

Synopsis of responses to the web consultation on the strategic plan.

All staff and students were invited to respond to the online consultation during the week beginning 26 February. By the end of the consultation period (23 March) 125 individuals responded, some of whom were on behalf of consultative fora. This document provides a summary of the main issues that came to light in response to each of the consultation's questions, and includes a number of (unattributed) comments submitted by individuals.

Vision

Do you think the Vision should (please choose one of the following):		
	Responses	
Remain as in the 2013-18 plan?	7%	7
Be revised to take account of the four issues recommended by PRAC?	69%	70
Reproduce the relevant section from Statute I?	24%	24
Comments		50

- 1) Positive aspects of Statute I were recognised and welcomed by many

“Brevity and factual nature of Statute I very appealing and avoids need to position us in terms of leadership with respect to the world -- our Vision should be about something higher and more abstract than where we are in some global leadership race.”

- 2) There was support to extend access and diversity to ‘equality and diversity, including access and inclusion for all students and staff’. This should extend to all categories of staff and students.

“Because it's not just a 'nice to have' tick box but essential to ensure we attract the best people and do the best, most relevant research.”

- 3) Other comments on specific elements of the vision:

- Provide leadership preferable to lead the world;
- The University should aim to provide leadership in research, education and engagement
- One Oxford (for example how can fundraising be better coordinated across colleges and the University);
- Work transparently to the highest possible standards (e.g. ethics);
- Environmental impact ought to be referenced;
- Greater emphasis on local community.

- 4) The colleges

- The collegiate structure's potential to enable and support interdisciplinarity for groups and individuals, and to provide supportive communities in which students and scholars can flourish (as individuals and members of groups that interact and collaborate) was recognised.
- The following points were also raised about the consequences of the collegiate structure: possible duplication of effort, additional bureaucracy, missed opportunities for economies of scale, and the necessity for complex communication channels

Priorities

Do you think that global reach should be highlighted as an important priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	85%	79
No	15%	14
Comments		33

Overall broadly supportive, noting that ‘Oxford in the world’ plus ‘impact and innovation’ may negate the need for this as a specific priority.

- 1) Relevance in view of
 - a) likely future academic and student base
 - b) global events and Brexit
- 2) Potential link to access and inclusivity, and the need to cast the net widely in striving for excellence

Do you think that networking, communication, and interdisciplinarity should be highlighted as a priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	77%	72
No	23%	21
Comments		33

- 1) Overall supportive – but the general view was that it was not clear it warrants the status of a strategic priority, and it is covered by the emergent themes.
 - a) Academia is too siloed,
 - b) greatest discoveries not made in a vacuum
- 2) The majority of points from the comments were negative
 - a) The wording is a bit ‘faddish’ and out of date. Better to say ‘striving to solve problems facing society in a changing world’.
 - b) Some comments suggested that this priority could be wrapped into “Global Reach” since networking would be an integral element in global reach.
 - c) This doesn’t include reference to the University’s role as an educator – comes over as advancement of research and innovation, not educating students.
 - d) Rather than interdisciplinarity a priority of “global excellence in every form of scholarship and teaching” was suggested.

Emerging issues

A. Access and Diversity – these are major issues on which the University needs to progress and should be an explicit priority in the new University Strategic Plan.

Should Access and Diversity should be highlighted as a priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	93%	83
No	7%	6
Comments		40

Overall comments were very supportive, echoing points provided in response to the Vision. A clear sense that it should be broadened to ‘equality and diversity’, for both students and staff.

- 1) How will it be implemented, and what will success look like. Need to set out ‘concrete steps’.
 - a) Need to explain and instil relevant training and communications.
 - b) Calls for greater engagement with the multilingual nature of the UK.
 - c) Some comments indicated wariness of the possibility of positive discrimination being introduced at the possible expense of academic excellence.
 - d) Need for evidence based approach to reduce risk of tokenism and lip service.
- 2) Oxford gives off an aura of not listening when criticised on outreach and diversity, which must change,
 - a) Some respondents thought excellent progress has been made recently.
 - b) Others considered progress to be too slow and required prioritising to produce better outcomes.
- 3) Impact on staffing
 - a) Cost of housing as a barrier to access
 - b) Local people find it economically very challenging to work in Oxford
 - c) Lengthy commutes due to high costs of living within the city.
- 4) Challenges associated with casualization of teaching making academia challenging to break into, especially from ‘marginalised backgrounds’

‘Access and Diversity are hugely important issues which need to be tackled. In many respects Oxford needs to stop throwing money at the problem and sit down and really consider what the best way to improve this is. This should be considered not only at the undergraduate level but into graduates, early career researchers and up into its governance structure.’

If we are to benefit society, it follows that we will be accessible to it. If we are to be world-leading, it follows that we will be diverse. The reverse does not follow: being accessible doesn't necessarily benefit society by itself (e.g., if we destroy the quality or standards of our teaching, it won't matter that we are accessible); diversity does not make one world-leading by itself (it is perfectly possible to be diverse and second rate). So we should think of these things as means to our ends rather than objectives in their own right.’

