

Council Minutes: 20 May 2022 (hybrid meeting)

PRESENT: Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt (Pro-Chancellor) (in the Chair); Professor Andy Schofield (Vice-Chancellor); David Barron (lay member); Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears (lay member); Professor Steve Bradley (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); Hanah Burgess (lay member); Anthony Carey (lay member); Claire Leitch (Senate representative); Alison Mullan (Senate representative); Baroness Neville-Jones (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Marcia Reid Fotheringham (lay member); 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); Maureen Whilby (lay member); Valerie Young (lay member).

IN ATTENDANCE: Claire Geddes (Committee Secretary); Gill Hemus (interim Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness) (*for items 9 and 13*); Simon Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Governance); Sarah Randall-Paley (Director of Finance).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Professor Sir Ian Diamond (lay member); Ian Johnson (lay member); Nicola Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)).

INTRODUCTION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Council noted the apologies for absence received for this meeting.
- 1.2 Council recorded its thanks to both Oliver Robinson and Gaya Shewani for their services to Council as both would be leaving office at the Students' Union at the end of June 2022.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 11 MARCH 2022

PAPER A

- 3.1 Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2022.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 **Item 4 Council Effectiveness Review:** Council noted an oral update from Professor Ella Ritchie, Chair of the Review Commissioning Group, which highlighted an extended reporting timeframe of January 2023, the focus of the review, the addition of David Barron to the Group, and that supplier selection processes were underway.

- 4.2 **Item 5 and 8:** Council noted information regarding retention rates and the presentation from Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) on the OfS Regulatory Picture NSS/TEF had been circulated to members.
- 4.3 **Item 10 Levelling Up:** Council noted that a meeting had taken place between members of the Executive and Lancashire County Council Cabinet members, and this would now be a regular occurrence (6 monthly with the involvement of the Pro-Chancellor).
- 4.4 **Item 10 Levelling-Up:** The Pro-Chancellor confirmed he had written to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government of the United Kingdom regarding Eden North prior to the Government's Spring Statement.

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

- 5.1 Council noted the written report from the Executive circulated on 13 May 2022. The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following.
- (i) Further correspondence from the Minister of State for Universities, Michelle Donelan, regarding universities ensuring in-person teaching provision. Council noted the University had returned to in-person provision but intended to retain online examination assessment provision due to its ability to provide the same conditions across the University's global campuses.
 - (ii) The University's successful application to Research Libraries UK.
 - (iii) Lancashire County Council Cabinet Members' visit to campus on 16 May 2022.

The Council noted a Financial Times Article from 18 May 2022, 'Are universities suffering from management bloat?', noted the growing government and regulator demands of the sector and considered how the University could respond to an environment where there was increasing (and often uncoordinated) demands placed upon it.

- 5.2 Council noted the report from the Vice-Chancellor.

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

- 6.1 The President thanked Council for its support to him during his two years in office and reported on the following.
- (i) The planned transition between himself and the incoming President, India Ellis.
 - (ii) The outcome of the Students' Union's quorate referendum with a majority vote in support of the proposed changes to the organisation's Articles of Association.

- (iii) A recent student death and the Students' Union's determination to continue to develop its wellbeing services and support. The Chair expressed sadness at the student's death and offered Council's condolences to all those affected.
 - (iv) The conclusion of the appointment processes for an external trustee with financial expertise to the Students' Union's Trustee Board.
- 6.2 Council noted that the Students' Union had not provided an Annual Assurance Report to the Audit Committee and that Committee's continuing serious concerns regarding the Students' Union's financial sustainability. Council agreed that there needed to be increased dialogue with the Students' Union regarding its position, future plans and shared goals with the University.
- 6.3 Council noted the report from the President of the Students' Union.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

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| 7. | RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF) 2021 EXERCISE RESULTS
<i>Restricted and Commercial in Confidence</i> | PAPER C AND PRESENTATION |
| 8. | RESEARCH INSTITUTE PRIORITISATION AND THE NEW INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY
<i>Restricted and Commercial in Confidence</i> | PAPER D |
| 9. | SAFETY HEALTH AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021 | PAPER E |
| 9.1 | The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance introduced the annual Safety, Health and Wellbeing assurance report drawing attention to its scrutiny by the Council Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee and Audit Committee, the distortive effects of the pandemic on data, changes to the professional leadership team in this area and the introduction of a revised approach to fire safety in University's student accommodation. The Interim Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness provided additional detail on the team's response to the pandemic and other key areas of the report including incidents and near miss reporting. | |
| 9.2 | Council considered the report and was satisfied with the assurance it provided and <u>approved</u> the Annual Safety, Health and Wellbeing Report on the recommendation of its Council Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee (18 February 2022). | |
| 10. | UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY REVIEW | PAPER F |
| 10.1 | The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance provided a précis of the changes to the risk register, the principles behind its development and discussion at the Audit Committee regarding the current number and level of red flagged risks. | |

