

Summary of Business for
Council Effectiveness and Statutes Review
Project Board



Title	Governance Webpage Options
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Date	15 July 2013
Status	For decision
Document type	Options paper
Summary	This paper offers options as to how the current governance webpages might be restructured to facilitate the publication of minutes
Previous consultation	None
Resource implications	Time from staff to implement said changes; potential time from Communications team
Risk analysis	See attached risk register
Effective date of introduction	Immediate
Recommendation	The Project Board is asked to DISCUSS the options and DECIDE on a course of action

Governance webpage options

The current College governance webpages currently only provide the agendas and minutes of Council meetings with committee documents held behind the College's firewall.

The new definition document for Universities from the Information Commissioner's Office states that "Minutes of formal meetings where key decisions are made about the operation of the HEI should be available... Information in this class should be available at least for the current and previous three years." The document also states that universities ought to be publishing agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes from the governing body, Council / Senate, academic boards and steering groups and committees.

This coincides with the recommendations from the 2010 and 2013 Council effectiveness reviews that the College should publish Council papers online and the request from the Project Board that more documentation should be made available online.

There are three options as to how and how much we might wish to publish.

- Option 1 is to move the pages for all Council-related committees to the Governance webpages. This would ensure that our information is accessible and all in one place.
- Option 2 is to find a suitable place in the Governance section to accommodate all of the committees which fall under the Planning and Resources banner, as well as relocating the Council committees. Some of these committees could be seen to be making key decisions about the operation of the College such as Estates Major Projects Committee and Academic Planning Committee and so would fall under the remit of the new definition document. These committees are currently housed and maintained in the Strategic Development Unit pages behind a firewall which prevents access from outside the College.
- Option 3 is to choose a mixture of both Council and management committees whose documentation will be published online outside the firewall. It may be necessary in the interests of transparency to list all the committees which exist but provide links to the restricted area for their agendas and minutes.

The main Planning and Resources Committee frequently handles business which is both commercially and strategically important and so the minutes of this committee would incur the most redactions. The secretary of PRC would need to assist the Secretariat in determining which information was sensitive at the time of publication. It is estimated that this would take a further hour per meeting for the Secretariat to read through and redact the minutes appropriately and receive confirmation from the Secretary of PRC.

To allow items of business to play out over the term, it is proposed that PRC minutes would be published at the same time as the Council committee minutes are published. This would allow for items of business to potentially become less sensitive as they are acted upon throughout the term and this would allow for a more comprehensive set of minutes to be published.

In order to prevent time being wasted on updating redacted versions of minutes as items of business become public knowledge, it may be necessary to have a disclaimer by the PRC section which says

that redactions are correct at the time of publication and any queries should be directed to the FOI inbox.

With regard to the physical restructuring of the webpages, there are again a number of options.

- Option 1 is to have Council committees added as a tab next to the existing ones on the Council page. This tab could hold the terms of reference, agendas, minutes and papers of each committee we add to it.
- Option 2 is to have a separate webpage for the committees, situated underneath the Council tab in the sidebar on the Governance page. This would give us more space on the page to lay out the published items and would provide a clearer indicator when looking at the Governance page as to where these items are kept. Academic Board and its committees should probably be given a page of their own.
- A possible third option is one which would need input and guidance from the Communications team. Many comparator universities utilise a Calendar which houses all the documentation which is important to their institution. One example of this is the University of East Anglia which can be found here: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/calendar>. This includes their governing documents, their institutional structure, terms of reference and so forth. Within the structure of the Calendar they are able to house all the information about the workings of their institution.

It is difficult to find a place to house management committees within the current Governance webpages. Should the Project Board choose option 1 for the committee documents, then perhaps a further tab could be added to accommodate management committees. Alternatively, a small drop down option in the sidebar under Council could highlight management committees.

Should the Project Board choose option 2 then management committees could be allocated their own space within that webpage.

The Board is asked to decide for how many committees it wishes to recommend that we routinely publish documentation, and how it would like this documentation to be presented online.