



Minutes Meeting of Council

Date:	11 July 2022
Present:	A Pedder, Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); C Brownlie, Pro-Chancellor; Professor K Lamberts, President & Vice-Chancellor; D Bagley, A Belton, Professor G Gee, L Hand, Professor S Hartley, Professor J Kirby, P Rodrigo, Professor M Vincent, A Wray
Secretary:	Dr Tony Strike
In attendance:	Professor G Valentine, J Jones, R Franchi, M Borland, D Harrison and I Wright (items 1-4), M Nolan and D Barcroft (item 10), B Abrams (item 11), T Wray, C Vernon and S Thompson (item 12)
Apologies:	J Sutcliffe (Treasurer), A Hope (Pro-Chancellor); Professor D Forrest, Dr B Gilvary, G Greenup, A Kay, Professor K Layden, Professor D Petley

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Liam Hand and Rose Franchi to their first meeting of Council.

1. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

- 1.1 No conflicts were declared, other than those set out below in relation to item 15, the Report of the Council Nominations Committee, which included recommendations relating to some Council members who would not take part in decisions relating to them individually, and in relation to the decision in section 13.1.2 (b).

2. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

(Meeting held on 25 April and 7 June 2022)

- 2.1 The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Action Log and Matters Arising on the Minutes

- 3.1 Council approved the updated Action Log, and noted: that the Financial Strategy would be presented to Finance Committee and then to Council in November for approval; further consideration was being given to providing a dedicated EDI session for members of Council in the new academic year; the action regarding interim progress updates on the Student Roadmap would be covered within the Technology Enabled Strategic Framework item on today's agenda; and the action in relation to borrowing arrangements following work to consider refinancing and restructure options was in progress and would be brought to a future meeting.
- 3.2 It was noted that the University been represented at Jonathan Nicholls' Memorial Service, held on Saturday 9 July at the University of Warwick.

4. Health and Safety Update

- 4.1 Council received and noted an update from the Director of Health and Safety and Director HR, who had recently assumed executive responsibility for this area. There was

a discussion about the University's health and safety culture in the context of the importance Council places on seeking to have an exemplary health and safety culture, with different approaches to modelling behaviour amongst senior leaders discussed. It was noted that all Faculty Vice-Presidents had health and safety as one of their objectives and that the trade unions and the Students' Union was represented on the UEB Health & Safety Committee. Members suggested that the University could increase engagement by all staff and students by enabling individuals to make reports more easily and receive updates on reports they had made. The University Secretary would seek to include the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Health and Safety in the induction programme for the incoming Chair of Council.

- 4.2 Council reiterated the importance of a positive institutional health and safety culture and referred the issue back to the Executive in order that the necessary cultural changes were effected as a matter of priority. A further update was requested in the next academic year on the actions taken following Council's discussion, which could draw on Council members' expertise.

5. Approval of Category C business

- 5.1 Council considered Category C business, which is covered in Minutes 17-24, below.

6. President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

- 6.1 Council received and discussed the President & Vice-Chancellor's report, in which he provided information on key current and forthcoming developments in the policy environment and against each of the themes in the University Vision and Strategy. The following points were noted:

- (a) Industrial Action: Following local negotiations, UCU had formally confirmed their withdrawal from all industrial action at the University. The current industrial action ballot mandate was due to expire on 7 October 2022. UCEA wrote to the unions with a final national pay offer for 2022-23, for an overall paybill uplift of 3.18%. The offer provides for an uplift of up to 9% for staff on the lowest spine points, and an uplift of 3% for staff on or above spine point 20.
- (b) Political Developments: Michelle Donelan, who was promoted from universities minister to Education Secretary following Nadhim Zahawi's promotion to Chancellor, subsequently resigned from government, shortly before Boris Johnson's announcement that he would resign as Prime Minister. James Cleverly had been appointed Education Secretary at a crucial time for the HE sector, shortly before A-level results day and as the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill moved through Parliament.
- (c) National Policy: The HE Freedom of Speech Bill was progressing to the Committee Stage. The University continued to work with the Russell Group to ensure that the Bill's provisions were proportionate and risk based. The University would seek to ensure that the Bill was workable and compatible with other institutional obligations. The political impact of the NI Protocol Bill on UK-EU relations was having an effect on UK association to Horizon Europe and it was not clear that a resolution could be found. The Plan B approach of establishing a UK research and innovation programme was not yet defined.
- (d) Student Recruitment and Admissions: UG Home applications were similar to this point last year and UG Overseas applications were above 2021 levels. Furthermore, there had been an increase in the number of students accepting the University's offers. With respect to PGT Home applications, overall numbers were considerably down compared to 2021, a position replicated across the sector and likely driven by improved employment and travel prospects. However, PGT Overseas numbers remained positive, with a further increase in applications and

with greater national diversity. Council noted a new campaign to promote Sheffield as a university city, in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield City Council.