B. Oxford in the world – as a global leader in higher education, Oxford also has an important role locally, regionally and nationally. The University should pursue these roles with rigour, in particular in its response to Brexit.

Should Oxford in the world be highlighted as a priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	93 %	83
No	7%	6
Comments		35

- 1) Need for clarity of what it means – four elements locally, regionally, nationally, and globally
 - a) Emphasis of local community engagement – for recruitment
 - b) Sense that this is what the University should be doing
- 2) Caution against being too narrow around Brexit, encouragement to be proactive not reactive
 - a) Need for clarity for EU staff and students, and simplifying, and stabilising as much as possible
 - b) Explicitly state that the world includes the EU
 - c) Discussion on how the moving target of Brexit should be reflected in the strategy
- 3) Counter argument: highlighting other areas of the vision as priorities will be of greater benefit in perpetuating and supporting Oxford as a global leader

‘We should, however, cleave to academic standards whenever possible. Pursue evidence-based responses; not shy away from new evidence should it be contradictory; acknowledge the extreme differences people experience within the local, regional, and national communities; maintain the independence/autonomy of the university from any political machine.’

C. Sustainability, Efficiency and Effectiveness – the next five years will bring many challenges. The collegiate University will need to strengthen its financial position by working in concert to deliver more efficient, effective and sustainable services.

Should Sustainability, Efficiency and Effectiveness be highlighted as a priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	72%	63
No	28%	24
Comments		42

Over half of the comments were in favour of this priority, albeit with a minority of queries about what it means, the extent to which environmental sustainability should be included, and whether it should be identified as a priority since it is something the University should undertake as a matter of course.

There was a clear emphasis on the need not to be managerially aggressive in delivering this priority, concern that it was shorthand for job cuts, and an emphasis on the need to value employees in any resultant course of action. The fact that many colleagues are currently working long hours was emphasised.

“However, this should not be taken as licence to pursue aggressive 'management consultancy'-style "reforms" to working practices or to attack the working conditions of staff. Transport and housing are currently unsustainable in the whole region and as the dominant force the University should be showing "Leadership" to fix this.”

A number of self-identified recent recruits to the collegiate University highlighted their surprise at the levels of duplication of effort and inefficiency across the organisation.

“The waste of money, time, resources and people at this University is staggering. Most of our competitors do a lot more with a lot less.”

D. Size and Shape – the growth of the collegiate University over the last decade reflects its academic success, particularly in research. An academic case has been made for that growth to continue but, if so, the collegiate University will need to put in place plans to respond to that case.

Should Size and Shape be highlighted as a priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	59 %	49
No	41 %	34
Comments		39

The comments provided a summary of many of the issues that any consideration of size and shape in the collegiate University context should aim to address:

- 1) Has the case for growth been made for growth?
 - a) A clear sense that there is not a unified view on this point across the collegiate University: is growth in student numbers required, or changes to the shape of the student body of greater priority?
 - b) Details of recent changes to size and shape would help the discussion, along with understanding the advantages and disadvantages.
 - c) Administrative growth should not be encouraged.
- 2) How would targets be set – and how could academic priorities be taken into account, to ensure the range of disciplines is maintained?
- 3) Consequences of growth on staff workload should be included in any such discussion.
- 4) What role should the colleges play, specifically in graduate provision if graduate numbers rise?
 - a) Should new graduate college(s) be established, or current colleges’ graduate provision be increased?
 - b) Should the link with colleges be broken, mindful of the consequences?
- 5) Could size and shape could be linked to access and diversity?
- 6) The quality of students is paramount;
 - a) Excellence in research and education should be prioritised
 - b) Could the ‘Princeton Approach’ (strict limits to high quality student numbers) be adopted?
- 7) Does the city have the capacity to absorb further growth?
- 8) How would targets be set? It was noted that growth in recent years has not always taken place jointly across colleges and departments/facilities, resulting in additional pressures in some aspects of the students’ support.

E. Impact and Innovation – the University’s research and education will continue to provide significant social and economic impact. Working with partners we need to foster an environment of creativity and innovation in both research and education.

Should Impact and Innovation should be highlighted as a priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	85%	72
No	15%	13
Comments		28

The comments were broadly supportive and raised the following specific points:

- 1) Innovation was recognised as a top priority
 - a) Clear concerns with ‘impact’ and an emphasis on the need for impact to be appropriate for the subject area.
 - b) Emphasis that in many social sciences and humanities disciplines, in particular, innovation and impact are not the immediate aims of research agenda, and the University should protect the long term approach to excellent research and scholarship in these cases.
 - c) Academic excellence should be the ultimate measure of academic success.
 - d) Should the definition be expanded to include innovation in teaching?
 - e) Potential to link innovation with ‘Oxford in the world’ raised.
- 2) The University’s role in translating research into impact was emphasised, and possible approaches to encouraging it suggested e.g. should expectations of innovation be included in academic contracts?
- 3) Need to include public engagement with research since it can increase the quality and impact of research:
 - a) The importance of engagement, impact and innovation for not just economic prosperity– but also societal benefits in terms of public culture, health and wellbeing and democratic citizenship.
 - b) To highlight the benefits of widening engagement and Public Engagement with Research to researchers - including: enhancing research and impact; access to funding; new collaborations and partnerships and new research perspectives; research that is aligned to societal needs.
- 4) Opportunities to use innovation to improve back office systems and reduce waste of administrative resources.

