

Council Minutes: 11 March 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); Professor Sir Ian Diamond (lay member) (online); Ian Johnson (lay member); Claire Leitch (Senate representative) (online); Alison Mullan (Senate representative); Baroness Neville-Jones (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Marcia Reid Fotheringham (lay member); Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor) (online); Oliver Robinson (Students' Union President); Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone (Senate representative); Gayatri Shewani (student member); Maureen Whilby (lay member); Valerie Young (lay member).

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Allen (Head of Philanthropy) (*for item 7*) (online); Dr Giles Carden (Director of Strategic Projects and Chief of Staff) (*for item 10*); Nick Fragel (Director of Philanthropy, Alumni and Supporter Engagement) (*for item 7*) (online); Claire Geddes (Committee Secretary); Catherine Harrison (Associate Director of People, Culture and Inclusion) (*for items 11 and 12*); Gill Hemus (interim Director of People and Organisational Effectiveness) (*for items 11 and 12*); Simon Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Governance); Rachel Newbury (Head of Alumni and Development Services) (*for item 7*) (online); Nicola Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)); Sarah Randall-Paley (Director of Finance); Professor Wendy Robinson (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)) (*for item 8*).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: His Hon. Phillip Sycamore (lay member).

INTRODUCTION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Council noted the apologies for absence received for this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 28 JANUARY 2022

PAPER A

3.1 Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2022.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 *Item 8: Collaborative Partnerships Annual Report.* The Pro-Chancellor confirmed all lay members had expressed an interest in being matched with a University teaching partnership in order to take a special interest in its activity.

4.2 *Item 15: Council Effectiveness Proposal.* The Pro-Chancellor confirmed Professor Ella Ritchie had agreed to chair the steering group that would commission the Council Effectiveness Review and which would comprise of the following members: Valerie Young, Steve Bradley, Oliver Robinson and Nicola Owen, with the Head of Governance Services providing administrative support. Council noted the steering group Chair's intention to engage all Council members in the review process and for a report to be received by the September meeting.

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

5.1 Council noted the written report from the Executive circulated on 3 March 2022. The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following.

- (i) National discussions regarding supporting students affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the University's continued support of its own staff and students impacted by the conflict and the consideration being given to teaching and research partnership activity connected to Russia.
- (ii) Applications to date for the 2022/23 admissions cycle with the return to normality for campus visit day activity.
- (iii) The conclusion of the 2020 USS pensions valuation exercise and pensions changes to be implemented from 1 April 2022. Council noted the timetable for the next valuation in 2023 and the potential consequences continued high inflation rates would have on the scheme.
- (iv) The start of national pay negotiations for August 2022 and trade unions expectations with regards to this.
- (v) The continued industrial action by UCU and its intention to ballot to secure a mandate for action during the summer assessment period.
- (vi) The University's ongoing management of the Covid-19 pandemic with low recorded staff and student case numbers but with senior management being mindful of the impacts of long Covid on some individuals.
- (vii) The opportunities presented by the Government's policy announcement on lifelong learning funding. Council noted the work on micro-credentials being undertaken within the University, and with regional further education colleges to optimise routes into higher education.

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) Students' and the Students' Union's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine including a solidarity event in Alexandra Square.
- (ii) That an external trustee with financial expertise was as yet to be secured for the Students' Union's Trustee Board, despite a search exercise supported by the University, and the measures being taken to address this.
- (iii) Revised Students' Union governance reform proposals, which were out for student consultation and, if passed by referenda, the Trustee Board wished to seek Council's formal approval of changes to its Articles at the meeting of Council on 20 May 2022.
- (iv) The conduct of the Fulltime Officer elections.
- (v) The success of two recent Students' Union events, the Live Well Expo and Societies Awards, as well as plans for the Home Roses Event in May.

6.2 Council encouraged the Students' Union's Trustee Board to appoint a trustee with financial expertise as soon as possible and noted the report from the President of the Students' Union.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

7. DIVISION OF PHILANTHROPY, ALUMNI AND SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT (PASE): ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT (2021) PAPER C
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8. OFFICE FOR STUDENTS (OfS) REGULATORY PICTURE NSS/TEF PRESENTATION

8.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) gave a presentation regarding the regulatory context for the higher education sector, the drivers for change and the OfS's direction of travel with regard to student outcomes and new assessments of quality through the Teaching Excellence Framework. She drew attention to the key proposals regarding student outcomes and their scope (to include postgraduate students and in subsequent years teaching partnerships), outlined the process for assessment of its performance, the foreseeable challenges to the University of this approach and its preparedness for the changes.

