

Note: The above minute has been redacted as it is considered to be exempt information as defined by section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which covers commercial interests.

4.24-25 **Vice-Chancellor's Update Report (Document C4/24-25)**

- 4.1 Council received and discussed the Vice-Chancellor's report which provided information on key matters affecting the University since the last meeting. Attention was drawn to the following updates with additional information provided as follows:
- the deepening funding crisis in the UK HE sector, noting the outlook for the sector remained volatile and challenging.
 - despite a good performance in home undergraduate recruitment, the University's new student intake was notably lower than last year which would have a significant impact on income. Executive Board was implementing a series of priority actions to address the financial challenge; this had been communicated to staff and was being followed by an all-staff meeting. The Executive remained committed to communicating with staff in an open and transparent manner to support a collective understanding of the current financial position.
 - the University needed to become leaner in order to become financially viable and the Executive was in the early stages of scoping out a more deliberate approach to organisational change with an emphasis on quality, effectiveness, and efficiency. The priority need to protect the interests of students was emphasised, as was the need to ensure that staff were supported during this time of financial challenge and change.
 - whilst the situation the University faced was serious, it presented an opportunity to establish a strong foundation to achieve its mission with an approach that embraced its values.
- 4.2 During discussion, Council sought clarification on the significant change programme that had commenced, noting that a review of the University's operating model would be undertaken judiciously but at pace, drawing upon best practice. A Change Framework had been approved by the Executive which set out a structure and principles designed to support the University in delivering successful change in a consistent, people-centred way, and in line with its values. Further details would be shared at the Council Strategy Day with the Executive welcoming early engagement and reflections from Council on the emerging approach, acknowledging the suggestion that external specialist support may be required.
- 4.3 Contributions rates for Faculties were also discussed noting these varied significantly by Faculty. All academic areas needed to make a positive financial contribution, and portfolio management, including the rationalisation of programmes, and course closures were being considered as part of the change programme.
- 4.4 A further update was provided on the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship Programmes noting that the University's Student Protection Plan had been enacted and SWDA learners had been transferred to the University's approved BA Social Work Programme. The University had met and liaised with Social Work England, the Office for Students, and relevant employers during this process with the key focus being on protecting the learners' interests. Council noted that a scheduled review of social work provision by Social Work England would take place in mid-October.

5.24-25 **Student Recruitment Update (Document C5/24-25)**

- 5.1 Council received an update on student recruitment for September 2024 noting the concerns highlighted at previous meetings regarding a potential significant shortfall in international

students had materialised. Market conditions for international recruitment had been extremely challenging during the cycle due to immigration and visa changes, economic and political situations in key markets, as well as increased competition from UK universities. The impact of a reduction in international students had been felt across the sector.

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8.24-25 **People Update (Document C8/24-25)**

- 8.1 Council received an update on several people-related matters with attention being drawn to:
- activity undertaken as part of the People Strategy delivery plan including the recent staff survey.

- the very positive feedback received from delegates on the Bradford New Manager Programme.
- national-level industrial relations including an update on the national pay negotiation process.

9.24-25 **Report from University Secretary (Document C9/24-25)**

- 9.1 Council received a report on the ongoing work related to areas of governance noting that a review of the University's Charter and Statutes would be undertaken in line with the Council Effectiveness Action Plan. As part of this, supporting Ordinances and Regulations, and the University's Scheme of Delegation would also be reviewed. Council also noted that a review of the University's decision-making structure was being undertaken. This would ensure that processes were lean, fit-for-purpose, and agile to respond to changing circumstances.
- 9.2 Council was informed that:
- the Vice-Chancellor, Chief Finance Officer, and University Secretary had met with the Office for Students in mid-September during which an update on the University's financial position was provided. The meeting, which was constructive, was part of a multi-provider engagement piece that the OfS was undertaking with the sector.
 - Sir David Behan, Bradford Alumnus, and Interim Chair of the OfS, would visit the University in October as part of an alumni reunion, and the Executive would take the opportunity to engage in discussions related to future evolution of regulation, and the University's ambitions and challenges.

10.24-25 **Report from the Students' Union (Document C10/24-25)**

- 10.1 Council received and noted a report from the Students' Union on their priorities for the 2024/25 academic year.

11.24-25 **Additional Finance Committee: 4 September 2024(Document C11/24-25)**

- 11.1 Council received a report from the Finance Committee which provided a high-level summary from its meeting held on 4 September. Attention was drawn to the Committee's approval of the proposed approach to seeking a new Revolving Credit Facility.

12.24-25 **Register of Interests (Document C12/24-25)**

- 12.1 Council received and noted the report.

13.24-25 **Minutes of the Meetings on 24 July 2024 and 22 August 2024 (Document C13/24-25)**

- 13.1 The minutes of the meetings held on the 24 July 2024 and 22 August 2024 were approved by circulation prior to the meeting.

14.24-25 **Council Terms of Reference and Membership 2024/25(Document C14/24-25)**

- 14.1 Council received and noted the report.

15.24-25 **Draft Council 2 Agenda, November 2024 (Document C15/24-25)**

- 15.1 Council received and noted the report.

16.24-25 **Council schedule of business (Document C16/24-25)**

16.1 Council received and noted the report.

17.24-25 **Tour of Student Central and Library Level 01**

17.1 Following the formal meeting, Council received a tour of the newly refurbished [Student Central](#) and JB Priestley Library Level 01.

Jacqui Holgate, Head of Governance

October 2024