

**Council Minutes:**  
**26 November 2021**  
(hybrid meeting)

**PRESENT:** Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt (Pro-Chancellor) (in the Chair); Professor Andy Schofield (Vice-Chancellor); David Barron (lay member) (online); Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears (lay member); Professor Steve Bradley (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); Hanah Burgess (lay member); Anthony Carey (lay member) (online); Ian Johnson (lay member) (online); Professor Claire Leitch (Senate representative); Baroness Neville-Jones (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Oliver Robinson (Students' Union President); Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone (Senate representative); Gayatri Shewani (student member); His Hon. Phillip Sycamore (lay member); Valerie Young (lay member).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Professor Paul Connolly (Executive Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) (*for item 12*) (online); Nick Fragel (Director of Philanthropy, Alumni and Supporter Engagement) (*for item 19*) (online); Claire Geddes (Committee Secretary); Simon Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Governance); Professor Sandra Kemp (Director, The Ruskin – Library, Museum and Research Centre) (*for item 12*) (online); Nicola Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)); Sarah Randall-Paley (Director of Finance); Christine Parker (Head of Engagement – Trusts and Foundations) (*for item 19*) (online); Professor Wendy Robinson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)) (*for item 13*).

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Alison Mullan (Senate representative); Marcia Reid Fotheringham (lay member); Professor Sir Ian Diamond (lay member).

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Council noted the apologies.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 24 SEPTEMBER 2021

**PAPER A**

3.1 Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 There were no matters arising.

## **5. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE AND QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE**

5.1 The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following.

- (i) The ongoing management of the Covid-19 on campus with a small number of positive cases and the arrangements for pre-departure testing and asymptomatic testing in January.
- (ii) The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Lancaster City Council.
- (iii) The significant media coverage arising from the University's COP26-related activity and research.
- (iv) UCU's industrial action with both strike action from 1-3 December and action short of a strike and the measures being taken by the University to mitigate the impact on student facing activity in particular marking and feedback.
- (v) The Government's change in its approach to widening participation and access within universities, with the focus broadening from admission of disadvantaged students to student progression and success, with more measurables concerning student achievement.

Council briefly discussed Lancaster's access and participation performance, the Government agenda of universities driving school performance, Lancaster's connectivity with schools and further education colleges and the Sutton Trust's 'What Degrees are Best for Intergenerational Mobility Report'.

- (vi) The likely timeframe for the Government's Higher Education white paper and consultation regarding reducing the financial burden of higher education on the public purse.

5.2 Council noted the report from the Vice-Chancellor.

## **6. PRESIDENT, LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION: REPORT PAPER B**

6.1 The President of the Students' Union reported on the following:

- (i) the range of events and activity which the Students' Union had delivered over the period;
- (ii) the upcoming College Junior Common Room elections;
- (iii) the Students' Union's recommencement of participation in University Open Day activity;
- (iv) the Students' Union's support for the United Nations' international campaign '16 Days against Gender Based Violence';
- (v) the Students' Union's support for the UCU strikes, after an inquorate referendum but where there were a majority of students who participated were in favour;

- (vi) progress with partnership working with the University relating to student sport;
  - (vii) the Students' Union's aim to diversify its Trustee Board and its search for a new external trustee with financial expertise (supported by the University).
- 6.2 Council members expressed concerns around the Union's sustainability and governance and offered their assistance with this. Council members noted the President's view that the Students' Union Trustee Board had been transformed with the recruitment of new trustees and his view that the description in the Students' Union internal audit report no longer reflected how the Board was now operating.
- 6.3 Council noted the discussions which had taken place with the Audit Committee regarding the Students' Union's sustainability and the related internal audit report and that, in light of the Council's continuing concerns, there would be a further progress report to the committee in January 2022.
- 6.4 Council noted the report and commended the Students' Union on its activity to support academic representatives and society groups.

#### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 7. ANNUAL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL AND THE VICE-CHANCELLOR** **PAPER C**  
*some Restricted and Confidential content*
- 8. ORAL REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2021**
- 8.1 Council received and noted an oral report from the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Valerie Young, from its meeting of the 21 October 2021. She highlighted its consideration and subsequent approval of an overall increase in residences charges for 2022/23 of 5.5% and negotiations to extend the University's revolving credit facilities.
- 9. STRATEGIC REPORT AND ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2021** **PAPER D**  
*Restricted and Commercial in Confidence*
- 10. ORAL REPORT FROM THE EXTRAORDINARY JOINT MEETING OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE AND THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2021**
- 10.1 The Chair of the Extraordinary Joint Meeting of the Estates Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Professor Ella Ritchie, provided a précis of the meeting's consideration of both the Engineering Building Phase 2 Project and the Ruskin Project. The Chair highlighted consideration of the demand for new Engineering space and the value for money of the project and noted that matters regarding contingency were still to be resolved.

10.2 Council noted the complexities regarding the Ruskin Project due to external requirements and stakeholders but that the meeting viewed that there was a compelling case for investment in the project due to the significant range of opportunities arising from it including internationally.

10.3 Council noted the oral report.

**11. ENGINEERING BUILDING PHASE 2 PAPER E**

11.1 The Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) gave a summary of the background to the business case for the Engineering Building Phase 2 including projected growth in both teaching and research activity. She highlighted the pause in the project's progress during the pandemic, the success of a value engineering exercise but subsequent rise in construction costs, the testing of these, and due diligence regarding the contractor and proposed contracting arrangements.

11.2 Council received the recommendation from the extraordinary joint meeting of the Estates Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 19 November 2021 which was to proceed with the project within a revised project budget. Council considered the proposal and the approach being taken to managing carbon reduction targets within the overall Capital Programme.

11.3 Council approved the delivery of Engineering Phase 2 (LUEB2) within a revised total budget envelope of £18.418M.

**12. REPORT ON THE RUSKIN PROJECT PAPER F**  
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**13. ANNUAL REPORT ON TEACHING QUALITY ASSURANCE PAPER G**

13.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced the assurance report highlighting the exceptional arrangements put in place to ensure appropriate maintenance of academic standards and quality during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the good practice, quality assurance process development and learning during the period.

13.2 Council considered the report and noted the proposed future programme of education work particularly regarding curriculum transformation and use of digital, embedding student voice and co-creation and the synergistic relationship between quality assurance and enhancement.

13.3 Council noted that it was due to receive the Annual Partnerships Report at its January meeting which would provide complementary information regarding international activity but that it would be useful to receive additional background information about arrangements to aid its decision making.

13.4 Council confirmed that the evidence presented in the ATQA Report provided full assurance to it with respect to the statements required by the Office for Students in the University's 2019-2020 return. Council approved the Annual Report on Teaching Quality Assurance.

**14. RESILIENCE AT LANCASTER: RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PAPER H**

- 14.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance highlighted the revisions to the Framework including incorporation of the 2021 risk appetite statements and the changes made to risk register reporting to ensure alignment between Faculty and Divisional Risk Registers, and the University Risk Register.
- 14.2 Council considered the changes and noting the importance of the work and approved the revised Resilience at Lancaster Framework.

**15. UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER BIENNIAL REVIEW PAPER I**

- 15.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance presented the risk register to Council for its biennial review summarising the national and local risk dimensions to risk and the rationale for changes in score. He reported that the risk ratings reflected the period of prolonged instability in which the University had been operating and the perceived limited controls there were regarding certain risks.
- 15.2 Council considered the risk register, its relationship to the updated risk appetite outcomes which had evidenced an increased appetite for risk in most risk dimensions considered, and the nature of risk management (in particular assessing and identifying opportunities as well as threats).
- 15.3 The Council noted that a number of the areas where current opportunities were being explored were not of sufficient scale to feature in or jeopardise the University's main risk profile and were considered via project risk registers. Council advised that it would be helpful for it to have a wider view on the Executive's thinking regarding balancing risks and opportunities.
- 15.4 Council noted the report on the Review of the Risk Register.

