University of Sheffield | University Secretary's Office

# Minutes — Meeting of the Council

**Date:** 26 February 2026

**Present:** Martin Temple, Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair)

Claire Brownlie (Pro-Chancellor), Adrian Stone (Pro-Chancellor), Rob Memmott (Treasurer), Professor Koen Lamberts (President & Vice-Chancellor), Ghislaine Allilaire, Rebecca Freeman, Dr John Hogan, Varun Kabra, Professor Janine Kirby, Frances Morris-Jones, Dr Siobhán North, Professor Conchúr Ó Brádaigh, Phil Rodrigo, Professor Mark Strong, Rob Sykes, Dr Phil Tenney, Eli Thompson (Items 1-15), Professor Mary Vincent

**Secretary:** David Swinn

**In attendance:** Emily Allan, Kiara Delgado Derteano (Items 1-15), Professor Sue Hartley, Jo Jones, Dr Edward Smith, Ian Wright

**Apologies:** None

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed Members and attendees to the meeting. Apologies as recorded above were noted.

1.2 The Chair noted that a quorum of the Council was present for a meeting in accordance with Section 3(5) of University's statutes and therefore that the meeting was duly convened.

## 2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

2.1 CLOSED MINUTE

2.2 Other Conflicts of Interest

2.2.1 CLOSED MINUTE

2.2.2 There were no other conflicts of interest declared.

## 3. Approval of Category C Business

3.1 Council considered Category C business, which is covered in Minutes 7-15, below.

## 4. President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

4.1 Council received and noted the President & Vice-Chancellor's report, which provided information on the principal current and forthcoming developments in the policy environment and against each of the themes in the University's Strategic Plan. Attention was drawn to the following updates and developments since the written report was prepared:

a) CLOSED MINUTE

b) Centre Specialising in Apprenticeships and CPD in the Faculty of Engineering: In January, UEB had approved proposals to develop a dedicated centre in the Faculty of Engineering that would specialise in the provision of engineering apprenticeships and high quality CPD provision, incorporating governance and management of the AMRC Training Centre and the current Multidisciplinary Engineering Education (MEE) Team.

   The proposal would be presented at the March meeting of Senate for consideration and any advice to Council, prior to Council being asked for formal approval of the new Centre at the April meeting. The provision of the Centre would come within the remit of Ofsted and would therefore be the subject of periodic Ofsted audits.

c) CLOSED MINUTE

d) External Engagement: The political attention on changes made by the government to student loan repayments, spearheaded by Money Saving Expert founder Martin Lewis, had complicated the University's and wider UK HE sector's lobbying efforts for tuition fee increases in line with inflation to be provided for in law.

   Following the Government's postponement of the relevant legislation, further increases were not now expected to come into effect before the introduction of the International Student Levy, which therefore exacerbated the adverse financial impact of the Levy. The University had written to the Chancellor highlighting the risk of the Levy fee and would continue to work with the Government and via the Russell Group to highlight the importance of degrees and the benefit of the HE sector to taxpayers.

e) Student Group Claim: On 14 February 2026, University College London (UCL) settled a legal claim relating to the provision of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and previous periods of industrial action. The settlement had been reached immediately prior to a High Court hearing of a series of test cases that would have determined key points of law and fact so as to inform the approach to the wider group claims. Thirty-six other universities, including the University, had received letters before action and in some cases draft particulars of claim while the UCL case was progressing and the University had been in correspondence with the claimant solicitors. Council would be kept updated as appropriate.

f) University Strategy: UEB had started to plan for the replacement of the current University Vision and Strategy, which ran until the end of 2026/27, with a new Strategy that would aim to create a clear and positive future vision for the University as it navigated an environment that was volatile and complex.

g) Professional Services: With effect from August 2026, two teams within Global Engagement would transfer to Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment, and Communications, with the enlarged department to be renamed Communications and External Relations (CER). A further team in Global Engagement would be relocated to the Careers and Employability Service. The impetus behind these changes was to reduce barriers between teams that had strong existing relationships and improve the broader student experience. The bulk of roles, job titles, and reporting structures would remain the same following the restructure.

h) CLOSED MINUTE

## 5. Student Experience

5.1 Council received and noted the report, which provided an update on the SU's work since the last meeting of Council, in particular the insights gained from the recent all-student survey. The report also included a progress update in relation to the review of the Students' Union Articles of Association.

