

Council Minutes: 5 July 2024

PRESENT: Rt. Hon. Alistair Burt (Pro-Chancellor) (in the Chair); Professor Andy Schofield (Vice-Chancellor); Tania Baumann (lay member); Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears (lay member); Alun Branigan (lay member) (*online*); Hanah Burgess (lay member) (*online*); Anthony Carey (lay member); Cerys Evans (Students' Union President); Adrian Jonas (lay member); Claire Leitch (Senate representative) (*online*); Professor Rebecca Lingwood (Deputy Vice-Chancellor); Alison Mullan (Senate representative); Marcia Reid Fotheringham (lay member); Professor Ella Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone (Senate representative); Harrison Stewart (student Council member); His Hon. Phillip Sycamore (lay member); Maureen Whilby (lay member).

IN ATTENDANCE: Nick Fragel (Director of Philanthropy, Alumni and Supporter Engagement) (*for item 14*); Claire Geddes (Committee Clerk); Simon Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary); Nicola Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) and Secretary); Christine Parker (Head of Engagement: Trusts and Foundations) (*for item 14*); Russ Quigley (Deputy Director, People and Organisational Effectiveness); Sarah Randall-Paley (Director of Finance).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

INTRODUCTION

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Council noted that no apologies for absence were received for this meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair expressed thanks on behalf of Council to His Hon. Phillip Sycamore for his valuable and longstanding contributions to the Council, as he would be finishing his term of office on 31 July 2024.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Professor Rebecca Lingwood, as the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Harrison Stewart, the Students' Union's newly appointed student member of Council (and its Education Officer for 2024/25), to their first meeting of the Council.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: 17 MAY 2024

PAPER A

- 3.1 Council approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 May 2024.

4. MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 *Item 4.1 Matters Arising: Proposed Changes to Governance Oversight of Redundancies*: the Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) and Secretary provided an update regarding ongoing discussions with the recognised campus Trade Unions regarding their concerns about the proposed changes.

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

- 5.1 Council noted a written report from the Executive circulated to Council on 28 June 2024. The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following.

- (i) Progress with the Ruskin Museum and Research Centre capital project since Council's approval on 17 May 2024. He updated on further discussion with the National Heritage Museum Fund (NHMF) which had sought assurance on a number of points, including that the building would be maintained at University Museum Accreditation standards. Members noted the intention that the management of the University's Ruskin-related activity would move to implementation of the agreed objectives and building refurbishment.
- (ii) ***Restricted and Commercial in Confidence***
- (iii) The Executive's co-ordination of communications on behalf of the University with the new incoming Labour Government to ensure effective engagement.
- (iv) National and international league table rankings including the UK Higher Education Sector's recent decline in performance in the QS World Rankings, and the University's plans to regain and improve up its own previous position. He highlighted the imminent release of the National Student Survey 2024 results.
- (v) The management of the cessation of the Pro-Palestinian encampment in Alexandra Square, but ongoing disruption to other University business arising from protests relating to situation in Gaza. This included interruptions at recent open days.
- (vi) The Executive Board's consideration of how to ensure the long-term sustainability of the University and its initial thinking regarding its scale, size, shape. He drew attention to the increasingly challenging and competitive market for overseas students.
- (vii) The recent Executive Board Away Day's focus on scenario planning and its consideration of a range of potential mechanisms to mitigate below target admissions performance, if this position were to materialise in the autumn.

Council discussed the risks and sensitivities relating to possible mitigations.

6. STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT'S REPORT: JULY 2024 **PAPER B**

- 6.1 Council noted the written report from the Students' Union Elected Officer Team of 2023/24 regarding the outcomes and impacts of its activity over the year. The President highlighted the success of the Students' Union's recent Summer Ball, which it was hoped would grow in popularity over future years.
- 6.2 Council discussed the Students' Union Governance Review Effectiveness Report and noted how changes had been implemented to the Union Assembly to ensure both representation from the Colleges' Junior Common Rooms (JCRs) and a wider spread of diversity of opinion and thought. Members highlighted the importance of the Students' Union being an effective student voice in the development of key projects such as Curriculum Transformation.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