“It should be _a_ priority, but not _the_ priority. The ultimate measure of our success is academic excellence, not impact”.

F. Staff and Student Housing – the national housing crisis is particularly acute in Oxford. To continue to attract the very best staff and students to Oxford we will need to ensure that high quality affordable housing is available. In order to deliver this, the University will need to work with Colleges and with external partners to develop affordable housing schemes for staff and to provide additional student accommodation.

Should Staff and Student Housing be highlighted as a priority?		
	Responses	
Yes	79 %	69
No	21 %	18

Comments

42

The comments were almost all supportive that the University should do something to address housing for staff and students, and raised the following specific points:

- 1) Housing was recognised as a priority, which the University should (on balance) seek to address. It was questioned whether it would be better placed as an enabling strategy to allow the University to achieve the principal aims of research and teaching?
- 2) Affordable housing was cited as being crucial to address the access agenda – and the need to offer it for all staff, and include them in the discussions was emphasised, specific issues included:
 - a) It is becoming less possible for staff (almost regardless of grade) to afford to live within commuting distance of Oxford.
 - b) Emphasised as being one of the most important issues faced by students
 - c) The lack of affordable housing located within a reasonable commuting time of the city, with quality local schools, was cited as one of the main reasons for staff leaving the University
 - d) It is crucial for quality of life, and overall well-being of staff and students.
- 3) Opportunities to work with the city and regional councils to plan for housing development, noting the potential to enhance town/gown relations
 - a) Caution against building on green field sites was emphasised
- 4) The unequal distribution of college support for housing was highlighted.
- 5) The problem will only be exacerbated as the University expands – could student numbers be reduced to ease the housing pressures?
- 6) Opportunities for more innovative solutions were proposed:
 - a) satellite offices in nearby towns for ‘back office’ functions
 - b) better use of flexible working.

Do you think the Personnel Strategy should become an enabling strategy for the 2018-23 Strategic Plan, so that the three core strategies reflect the principal objects of Statute I?

Should the Personnel Strategy become an enabling strategy?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	84 %	57
No	16 %	12
Comments	40	

Whilst in the voting 84% of respondents were in favour of moving the Personnel Strategy from ‘core’ to ‘enabling’, the comments raised a number of concerns about such a move. The prevailing view was that as people are at the core of supporting the University to deliver its vision, and moving the Personnel Strategy to ‘enabling’ would not send the right message.

That said a significant number of respondents commented that they did not understand what the question meant.

Commitments

A. Commitment 1 – to maintain originality, significance and rigour in research within a framework of the highest standards of infrastructure, training, and integrity.

32 Comments – 19 supportive of the commitment, the main points raised in the commentary were as follows:

- 1) Need for a more holistic career focus, and to place researchers at its core, and to support researchers as people. It was felt that a specific commitment to enhance the professional and institutional experience of researchers will add value to the plan. Specific actions may refer to commitments contained in Athena SWAN and Race Equality Action Plans.
- 2) Investment in infrastructure should take second place to investment in people, specifically more investment in training is required.
- 3) Some suggested changes to the wording – ‘maintain’ should be replaced with ‘champion’ ‘collaboration’ should be included.

B. Commitment 2 – to empower the creative autonomy of individuals to address fundamental questions of real significance and applied questions with potential to change the world.

39 Comments – 19 supportive of the commitment, the main points raised in the commentary were as follows:

- 1) Groups of researchers should be referenced, not just individuals
 - a) Acknowledgement of the contribution of ‘individuals at all levels’ to reflect early career researchers’ contributions
- 2) Concern that this approach fails to address some key approaches to research:
 - a) Recognition of research that ‘preserves the endangered’, as well as that which ‘changes the world’.
 - b) The scholarly pursuit of research for its own sake
- 3) Concern at wording –
 - a) Reads awkwardly and not particularly clear
 - b) Can individuals be autonomous if they are only supposed to address questions of real significance?
- 4) Concern at service provision which means academics are expected to undertake significant levels of administrative activity.

C. Research Commitment 3 – to maintain and develop resources, and invest in subject areas of long-term worth

45 Comments – 12 supportive of the commitment, the main points raised in the commentary were as follows:

- 1) Some concern at what this means, and whether it could be made more specific.
 - a) how ‘worth’ would be defined, and by whom
 - b) whether benefit, or impact should be used instead of ‘worth’ (in view of its monetary implications).
 - c) What the consequences would be on those subjects not deemed to have long term worth according to the resultant definition

‘Every academic subject is equally worthy, academically speaking; and even if we consider social/economic worth, it is not immediately clear what subject areas will be more or less important in 50 or 100 years.’