- (e) National Student Survey: The NSS results were released by the Office for Students on 6 July and Council was pleased to note that the initial institutional headlines were positive, with overall satisfaction remaining above the sector average and ranking ninth in the Russell Group. Materials Science was ranked number one in the UK overall, with a further 13 subjects in the top five and three more in the top 10.
- (f) Knowledge Exchange: The latest Higher Education - Business and Community Interactions survey data, which formed the basis for most of the measures in the Knowledge Exchange Framework, demonstrated that the University had maintained a consistent increase in collaborative research income since 2016/17. The University had also improved its ranking to 2nd both nationally and within the Russell Group. Income from IP had continued to increase since 2015/16 and the University now ranked second in the Russell Group and third nationally for this measure. Attention was also drawn to further details on the University's IP commercialisation activities, which were set out in the written report.
- (g) Executive Structures: Attention was drawn to section 5.3 of the report which set out the latest position regarding the executive structures.
During discussion of the report, Members agreed that, in order to enable Council to be more sighted on league tables, an update would be brought to the October Council meeting.

7. Financial Strategy

- 7.1 This item was deferred to Council's meeting in November 2022.

8. Financial Forecasts and Updated Budget

- 8.1 Council considered the Financial Forecasts 2021/22 – 2026/27. Further work would be carried out before November with Faculties and Professional Services to validate the forecasts and the assumptions on which they were based. Work on the estates strategy regarding the use of space and in relation to net zero carbon targets would both be built into the forecasts. The University would require no new borrowing and remain compliant with its bank covenants.
- 8.2 Council approved the financial forecasts 2021/22 to 2026/27 and approved the updated 2022/23 budget, having noted the changes. Members also noted the 2021/22 outturn position and that the updated forecasts would be presented to Council for approval in November 2022, prior to submission to the OfS. These updates would reflect the actual 2021/22 results, early indication of the 2022 student intake and any other material changes required. The November forecast would also provide details on any mitigation actions that were necessary to address any funding shortfalls, if required.

9. Strategic Planning Cycle Actions and Outcomes 2021-22

- 9.1 Council received and noted an update on the actions and outcomes from the 2021/22 strategic planning cycle, following the implementation of a new, five year, planning cycle to support the delivery of the University Vision and informed by the Strategic Delivery Plans for each Pillar of the Vision. It was highlighted that the plans included targets across all departments. The student intake targets had been reviewed and reset for all academic departments. The annual cycle will include an assessment of progress against the previous years' priorities and actions.

- 9.2 Council will receive an update on progress against the KPIs in the autumn. This will include an overview of the academic department positions using the Department Strategic Framework.

10. Access and Participation Plan

(M Nolan and D Barcroft in attendance for this item)

- 10.1 Council considered an update on progress against the current University Access and Participation Plan for the year 2021/22, noting that the OfS had confirmed that their monitoring process was complete and that no matters were drawn to the University's attention or any further action required. Members also considered proposed variations to the plan for 2023/24 as a result of changes made by the OfS to the process and approach.
- 10.2 Council noted that the OfS had advised that universities were not required to submit monitoring returns in 2022 in respect of their 2020-21 plans but that that internal monitoring should continue. Attention was also drawn to the priorities announced by the OfS' new Director of Access and Participation in March 2022, which the OfS had asked providers to take into account in preparing and submitting variations to their plans for the year 2023/24.
- 10.3 During discussion Members were pleased to note the update report and the positive overall progress made against the APP targets. It was clarified that, although the update report focused on specific groups of students as set by the OfS, a number of the institutional actions in place would also have a positive impact on other under-represented groups. Council approved proposed variations for the year 2023/24 for submission to the OfS. It was also noted that these variations were requested by the OfS as part of a three phase approach that would complete on submission of a new access and participating plan for approval by Council in Summer 2023.

11. Technology Enabled Strategic Framework Progress Update and Phase 4 Approval

(B Abrams in attendance for this item)

11.1 TEF Phase 3 Progress Update

- 11.1.1 Council received and noted an update on progress against the TEF Phase 3 plans and the institutional value delivered to date, following consideration by the UEB ITSG, UEB and Finance Committee. Members noted that around two thirds of the roadmap items were, or would, complete by the end of 2021/22, with the remainder completing either in 2022/23 or, in a small number of cases, in 2023/24 or later due to the size and scope of these projects. Attention was also drawn to areas of challenge or ongoing risk, and how these were being addressed. It was forecast that 89% of the revised January budget would be spent by the end of the financial year.

11.2 TEF Phase 4 Proposal

- 11.2.1 Council considered the TEF objectives and plans for Phase 4 (2022/23) and associated case for investment, as considered and endorsed by the UEB ITSG, UEB and Finance Committee. Particular attention was drawn to the wider IT market.
- 11.2.2 With respect to the volume of activities and objectives in scope of Phase 4 and institutional capacity to deliver on these, it was noted that ITS would be working to refine the key priorities. The University was looking to build its institutional capability.

- 11.2.3 Council noted the prioritised roadmap objectives that comprised Phase 4, and approved the proposals, including investment for Phase 4, comprising both capital and revenue expenditure, for the financial year 2022/23, as set out in the related paper.