**16. COUNCIL END OF YEAR APPRAISAL REVIEW 2020-2021 PAPER J**  
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**17. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs): PERFORMANCE: PAPER K**  
**FORMAT AND YEAR-END REPORT FOR 2020-21**

- 17.1 The Director of the Strategic Planning and Governance presented the data and assessments of performance against the KPIs highlighting the lag time in the availability of some national benchmark data and that a more complete data set would be provided in the mid-year report, e.g. the undergraduate entrant qualifications KPI had been based on internal data only.
- 17.2 Council considered the indicators, in particular the challenges regarding carbon reduction targets and the on-going work to find suitable comparator benchmarks in the sector. Council noted the progress made to date against the University KPIs as outlined in the report approved the proposed reporting format for KPIs.

- 18. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT** **PAPER L**
- 18.1 Council noted that the Deputy Pro-Chancellor, Professor Ella Ritchie, had left the meeting prior to the consideration of her reappointment as part of this item.
- 18.2 The Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) gave a progress report regarding the search for new lay members of Council (supported by Perrett Laver), and which had produced a strong and diverse pool of candidates for interview. She outlined the rationale for the proposal to undertake some annual diversity monitoring of Council's composition and reported that the Nominations Committee would be considering succession planning for senior committees of the Council in the new year.
- 18.3 Council noted the progress report regarding the search process for new lay members of the Council.
- 18.4 Council approved the reappointment of Professor Ella Ritchie as Deputy Pro-Chancellor for a second term from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2025.
- 18.5 Council approved in principle, the annual collection of HESA Governor diversity data from Summer 2022 with an annual report to Council.
- 19. ACCEPTANCE OF PRINCIPAL GIFT TO LANCASTER UNIVERSITY** **PAPER M**  
**ON THE CLOSURE OF THE JOY WELCH EDUCATIONAL**  
**CHARITABLE TRUST (JWECT)**  
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- 20.\* PREVENT ANNUAL REPORT INCORPORATING THE OFS PREVENT** **PAPER 1**  
**MONITORING: ACCOUNTABILITY AND DATA RETURN 2021**  
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- 21.\* REMUNERATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021** **PAPER 2**
- 21.1 Council approved the Remuneration Committee Annual Report for 2020/21.
- 22.\* REMUNERATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE** **PAPER 3**  
**STATEMENT 2020/21**
- 22.1 Council approved the Remuneration Committee Annual Governance Statement 2020/21.
- 23.\* ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC REWARD COMMITTEE** **PAPER 4**
- 23.1 Council approved the Annual Report of the Strategic Reward Committee.
- 24.\* DRAFT MODERN SLAVERY ACT STATEMENT** **PAPER 5**
- 24.1 Council reviewed the revised Modern Slavery Act Statement and approved it for publication on the University's website.

**25.\* LANCASTER UNIVERSITY WIDENING PARTICIPATION PAPER 6**  
**2020-21 ANNUAL STATEMENT**

25.1 Council noted the Annual Statement on Lancaster University Widening Participation Activity 2020-21.

**26.\* REVOCATION OF HONORARY AWARDS PROCEDURE: MINOR PAPER 7**  
**AMENDMENTS**

26.1 Council approved the minor amendment to the revocation of honorary awards procedure.

**27.\* WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS PAPER 8**

27.1 Council noted the written reports of meetings of the Audit Committee, meeting of 1 November 2021; Equality and Diversity Committee, meeting of 20 October 2021; Estates Committee, meeting of 13 September 2021; and Student Experience Committee, meeting of 13 October 2021.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**28. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS PAPER N**

28.1 Council noted the proposed forward schedule of business.

**29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

29.1 There was no other business.

**30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

30.1 The next Council meeting will be held from 13:00-17:00 on Friday 28 January 2022, with a lunch beforehand, for attendees in person, in the Private Dining Room (12:00-13:00).