A. Education Commitment 4 – to ensure that our undergraduate and graduate admissions processes identify students with outstanding academic potential and the ability to benefit from an Oxford course whatever their background.

41 comments 24 were supportive.

The commentary provided an emphasis on the need to integrate this commitment with access (and coordinate it better across the collegiate University); and the need for greater emphasis on graduate outreach and support.

B. Education Commitment 5 – to ensure that the best Oxford experience is the typical experience, for all undergraduate and postgraduate students, and that Oxford fully equips graduates for the best of the diverse range of opportunities for study and employment

40 responses 17 were supportive

Comments provided a range of views on this commitment, one of the main points made was that it should be redrafted to be clearer and more specific. Particular concerns related to:

- 1) The diversity of experience offered, which could be broadened out to include the wider student experience, and reference other actions and commitments across the University.
 - a) The need to develop exemplary inclusive teaching practices.
 - b) Supporting staff so that they are enabled to deliver an excellent experience to all students (in line with the Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students, and consistent with indicators included in externally driven agenda such as TEF, Athena SWAN and the Race Equality Charter, building on the University's proactive approach to these areas).
- 2) The challenges of delivering a consistent approach in a decentralised university were highlighted:
 - a) the need for joint departmental/faculty and college working;
 - b) the variation in the student experiences offered by colleges.

C. Education Commitment 6 – to ensure that the unique richness of the collegiate University's academic environment is both retained and refreshed.

34 responses, 13 in favour

The commentary called for a redrafting of the statement, to be clearer and more specific.

- 1) On the collegiate structure a number points were provided, including
 - a) The disparity between those members of staff with and without a college affiliation
 - b) Discrepancy in the financial support colleges are able to provide to both their staff and students.

A. Widening engagement Commitment 7 – to serve society by promoting and contributing to economic, cultural, and social advances through the accessibility of Oxford's ideas, skills, and expertise.

29 responses, 18 in favour

Strong support in the commentary for this commitment, at the local, regional, national, and global level. Recognition of the work undertaken recently to foster a culture in which Public Engagement with Research is embedded at Oxford. Opportunities to include Oxford's teaching, especially for distance learners.

B. Widening engagement Commitment 8 – to share the fruits of research as widely as possible.

32 responses, 14 in favour

Whilst the spirit of this was supported, the wording was considered 'odd', and in need of revision – to have a more active strategy.

The opportunity to include a commitment to transparency and open research was suggested, and the need for funding to do so acknowledged.

C. Widening engagement Commitment 9 – to develop a strong and constructive relationship with the wider communities of Oxford by contributing to the cultural, health, social and economic wellbeing of the local and regional community.

33 responses 14 in favour

The strong links to commitment 7 were noted. The overall aim of this commitment was broadly endorsed, noting the University is one of the major employers in the local area.

The comments suggested that Oxford could work with and learn from the local community, and a greater sense of commitment would be provided by changing the wording from 'contributing to' to 'participating in'. The opportunities to link to the region of Oxfordshire (e.g. Harwell) were noted.

A. Personnel Commitment 10 – to recruit and retain high calibre staff from across the world.

16 of the 40 comments were supportive. The comments related to challenges associated with recruiting and retaining staff, and a range of points were made relating to the following:

- 1) Strong perception that this commitment is limited to academics, and a clear emphasis on the need to include explicitly
 - a) Research staff
 - b) High calibre administrative and support staff
- 2) Need to move staff to longer term contracts to enable greater focus on work
- 3) Cost of living issues:
 - a) Pay staff fairly to avoid loss of talented early career academics.
 - b) Pensions and the need to continue to offer an adequate scheme was cited.
- 4) Make it easy for international and European staff to work and remain at Oxford
 - a) The uncertainties that result from Brexit
- 5) Suggestion to add something about caring for and supporting staff, treating them fairly and the University being a committed employer to its staff.

This only relates to academic staff at present. Either we need two separate commitments or we need to include all staff under this one. I would prefer that we start by acknowledging how much we value and rely on all our staff, and that Oxford can only thrive when it creates an inclusive and supportive environment for all its staff.

B. Personnel Commitment 11 – to work towards an increasingly diverse staffing profile.

17 of the 40 comments were supportive. Significant reworking was considered necessary, to make the wording more active, other points included:

- 1) The need to update this commitment was emphasised, to reflect the expectations of Athena Swan, the Race Equality charter, and the other equality objectives, along with the need to encourage the promotion of inclusion, as well as diversity.
- 2) A requirement for enhanced training to combat bias and discrimination was emphasised.

The relevance of this commitment to all staff was highlighted: academic, researchers, administrative and support staff.

C. Personnel Commitment 12 – to develop all staff to enhance their effectiveness and contribution to the University’s goals.