11.3 Student TEF 2022-23 Proposal

- 11.3.1 Council considered a proposed vision, approach to management and associated budgets for the student roadmap, the dedicated work stream which Council had agreed to add to the TEF to enable delivery of aspirations that had previously formed part of the Student Lifecycle Programme. UEB ITSG, UEB and Finance Committee had considered and endorsed the proposals.
- 11.3.2 During discussion Members drew confidence from the commitment that the level of granularity seen in phases 3 and 4 of TEF, whilst not currently available for the student road map, would be available in the future. It was clarified that the focus would be on stabilising the current student record system and strategically optimising the data held within that system.
- 11.3.3 Council noted and endorsed the vision and the approach to management, approved the items of value for delivery in 2022/23 and approved the requested budget costs for 2022/23.

12. University Brand Development

- 12.1 Council considered proposals in relation to the development of the University's brand identity, which had been overseen and recommended by a Reputation Steering Group and supported by UEB. During a related presentation, attention was drawn to the following:
- a summary of findings from a recent brand audit and related challenges to be overcome;
 - a vision for a new brand identity and the key objectives;
 - proposed changes to the University logo and crest, including typeface, style and colour;
 - examples of how these changes would appear on institutional publications and compared to the University's collaborators, peers and competitors;
 - feedback from initial testing with stakeholders;
 - planned engagement and piloting, and subsequent roll-out
 - resource implications, which were largely time rather than financial cost.
- 12.2 Council welcomed the work to date and the proposals as means to enhance the University's brand and reputation amongst various stakeholder groups. Having reviewed the proposals and noted the planned next steps, Council approved recommendations for a pilot testing of the new, evolved brand identity and to consider full and final proposals at its November meeting.

13. Capital Programme

13.1 Closed minute and paper

13.2 Capital Projects Development Process and Governance

- 13.2.1 Council received proposals intended to address challenges within the current system of developing, overseeing and approving major capital projects, whereby the University could achieve greater agility, transparency and rigour in decision making processes, whilst ensuring that appropriate governance controls continued to be in place. Members also considered and endorsed a related proposal to increase the financial thresholds for delegated authorities for capital approvals, which had remained

unchanged for over ten years (see Minute 21.1, below), and noted the establishment of a central commercial team to support these activities.

14. Corporate Risk Register

14.1 Council received and noted a report from the UEB Risk Review Group and approved the updated Corporate Risk Register for 2021/22.

14.2 Attention was drawn to UEB Risk Review Group receiving an update on the discussion which took place at Council's June Away Day and the presentational changes to the Corporate Risk Register requested by Council would be undertaken for the autumn.

15. Report of the Council Nominations Committee

15.1 Council received and approved the Report, including recommendations relating to Council membership, which had been approved by Council on 7 June, and Council representation on other committees.

16. Minutes of the Senior Remuneration Committee

16.1 Council received and approved the Minutes.

17. Report of the Senate

17.1 Council received and approved the Report.

18. Report of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

18.1 Council received and approved the Report.

19. Report of the Finance Committee

19.1 Council received and approved the Report. It was noted that an update on borrowing options might be provided to Council before its October meeting.

20. Office for Students Conditions Compliance Register

20.1 Council received and noted the register of compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration and an accompanying report providing updates on the latest regulatory developments.

21. Council Matters

21.1 Council Scheme of Delegation

21.1 Council received and approved the Scheme of Delegation, including proposed increases to the approvals thresholds for capital projects, with immediate effect, and other minor updates to ensure that references to posts and other University groups or committees remained up to date.

21.2 Functions of Council (Statement of Primary Responsibilities)

21.2.1 Council noted and confirmed the arrangements in place for Council to fulfil its responsibilities.

21.3 Compliance and Assurance Framework

21.3.1 Council received and noted the framework and the future actions proposed in the related paper.

21.4 Council Business Plan 2021-22

21.4.1 Council noted the updated plan, which would be updated and refreshed for 2022/23.

21.5 Report on Action Taken

21.5.1 To note the report on action taken since the previous meeting.

22. Returning Officers' Report on the Students' Union Full Time Officers Elections 2022

22.1 Council received and noted the report, in particular that the Students' Union had run a fair and democratic process to elect its Officers in 2022 and the University Secretary's letter to the SU President regarding the numbers of candidates standing and members voting, so that Council could receive further details about how the SU continued to ensure that representation was reflective of its members' views in subsequent reports. It was noted that the Students' Union had identified enhancing member participation in its democratic processes as a priority.

23. Use of the University Seal

23.1 Council received and noted a report on the application of the University seal since the previous meeting.

24. Public Availability of Council papers

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

25. Farewells

25.1 On behalf of Council, the President & Vice-Chancellor thanked Tony Pedder, a member of University Council since 2005 and as Chair since 2012, for whom this was his final meeting before standing down at the end of 2021/22, and offered good wishes for the future.

25.2 On behalf of Council, the Chair thanked the following, for whom this was the final Council before they stepped down at the end of 2021/22, and offered good wishes for the future:

- Alison Hope, a member of Council and its Audit Committee since 2012 and became Chair of Council's Audit Committee in 2017.
- John Sutcliffe, a member of University Council since 2017 and Treasurer and Chair of Council Finance Committee since 2018.
- Keith Layden, a member of Council since 2017.
- Tony Strike, University Secretary since 2017.