8.2 Council considered both the Department for Education and OfS's approach and the latter's positioning with regard to its regulatory function, the principles and purpose behind the data-driven approach and scale of the challenges and burden this created. Council commented on the need for a risk-based and balanced approach to regulation to be found to achieve a fair system and the burdensome nature of the proposed arrangements.

8.3 Council noted the presentation regarding the OfS regulatory landscape and was supportive of the approach being taken requested to be kept informed regarding this area of work.

**9. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs): MID-YEAR REPORT PAPER D
FOR 2021-22**

9.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance introduced the mid-year Key Performance Indicators Report drawing attention to the indicators for which there was either finalised or interim data, and the context around performance of various metrics.

9.2 Council commented on the importance of league table position and reputation and was supportive of actions to increase National Student Survey (NSS) performance. Council noted the ambition regarding research grant capture (KPI1) and the range of measures being taken to stimulate activity following the impact of Covid-19 and the consequent prioritisation of teaching activity. Similarly, the Council noted the pandemic's impact on KPI15 (PGT recruitment), with the performance indicator reflecting travel restrictions in place in September 2021.

9.3 Council noted the Key Performance Indicators: Mid-Year Report 2021-22.

10. THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER PAPER E

10.1 The Director of Strategic Projects and Chief of Staff presented a précis of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper as a prelude to its more in-depth consideration at the Council Away Day on 19 May 2022. He highlighted the significant potential opportunities created through the twelve missions and the Government's proposed approach to create a multi-faceted ecosystem, system reform and regional empowerment.

10.2 Council welcomed the paper and noted the Northwest region's identification as the area most in need of levelling up. Council considered the University's alignment and synergies with levelling up's multiple missions through both existing and potential projects as well as its role as a Civic University.

10.3 Council considered the challenging timeframe for delivery of change (2030) relating to levelling up and how the University could influence the long-term strategy. Council commented on the financial support for levelling up, the potential impacts of the conflict in Ukraine on defence spending and the region, and the role of University research in the levelling up policy space.

10.4 Council noted the report and the opportunities levelling up presented for the University and supported further exploration of what it could mean for the University at the Council Away Day.

- 11. STATUTORY REPORTING ON GENDER PAY GAP 2021** **PAPER F**
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- 12. ANNUAL EDI REPORT 2020-21** **PAPER G**
- 12.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor introduced the Annual EDI Report 2020-21 emphasising the enhancements made to reporting since the previous year to promote transparency and highlight the breadth and depth of good practice initiatives across the University.
- 12.2 Council considered the report and the University’s work regarding intersectionality and the Race Equality Charter and noted the next steps in the implementation of the People and Culture Plan through the definition of equality objectives.
- 12.3 Council approved the Annual EDI Report 2020-21 for publication.
- 13. ORAL REPORT FROM FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2022** **ORAL REPORT**
- 13.1 The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee provided an oral report from the meeting of 9 March 2022 highlighting the projected out-turn position, an in-depth discussion with the Students’ Union regarding its commercial income challenges and the Committee’s approval of the budget setting process parameters for 2022-23. The Chair highlighted the value of Council receiving key elements of the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) report to understand the significance of higher education financing issues and the importance of international fee income.
- 13.2 Council noted the oral report.
- 14. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT** **PAPER H**
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- ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**
- 15. WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS** **PAPER I**
- 15.1 Council noted the following written reports of meetings:
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, meeting of 17 February 2022;
Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting of 28 January 2022;
Senate, meeting of 9 February 2022.
- 16. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS** **PAPER J**
- 16.1 Council noted the proposed forward schedule of business.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 There was no other business.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18.1 The next Council meeting will be the Council Away Day commencing with lunch from 13:00, followed by the Away Day meeting from 14:00 on Thursday 19 May 2022, including dinner that evening from 19:00. The next formal meeting of Council will be held from 09:30-13:00 on Friday 20 May 2022, followed by lunch.