14 of the 35 comments supported this commitment, but there was a clear sense that this will not be straight forward to achieve, and that all staff need to be made aware of the University’s goals. The overriding sense was that the University should provide staff with the support to enable them to contribute to the University’s goals. The following points were raised:

- 1) It was suggested that the plan could include reference to a workplace that is inclusive, values diversity, mental and physical health and wellbeing, and is free of harassment.
 - a) The commitment to housing could be included in this section
- 2) Encouragement for a stronger service culture to be developed, to reduce the burden of administration felt by many academic staff.
- 3) Not all post docs will remain in academia, and the University should provide them with opportunities to enhance their skills for use in other settings.

“This needs to focus more on providing staff with opportunities for career development, supporting their wellbeing, providing them with an environment free from discrimination and harassment, listening to their feedback (e.g. in the biennial Staff Experience Survey), training managers properly, ensuring good HR practices are followed, providing more consistency for staff across the University”

Enabling strategies

A. Finance, Capital and Value for Money.

Strategy 1 – to generate a sufficient recurrent surplus to sustain the University’s infrastructure, collections and academic activities.

Strategy 2 – to allocate unrestricted income to reflect the collegiate University’s strategic priorities and commitments.

28 Comments were provided in response to these strategies, which fell into the following areas:

- 1) Investment in academic activities should take priority over infrastructure
 - a) A call to invest in people – a strong perception that buildings are valued more than staff, and that there is too much investment in buildings.
- 2) The drain of transactional activity (in both time and money) of cross charging across the University’s departments for basic provision: e.g. of images, room bookings, refreshments etc.
- 3) The need to generate funds by ethical means, and review progress to this end.
- 4) Costs of senior administration felt to be excessive.
 - a) A call to invest in student support, staff salaries, and pensions.

B. Estates – to invest in estate where this will facilitate new or improved ways of working, increased efficiencies, improved opportunities for interdisciplinary working, or the decommissioning or transformation of inappropriate spaces.

24 Comments were provided in relation to these strategies fell into the following areas:

- 1) This should include a commitment to provide affordable staff and student housing.
- 2) Emphasis on other priorities for investment - people
- 3) Suggestion it could be simplified to ‘making the best use of our estates and facilities’
 - a) Need for investment in some buildings which are poorly maintained
 - b) Frustration at lack of progress in providing new building despite a decade of discussion.
 - c) Need to include environmental sustainability measures.
- 4) Highlighted that some spaces are under-used currently

C. IT – to invest in information technologies that enhance the capacity of Oxford’s academic communities to collaborate with each other and with global partners, and that support the student experience.

14 of the 28 comments were supportive of this strategy.

Comments made related to:

- 1) The need to extend to student and administrative support, not just limited to academic endeavour – everyone uses IT.
- 2) Unify provision across colleges and departments
- 3) The need for robust systems with protection and security
- 4) Oxford’s IT lags behind other UK HEIs

“We are spending a lot of money on IT, and rightly so. But there are ways we could be much more efficient, including doing more to attract the best project managers, as currently they don't seem to come with the skills to get things up and running quickly. Part of this would mean being prepared to modernise the way we work - agile working is a bit of a buzzword, but it also works (and is part of a package that can attract good staff), for example we would need certain committees to be prepared

to engage more regularly throughout the year. But we should also acknowledge that unless people are willing to make compromises in the way that they work together across the University, our IT systems will never be built quickly or be particularly satisfying to use, because they simply reflect that siloed thinking.”

D. Alumni Relations and Development – to realise the Oxford Thinking Campaign target to support the academic strategies of the University and colleges.

The 20 comments provided were broadly supportive, noting the need to refresh the campaign as it will have soon reached its target.

Additional comments

Do you have any other comments that you would like to make regarding the University Strategic Plan 2018-2023?

- 1) The **2013-18 plan can be improved upon** to make a more apparent how it will deliver an overall strategic vision:
 - a) The challenge within this revision should be to communicate the most important points in the fewest words.
 - b) Institutional values to underpin the plan could be developed as a separate piece of work
 - c) Link all the priorities to commitments and actions, including references to existing commitments.
 - d) An implementation plan with scorecards should be developed, to show progress
- 2) There is an opportunity to develop a **meaningful consultation** at a difficult time in view of the 'toxic climate caused by the pensions dispute':
 - a) The language needs to be less pious, and more chastened; use the passive tense less often, and avoid excessive use of adjectives and aim for a less self-congratulatory tone.
 - b) If the plan is more candid about what's wrong it will carry more credibility
 - c) More emphasis should be made to the fact that housing provision is part of the plan
- 3) **Student experience**
 - a) Concern at the lack of parity in student provision between colleges
 - b) Strategically support students so they can get the most from their Oxford experience
 - c) Address supporting student mental health/pastoral care of all students.
 - d) Greater coordination between colleges and departments
- 4) One respondent suggested that a central goal should be the reduction in administrative staff numbers.
- 5) Staff's **employment conditions** should be made an 'enabling strategy', in view of the:
 - a) Erosion of academic salaries in real terms for 10 years
 - b) Impact of proposed pension changes.
 - c) High cost of living in Oxford.
 - d) The University may become increasingly uncompetitive internationally in terms of recruitment and retention.
- 6) **Diversity**
 - a) Maybe specifically name underrepresented groups that are needed to diversify the student body and staff- BAME, LGBT, women, working class people?
 - b) There may be an increasing move to employ staff on short-term contracts rather than more secure, long-term employment. This is not good for diversity and access (or in fact, anyone) and should be addressed.
- 7) Local and regional recruitment and **transportation links** require improvement
- 8) A number of people expressed thanks for being given the chance to have a say.