5.2 During discussion, the following was highlighted:

5.2.1 The all-student survey had highlighted the rising cost of living and financial hardship as the primary concerns for the student body. Many students were working excessive hours which directly hindered their academic performance and general wellbeing. To address these issues, the SU had implemented support initiatives such as community hubs for free goods and breakfast clubs, while also campaigning for better student finance and subsidised transport.

5.2.2 The strong correlation between active campus engagement and a student's sense of safety and belonging was discussed. Members noted that the low survey response rate indicated a need for more robust data to gain a fuller understanding of the student experience.

## 6. Council Effectiveness - Implementation of Review Recommendations and Questionnaire Outcome and Proposed Actions

6.1 Council received and noted an update on recommendations and agreed actions following the 2024 Effectiveness Review, which was accompanied with a report on the members self-assessment questionnaire conducted over summer 2025 and its principal findings. These findings formed the basis of a number of recommendations for Members' consideration. Attention was also drawn to the consultation about the current review of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) HE Code of Governance. Publication of the indicative outcomes from this consultation was expected in Spring 2026. It was anticipated that the new CUC Code would reflect some of the major insights from the Gillies Report into financial mismanagement at the University of Dundee and, to this end, the University would revisit the results of its previous internal self-assessment against the Gillies findings to ensure their ongoing correctness.

6.2 Council approved the actions set out within the report as based on the findings from the self-assessment questionnaire.

**7. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
(Meeting Held on 20 November 2025)

7.1 Council approved the Minutes as an accurate record.

**8. Action Log and Matters Arising on the Minutes**

8.1 Council approved the updated Action Log. There were no other matters arising.

**9. Annual Report on Campaigns and Alumni Relations**

9.1 Council received and noted the Annual Report on Campaigns and Alumni Relations.

**10. Minutes of the Senate**

10.1 Council received and noted the minutes.

**11. Minutes of the Council Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee**

11.1 Council received and noted the minutes.

**12. Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee**

12.1 Council received and noted the report.

**13. Report on Action Taken**

13.1 Council received and endorsed a report on action taken on its behalf since the previous meeting.

**14. Public Availability of Council Papers**

14.1 Council received and approved recommendations concerning the publication on the web of papers presented at the meeting, in accordance with agreed proposals on the disclosure of information. It was noted that a number of papers were confidential and would not be made publicly available.

**15. Council Business Plan**

15.1 Council received and noted the latest iteration of the business plan.

**16. CLOSED MINUTE**

**17. CLOSED MINUTE**

**18. CLOSED MINUTE**

**19. CLOSED MINUTE**

**20. Corporate Risk Register**

20.1 Council received the 2025/26 Corporate Risk Register and noted the accompanying report on the Risk Maturity Self-Assessment, which had both been approved by the Council's Audit & Risk Assurance Committee during its meeting on 19 January 2026 (see Minute 22, below).

20.2 Members of Council approved the 2025/26 Corporate Risk Register.

**21. CLOSED MINUTE**

**22. Minutes of the Council Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

22.1 Council received and noted the minutes of the 6 November 2025 meeting and noted an initial update on the 19 January 2026 meeting pending full presentation of the minutes at the meeting on 30 April 2026.

**23. Minutes of the Council Finance Committee**

23.1 Council received and noted the minutes.

**24. Any Other Business**

24.1 There were no matters raised as other business.

**25. Feedback on the Meeting**

25.1 The Chair thanked Members for their contributions to the meeting.

**26. Date of Next Meeting**

26.1 Monday 30 April 2026.