7. HEADLINE BUDGET 2024/25 AND FINANCIAL FORECAST TO 2028/29 **PAPER C**
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8. POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF A VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE SCHEME **PAPER D**
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9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME (V15 FINAL) **PAPER E**
Restricted and Commercial in Confidence

10. NET ZERO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT (NZIP) **PAPER F**
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11. OFFICE FOR STUDENTS (OfS) ONGOING CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION: ASSURANCE UPDATE **PAPER G**

- 11.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary gave an overview of the University's annual report regarding its compliance with the OfS Regulatory Framework. He provided assurance that there had been no fundamental changes to the University's governing arrangements since its registration with the OfS in 2018 and there was confidence that the University continued to comply with the Conditions as set out in the paper.
- 11.2 Council noted potential additions to the Conditions of Registration arising from ongoing consultations.
- 11.3 Council noted the compliance assurance report and was satisfied with the assurance it provided, but recommended consideration of biennial reporting.

- 12. DRAFT RISK APPETITE STATEMENT** **PAPER H**
- 12.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary presented the revised outcomes of the risk appetite exercise and the purpose behind the creation of a statement. He drew attention to the synergies between the Council and Executive’s risk appetites but that the latter was moderately more risk hungry.
- 12.2 Members received and noted the comments of its Audit Committee with respect to risk appetite, and welcomed the revised approach risk appetite analysis and presentation which it confirmed had increased the accessibility and utility of the Statement.
- 12.3 Council noted the revised risk appetite scoring and encouraged the exploration of further ways to use risk appetite statement to inform its own, and the Executive’s, decision making.
- 13. UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER QUARTERLY REVIEW** **PAPER I**
- 13.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Deputy Secretary introduced the updated Risk Register highlighting the intention to adjust its format in response to the recent Audit Committee effectiveness review. He drew attention to an increase in scores relating to Risk 10 (international collaborative partner issues pre-control probability score) and Risk 13 (respond to/manage an incident, pre and post control probability score) due to recent business disruption on campus due to protest.
- 13.2 Members received and noted the comments of its Audit Committee with respect to the risk register, insights into the HE sector risk profile and the Committee developing its approach to the evaluation of emerging risks.
- 13.3 The University’s controls to prevent a cyber-attack arising its supply chain were discussed and assurance provided from an information governance perspective.
- 13.4 Council noted the updated University risk register.
- 14. POTENTIAL MAJOR GIFT** **PAPER J**
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- 15. UA92 BOARD: UNIVERSITY DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT** **PAPER K**
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- 16. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT** **PAPER L**
Restricted and Confidential
- 17. STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE** **PAPER M**
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*** ITEMS NOT FOR DISCUSSION UNLESS REQUESTED IN ADVANCE TO THE CHAIR**

18.* PROFESSOR EMERITI APPOINTMENTS: ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 PAPER 1

18.1 Council noted the Professor Emeriti appointments for 2023/24 as set out in the report.

19.* WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS PAPER 2

19.1 Council noted the following written reports of meetings:

- Audit Committee, meeting of 24 June 2024
- Council Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee, meeting of 11 June 2024
- Equality Diversity and inclusion Committee, meeting of 20 May 2024
- Estates Committee, meeting of 5 June 2024
- Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting of 14 June 2024
- Senate, meeting of 24 April 2024
- Student Experience Committee, meeting of 1 May 2024
- Student Experience Committee, meeting of 31 May 2024

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

20. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS PAPER N

20.1 Council noted the Forward Schedule.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21.1 Members noted that the annual Declarations of Interest review process had commenced and responses were required no later than 19 July 2024.

21.2 Council noted that the University would be writing to congratulate alumnus who had been successful in being elected as Members of Parliament in the 4 July 2024 General Election.

21.3 Members discussed the status of the Eden Project and how members of the Council could engage effectively with the new MP for Morecambe and Lunesdale and new Ministers.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22.1 The next meeting will be held from 13:00 on Friday 11 October 2024 in the Training Suites 1, 2, and 3, POE Building.