Summary of the main points provided by the Divisional Boards in response to the the strategic plan consultation (Hilary Term 2018)

The four divisional boards provided a range of views on the consultation document, the key points provided in response to the questions are summarised below.

Vision

- 1) The PRAC recommendation, rather than the Statute I approach was broadly supported, with some suggested modifications:
 - a) A recommendation that Oxford should still 'lead' the world rather than 'provide leadership' in research and education, since they are fundamental activities of the University,
 - b) Need to reference local scale in the vision statement alongside global.
 - c) Suggestions to structure the vision to articulate
 - i) What makes Oxford unique
 - ii) How this might be built upon or improved for the future
 - iii) The ways in which the University will compete effectively in a global market.

Rather than reflect on the 2013-2018 priorities, the divisional boards provided input and comment to the proposed priorities, which had been identified as part of the planning day, informed by the divisions' five year plans. Overall the boards were broadly supportive of the five priorities:

'The Board strongly endorses an approach that firmly grounds these priorities in Oxford's values. It is especially important to highlight Oxford's commitment to education and research, from the centrality of undergraduate education to fostering all varieties of research'.

Specific comments were offered on the priorities as detailed below.

A. Access and Diversity.

- 2) Emphasis that this should not be limited to undergraduates, but include post graduates and staff

B. Oxford in the world.

- 3) Oxford's commitment to the local and regional merits more emphasis, along with the national and international dimensions. The Plan could identify specific areas for action, whether capitalising on languages provision or a broadening and deepening of collaborative engagement with international partners.
- 4) Languages: these are central to Oxford and the Plan could recognise these as a significant asset for the University to develop. Oxford attracts staff and students from the UK and internationally who bring immense linguistic diversity. The University offers a wide range of language-based degrees at all levels, and holds collections spanning the language spectrum. A University commitment to support and promote the learning of languages other than English would be a suitable way to signal the University's interest in pursuing global partnerships, not least with continental Europe, while underscoring its commitment to attracting students and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- 5) An expectation that greater emphasis on the consequences of Brexit would be reflected in the next version of the plan.
- 6) Oxford: the centre and the satellites – the development of focused hubs of excellence locally (examples include more overt campus structures at Begbroke and Harwell), nationally (brand visibility in training opportunities e.g. the London Clinic) and internationally (MSD is already strong here with Major Overseas Programmes in Kenya, Thailand, and Vietnam). There are opportunities to develop a bi-directional educational role for emerging centres elsewhere (e.g. China).

C. Sustainability, Efficiency and Effectiveness.

- 7) This concept should be broadened beyond resources, to encompass the academic pipeline. It should include support for graduate funding and for endangered disciplines.
- 8) Financial sustainability was identified as a key objective, which could be met through
 - a) improvements to core support services (that should include a thorough assessment of precisely what sort of services are required)
 - b) targeted investments in activities that make a contribution to financial sustainability.

D. Size and Shape.

The comments provided a summary of many of the issues that any consideration of size and shape in the collegiate University context should aim to address:

- 9) The divisions were of the view that the plan should include targeted growth in the doctoral student population, this was identified as the most important priority by at least one division.
 - a) In some instances there was also a call for increased undergraduate and PGT students.
 - b) In terms of college association (which can constrain student growth) the two main options were suggested:
 - i) Removing the requirement for college membership for some groups of matriculated students,
 - ii) More college capacity could be provided by growing some existing colleges and/or establishing a new college.
- 10) There was an ambition to secure additional funding so that every PGR student and a significant proportion of PGT students received full scholarships, in order to create a national and international pipeline of future researchers recruiting the most able whatever their means.
- 11) It was emphasised that any plans for growth needed to be considered in tandem with their impact on academic workload and working conditions, as well as the student experience, including student welfare.

E. Impact and Innovation

- 12) Innovation was recognised as a priority during the Michaelmas Term planning day discussions. The need to broaden the definition to include cultural impact, alongside social and economic impact was emphasised. It was also suggested that the plan should incorporate a broader understanding of impact, which explicitly recognises the value of independent research intended to enhance knowledge.

F. Staff and Student Housing

- 13) This was welcomed as a priority issue, and it was recommended broadening to encompass working conditions in general, including academic remuneration and workload (which also had a bearing on size and shape).

CORE STRATEGIES

Perspectives on the core strategies from the Boards are provided below:

A. Commitment 1 – to maintain originality, significance and rigour in research within a framework of the highest standards of infrastructure, training, and integrity.

B. Commitment 2 – to empower the creative autonomy of individuals to address fundamental questions of real significance and applied questions with potential to change the world.

