 31 July 2025.

13677 Trustees were reminded that the period for annual Trustee Reviews was approaching and that LH would be seeking to organise the appointments with all Trustees for early August.

13678 Trustees were reminded that Register of Interests forms need to be returned to LH as soon as possible ahead of the annual audit processes commencing during the summer.

13679 Trustees were reminded that there is a nominations window currently open for Honorary Degrees until 25th July and Trustees were encouraged to submit candidates for consideration, bearing in mind that a good field is desired as these will be the first University Honorary Degree awardees to be created.

13680 Trustees were advised that Board Apprentice recruitment has now started and would benefit from Trustees sharing the links through their networks and re-posting the advert via social media.

13681 Finally, Trustees were reminded that in the University's brand guidelines, at least in the medium-term, the institution should be referred to as University of the Built Environment and abbreviations to UBE should be avoided where possible.

13682 There being no other items of business raised, the Chair thanked all Trustees for their participation in the meeting and wished them an enjoyable and restful summer.

13683 5.5) MEETING CLOSE

13684 The Chair closed the meeting at 16.01pm.

The following matters were circulated in a separate pack for approval, noting or report in advance of the meeting.

6) EXTERNAL AND REGULATORY UPDATE

13685 6.1) OFFICE FOR STUDENTS CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION COMPLIANCE REGISTER

13686 An update on the UCEM compliance register with OfS Conditions of Registration was provided at paper 6.1 and 6.1a.

13687 The Board **NOTED** the updated position regarding the University's compliance with OFS conditions of registration, that University of the Built Environment remains compliant with all conditions. The Board **NOTED** the specific update on conditions F1, F3 and F4. The Board **NOTED** the potential changes that may be introduced to the OfS approach to quality assessment.

7) MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR REPORT

13688 7.1) APPRENTICESHIPS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND OFSTED INSPECTION REGIME CHANGES

13689 The Board **NOTED** the Apprenticeships Quality Improvement Plan and how the University is working towards a higher judgement at its next Ofsted

inspection, but that changes are anticipated to the Ofsted inspection regime before the University is next inspected.

13690 **7.2) ACADEMIC REPORTS**

13691 The Board **NOTED** that the Executive Summary of the Academic Board meeting held on 2 June 2025.

13692 The Board **APPROVED** the Degree Outcomes Statement 2023-24.

ACTION: **Publish the Degree Outcomes Statement 2023-24 on the external website. [LH]**

13693 **7.3) FORVIS MAZARS AUDIT STRATEGY MEMORANDUM**

13694 The Board **APPROVED** the Forvis Mazars Audit Strategy Memorandum for audit work for the 2024-25 financial year and **NOTED** that audit fieldwork will take place over the two weeks commencing 8 September 2025 with Helen Knowles remaining as Audit Partner.

13695 **7.4) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE**

13696 The Board **APPROVED** the Board of Trustees Terms of Reference V23.01 for publication as the new V24.00.

ACTION: **Finalise and publish the Board of Trustees Terms of Reference V24.00.**

8) OTHER MATTERS FOR NOTING ONLY

13697 **8.1) TRUSTEE CALENDAR**

13698 The Board **NOTED** the Trustee calendar of dates for 2025, noting the minor updates recently made.

13699 The Board **NOTED** the Trustee calendar of dates for 2026, which have now been issued in Outlook to all Trustees.

13700 **8.2) REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

13701 The Board **NOTED** the quarterly report on Health and Safety.

13702 **8.3) UCEM COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND WHISTLEBLOWING REPORT**

13703 The Board **NOTED** the data on complaints made to University of the Built Environment in Quarter 3 2024-25 as detailed in paper 8.3.

13704 The Board **NOTED** the data on appeals cases in Quarter 3 2024-25 as detailed in paper 8.3.

13705 The Board **NOTED** that there had been no whistleblowing cases.

13706 8.4) DATA PROTECTION REPORT

13707 The Board **NOTED** the seven minor data protection breaches in the April-June 2025 period, and that there were no Data Subject Access Requests or third-party disclosures (paper 8.4). The Board **NOTED** that the overall rate of breaches remains relatively low. The Board also **NOTED** that the data protection function at UCEM is still being managed on an outsourced basis via Evalian.

13708 8.5) STAFF ORGANISATION CHART

13709 An updated Senior Level University staff organisational chart by department / SLT level was provided at paper 8.5 and **NOTED** by the Board.

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 18 September 2025

Meetings before 10 July 2025:

18 August 2025 – Quarterly Business Review

4 September 2025 – Remuneration Committee

Signed



Name

Peter McCrea OBE

Position

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Date

18 September 2025