10.2 Council noted the University's operating environment and considered that risk measurement and management of risk and the likelihood of risk realisation remained difficult due to volatility and uncertainty. Council noted that it had had marginally higher appetite for risk in some areas than the Executive, in the risk appetite exercise conducted in Summer 2021, and the University needed to continue to adapt to a riskier operating environment. Council commented on the following:

- (i) the requirement to keep a close eye on cost inflation and its impacts, noting that this would be a key factor within the budgeting process;
- (ii) undertaking some form of risk appetite exercise later in the year would be beneficial given the changes in Council membership; and
- (iii) Council would value the opportunity to consider some strategic risks in more detail whilst recognising and not wishing to replicate the work of its Audit Committee in maintaining oversight, assurance and undertaking periodic more detailed work on specific risk areas.

10.3 Council noted the updated University Risk Register.

11. LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION: ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION **PAPER G**
Restricted and Commercial in Confidence

12. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT **PAPER H**
Restricted and Confidential

13. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING **PRESENTATION**

13.1 The Head of Student Wellbeing Services and (Deputy Safeguarding Lead for Students) and the Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness (Safeguarding lead for Staff) gave a training briefing to Council regarding the duties and responsibilities of governing bodies in relation to safeguarding.

13.2 Council noted the safeguarding training briefing, related guidance, statements and policies as well as Council members' role in this area and OfSted's interest in this area in relation to the University's provision of degree apprenticeships.

14. CHEMISTRY PHASE 2 **PAPER J**

14.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the proposals regarding additional capital expenditure from the Capital Programme to allow the preferred contractor for Chemistry Phase 2 to be appointed and completion of the project in the Michaelmas Term.

14.2 Council noted the current challenges of the construction operating environment and approved the allocation of additional funds of £290,000 (including VAT) to enable the delivery of the Chemistry Phase 2 project.

15.* PROPOSAL FOR THE REVISED STANDING ORDERS FOR SUB-COMMITTEES PAPER 1

15.1 Council considered and approved the revised Standing Orders for sub-committees.

16.* BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR SAFEGUARDING BRIEFING: SAFEGUARDING: A GUIDE TO GOVERNORS ADVANCE HE/ SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT AND POLICY PAPER 2

16.2 Council noted the background documentation relating to safeguarding: AdvanceHE guidance and University statements and policies.

17.* STUDENT RETENTION DATA PAPER 3

17.1 Council noted the student retention data, in particular the improvement from the 2016 UK ranking of 46th (continuation) and 48th (completion) to position it amongst the very strongest performers in the latest available data (5th and 12th in the UK).

18.* PREVENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND DATA RETURN 2020-21 OUTCOME PAPER 4

18.1 Council noted the outcome of the Prevent Accountability and Data Return 2020-21 Outcome report.

19.* WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS PAPER 5

19.1 Council noted the following written reports of meetings:

Audit Committee, meeting of 4 May 2022

Council Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee, meeting of 18 February 2022

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, meeting of 25 April 2022

Estates Committee, meeting of 25 April 2022

Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting of 9 March 2022

Senate, meeting of 27 April 2022

Student Experience Committee, meeting of 23 March 2022

19.2 Council approved the following items related to the written reports of meetings:

- the terms of reference of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (Appendix 1);
- the terms of reference of the Estates Committee (Appendix 2); and
- the recommendations from the Estates Committee regarding Allocation of Existing Woodland for Memorial Woodland (Appendix 3).

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

20. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

PAPER J

20.1 Council noted the proposed forward schedule of business.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21.1 There was no other business.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22.1 The next meeting will be held from 09:30-13:00 on Friday 8 July 2022, followed by lunch. A members' dinner and presentation would be held beforehand on Thursday 7 July 2022 from 18:00.