C. Research Commitment 3 – to maintain and develop resources, and invest in subject areas of long-term worth

It was suggested that the research strategy should include clear commitments to invest in people for the benefit of research, as well as in critical infrastructure and equipment. It is felt that the importance of investing in people is not sufficiently prominent in the current commitments.

A. Education Commitment 4 – to ensure that our undergraduate and graduate admissions processes identify students with outstanding academic potential and the ability to benefit from an Oxford course whatever their background.

B. Education Commitment 5 – to ensure that the best Oxford experience is the typical experience, for all undergraduate and postgraduate students, and that Oxford fully equips graduates for the best of the diverse range of opportunities for study and employment

C. Education Commitment 6 – to ensure that the unique richness of the collegiate University's academic environment is both retained and refreshed.

- 1) The Boards made the following points:
 - a) A need to address directly educational quality and the student experience.
 - b) **Education as a shared endeavor**, manifest as 'ownership' at all levels, from UG participation in course design, to self-selected and -organized training opportunities for graduate students, structured teaching opportunities for early career academics and transparent democratic processes for strategic decision making at the institutional level.

A. Widening engagement Commitment 7 – to serve society by promoting and contributing to economic, cultural, and social advances through the accessibility of Oxford's ideas, skills, and expertise.

B. Widening engagement Commitment 8 – to share the fruits of research as widely as possible.

C. Widening engagement Commitment 9 – to develop a strong and constructive relationship with the wider communities of Oxford by contributing to the cultural, health, social and economic wellbeing of the local and regional community.

- 2) The need to clarify the boundaries between Widening Engagement, public engagement, and business and policy engagement was highlighted by the Boards. The respective roles of GLAM and the academic divisions and relevant service areas needed to be identified.
- 3) The importance of the relationship with the local NHS partners – the Oxford University NHS Hospitals Foundation Trust and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust – is central to a range of University activities including Widening Engagement. This relationship and its importance should be given greater prominence in the new plan.

A. Personnel Commitment 10 – to recruit and retain high calibre staff from across the world.

B. Personnel Commitment 11 – to work towards an increasingly diverse staffing profile.

C. Personnel Commitment 12 – to develop all staff to enhance their effectiveness and contribution to the University's goals.

- 4) The University needs to provide an environment which supports the recruitment and retention of staff:
 - a) Issues relating to internationally competitive pay rates, pension provision, negative perceptions caused by Brexit and the high cost of living in Oxford must be addressed for the University to attract the very best staff. The high cost of housing is a particular problem for early career staff.
 - b) Retention issues to be addressed include: academic career progression, workload and staffing models; staff development and leadership; ensuring equitable salary arrangements for equivalent academic roles; diversity; and a commitment to staff wellbeing.
- 5) A refinement to commitment 10 was recommended, so that the commitment is to recruit and retain the *highest* calibre staff rather than just *high* calibre staff.

A. Finance, Capital and Value for Money.

Strategy 1 – to generate a sufficient recurrent surplus to sustain the University's infrastructure, collections and academic activities.

Strategy 2 – to allocate unrestricted income to reflect the collegiate University's strategic priorities and commitments.

- 6) One division commented that 'The principle of subsidiarity and the as earned model of funding is critical to the effectiveness of the enabling strategies relation to finance, capital, and value for money.'

Further comments

- 1) Greater clarity regarding how the plan would be developed over Trinity Term was requested.
- 2) It was proposed that effective and agile governance might be considered an enabling strategy for the University's strategic plan. The complexity of the University's decision making processes may lead to missed opportunities. Sometimes the ability to make rapid, well-informed, decisions is critical in order to seize strategic opportunities.
- 3) Difficult matters, like student number planning, should not continue to remain unresolved since they have the potential to do lasting damage.
- 4) The priorities identified at the planning day in Michaelmas Term should be incorporated into the strategic plan.
- 5) The document should be redrafted so as to celebrate Oxford's current engagement with the world and to set out the ways in which we will seek to do more. This engagement could usefully be informed by social science research and teaching on critical issues in a changing world, such as demography, diversity, the environment, business, and leadership.
- 6) The Social Sciences Board sought to emphasise the importance to the division of the academic objectives in the Social Science Quarter strategy:
 - a) maximise the benefits of co-location of academic departments with commercial tenants from mission-relevant policy/consultancy/NGO organisations with complementary interests. In turn, this will develop and enhance the key role of the social sciences in the commerce and governance of the world, and amplify opportunities for students, early career researchers and others to interact and engage in this arena;
 - b) develop the 'public face of social science' at this western gateway to the city to better publicise and more effectively engage public interest in Oxford's world-leading social science research;
 - c) enhance interdisciplinary working and societal impact;
 - d) enable the sharing of teaching and digital resource space equipped to a high digital and technical specification (which will improve accessibility and enhance part-time learning, and the student experience);
 - e) provide showcase facilities for public engagement with research;
 - f) significantly improve the urban fabric and profile of the western gateway to Oxford as a University city; and
 - g) exploit the area's excellent and improving transport links.

Summary of the main points provided by University and Conference committees in response to the strategic plan consultation (Hilary Term 2018)

Education, Personnel, and Research and Innovation Committees each provided their views on the draft and developed proposed versions of their relevant theme.

In addition, Conference of Colleges, BESC, IT Committee, GLAM Board, and the International Strategy Office provided formal responses. The main elements of their submissions are summarised (unattributed) in this document.

Feedback on the six proposed priorities

1. The proposal to consider the size and shape of the collegiate University was welcomed. Feedback from the Conference of Colleges emphasised that growth should be driven by a strong academic case and that the University should commit itself to the principle that all matriculated students should be members of a college (or PPH). Furthermore any expansion in student numbers should not be at the expense of the quality of student experience.
2. Preservation and dissemination of knowledge was suggested as a priority. This could be seen more broadly to encompass collections, but also research ethics/integrity (specifically around the reproducibility of research) as well as digital/OA and OUP (dissemination)

Research

3. Expand international research collaborations to increase global impact
4. Extend the definition of “Infrastructure” as it should pertain not only to bricks & mortar, but to software systems and people.
5. Need to reference Open Science, specifically around the OA and Open Data agendas, and about the underpinning of this through preservation. These are essential for Oxford’s research to remain world-leading.
6. To note that a commitment within the GLAM Strategy is to enhance the role of the institutions to support pathways to impact by reaching, engaging and inspiring audiences which ensures impactful public engagement with research and the development of long-term, even lifelong, relationships with a diverse public in relation to that research dialogue.
7. GLAM also has a distinctive and important role in the area of skills training for researchers, particularly those in early career, and to develop innovative tools for impact and help develop innovative teaching tools such as Cabinet and new methodologies (such as object-led teaching?).

Education

8. A discussion of the undergraduate curriculum would be welcomed: subjects taught, distribution of places, and the curriculum within each subject.
9. The following aspirations were proposed for inclusion in the plan:
 - a. The challenges in supporting the welfare of students
 - b. Increase share of internationally mobile doctoral students
 - c. Improve international mobility opportunities for students
 - d. Extend the remit of the teaching strategy to incorporate engagement with school children through the use of the collections.
10. There is a role for IT to actively enhance the student experience not just to support the status quo.

Section 3: summary of input from University and Conference Committees

11. Ensure the collections are appropriately referenced for the distinctive experience that they afford University students in sciences, social sciences, and humanities, particularly in relation to object-led teaching.
12. Professional development in the cultural sector, Museum Leadership was also highlighted.

Widening engagement

13. Oxford as internationally recognised as a place to visit – virtually and physically.

People

14. Recruitment and retention was recognised as challenging in view of Brexit, salaries, housing and changes to pension schemes. The successful recruitment and retention of world-class staff is crucial to the University, mitigating measures are required.
15. The following aspirations were identified for inclusion in the plan:
 - a. The need to continue to attract top international academic staff;
 - b. Improve international mobility opportunities for staff;
 - c. The University should explicitly embrace apprenticeships.
16. The lack of any mention of staff wellbeing in the current plan is striking

Enabling strategies

Estates

17. Could a target be introduced to improve the functional suitability of space from the current baseline?
18. Ensure capital planning takes account of the total property portfolio, and addresses the needs of those buildings that are coming to the end of their life, as well as opportunities for new buildings and academic developments.
19. The maintenance of the overall estate should be prioritised; is the repairs and maintenance budget of the correct size currently?
20. Could a separate budget be identified for heritage assets?

IT

21. The digital strategy should encompass both IT systems and the needs of digital collections and the tools to allow them to be used globally for teaching and research.
22. Regarding research computing – this needs to be more than just helping communication with collaborators – needs to focus on how IT can enhance the quality of our research. Researchers require the equipment, tools and skills (or skilled support) to use them.
23. Other areas where IT was integral to the successful delivery of the strategic objectives were proposed:
 - a. reducing the administrative burden by streamlining (and potentially automating) standard processes;
 - b. enhancing decision making by providing better, authoritative business information based on a single source of the truth;
 - c. incubating innovation in teaching and learning;
 - d. identifying and protecting quality research data to ensure external requirements can be met (for example reporting to HEFCE, preserving intellectual property created via research grants and making research data available under the open access agenda);
 - e. developing digital literacy among staff and students both to enhance their productivity whilst at Oxford and as a skill to take forwards into the rest of their careers.

Section 3: summary of input from University and Conference Committees

Further points on the enabling strategies

24. Proposal to acknowledge explicitly the importance of the collegiate University in maintaining, caring for and developing its globally significant collections. Is this best done by treating the collections as 'estate'? Collections are assets, and are a defining characteristic of the University. Physical and digital collections 'enable' research, teaching, and WE.
25. Expand international communications to support other objectives

Factors to consider in developing the implementation plan

26. Identify appropriate metrics across all aims contained in Strategic Plan.
27. Responsibility for the various elements of the plan may not all map neatly into the remit of a single committee.
28. Greater use of data in drawing up the plan and monitoring its progress was encouraged.