

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2024

Members:	John Hinchcliffe (Chair)	Sanskrity Baraili	Professor Shirley Congdon
	Dr Stewart Davies	Dame Sally Dicketts	Paul Donovan
	Terry Hartwell	Kate Ireland	Faiz Ilyas
	Victoria McKay	Ash Mehta	Sally Neocosmos
	Raizana Razeen	Professor Vishantha Weerakkody	

In attendance: Professor Udy Archibong, PVC, EDI (for item 75)

Martin Conway, University Secretary
 Professor Alastair Goldman, Director of Local Activity Partnerships (for item 75)
 Jacqui Holgate, Head of Governance
 Andrew Lang, Chief Finance Officer
 Claire Pryke, Associate Director, Outreach, Recruitment and Admissions (for item 73)

Apologies:	Raja Waseem Ahmad	Professor Zahir Irani	Ibrahim Mahmood
	Simon Lewis	Professor Amir Sharif	

71.23-24 **Welcome and Report from the Chair**

71.1 The Interim Chair of Council welcomed Members and attendees to the meeting including the new Sabbatical Officers, Raizana Razeen (Education Officer) and Sanskrity Baraili (Student Affairs Officer). Thanks were extended to the outgoing lay members, Terry Hartwell, and Sally Neocosmos for their significant contributions both to the work of Council and to the University noting they had served with distinction over several years. Matt Atkinson, Sanjay Patel, Tori McKay, and Maryann Hardy were also thanked for their service to Council and its Committees.

71.2 The Interim Chair commented on the complex and challenging environment in which the University continued to operate including the uncertainty on issues relating to funding, increased competition for home and international students, and the financial turmoil in the sector. The importance of recruiting to target was reiterated. The Interim Chair also noted that the recruitment process for a permanent Chair of Council was nearing conclusion, and that new lay members would be appointed in Autumn 2024.

71.3 Council noted this was John Hinchcliffe's final meeting as Interim Chair of Council and thanked him for undertaking the role and for leading the Council during a challenging period. The Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of Executive Board, also extended thanks to the Interim Chair.

72.23-24 **Vice-Chancellor's Update Report (Document C84/23-24)**

72.1 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:



- (a) that a new government had been formed and cabinet ministers appointed. Whilst no immediate impact on the current crisis facing Higher Education was expected, the University remained hopeful to see positive changes overtime.
- (b) that the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme had closed and through a combination of the MARS, the removal of vacant roles, and achieving savings in non-staff costs, this placed the University on track to delivery savings of £10.8M.
- (c) that Executive Board continued to focus on savings and enhancements noting that the University's strategic goals would be delivered through the newly prioritised Project Charters, and these would drive performance, with their success evidenced by strategic KPIs and delivery plans.
- (d) the positive outcome from the recent Ofsted inspection of apprenticeships provision which had been rated as 'good'. This demonstrated the progress that had been made and that the University had a strong framework to inform future improvement and growth in apprenticeship programmes.
- (e) that the Staff Survey had closed with 66% of staff completing the survey. An analysis of the results was being undertaken and an update would be provided to Council in due course.
- (f) the significant infrastructure projects that had been recently completed noting that a tour of the refurbished Student Central would be arranged in September.

[REDACTED]

72.3 The City Heating District Scheme was discussed noting the significant work associated with the project, which was fundamental to a number of activities, including accelerating the University's route to its net zero commitment. The business case had been endorsed by a Sub-Group of Council on 9 July and final stage negotiations and legal documentation was being prepared for the new 20-year contract.

- 72.4 **ACTIONS:**
- **present report on staff survey results to future Council (Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing)**
 - **schedule tour of Student Central (Governance)**

Note: Parts of the above minute have been redacted as they are considered to be exempt information as defined by section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which covers commercial interests.

73.23-24 **Student Recruitment (Document C85/23-24)**

73.1 Council received and noted the current position with application numbers for home and international recruitment for 2024 entry. Undergraduate home recruitment was largely in line with last year and postgraduate home was similar to last year but against a slightly increased target. The most significant risk was from international recruitment where early indications pointed to a significant shortfall against target. This aligned with the volatile and challenging environment in which the University was currently operating noting that the landscape of international student recruitment in the UK had experienced a major decline in international applications following a period of unexpected prosperity post-Covid. The importance of a successful clearing period was noted with any shortfall in recruitment likely to lead to further cost reductions.

73.2 During discussions, Council noted that other universities, including Russell Group universities were reporting declines in international recruitment due to a combination of negative government rhetoric, aggressive competition, and geopolitical change in key markets. In response to the challenging cycle, the University had been proactive in implementing strategic interventions to optimise recruitment and maximise conversion of international students.

█ [REDACTED]

73.4 The Vice-Chancellor thanked Council for the valuable debate noting that the Executive Board would reflect on the discussion and the points raised.

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74.23-24 **Budget 2024/25- and Five-Year Plan to 2028/29 (Document C86/23-24)**

74.1 The Chief Finance Officer provided a comprehensive overview of the draft budget 2024/25- and five-year plan to 2028/29 noting it had been through an iterative process and had been subject to significant scrutiny and challenge by Executive Board and Finance Committee.

74.2 In response, Council considered the plan in detail including the lower growth projections; uncertainties and risks associated with the five-year plan; the need to have appropriate financing arrangements in place noting this would be considered by the Finance Committee in early 2024/25; the University's current recruitment profile and where growth opportunities

might lie, having due regard to the competitive environment in which the University operated; the University's position in clearing and the need to ensure that the main scheme featured more significantly in future recruitment cycles; the need for investment as this was critical to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the University in a responsible and measured way; the management of scholarships and bursaries for maximum efficiency; and the impact of government policy issues and legislation changes. The sensitivities and scenario analyses were also discussed, as was the importance of improving student retention.

- 74.3 Other points of note included the challenges associated with plan with Members recognising that an already constrained budget was likely to be placed under significant, additional pressure. Council was assured the University's approach to scenario planning and budget setting was appropriately prudent such that any mitigating action that was required would be deployed strategically, led by the Executive Board on the basis of agreed principles and processes and informed by financial modelling. [REDACTED]

- 74.4 Following discussion and having considered the matter carefully, Council **approved** the five-year plan to 2028/29 on the recommendation of the Finance Committee and Executive Board noting it was a realistic but challenging plan.

- 74.5 Council thanked the Chief Finance Officer and his team for the detailed work that had been undertaken on the budget and plan, and for providing a transparent report which enabled Members to be fully informed about the plan allowing the matter to be considered and a decision reached.

Note: Parts of the above minute have been redacted as they are considered to be exempt information as defined by section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which covers commercial interests.

75.23-24 **Access and Participation Plan – Request for Approval (Document C87/23-24)**

- 75.1 Council received a presentation on the development of a new draft Access and Participation Plan for submission to the Office for Students by 31 July 2024, which would take effect in 2025/26 following OfS approval. It was noted that the APP had been co-created with key stakeholders and had been subject to extensive consultation with students and staff, which was welcomed.

- 75.2 Members discussed the APP and points of note included the regulatory context and related requirements; the APPs contribution to Widening Participation, from access to attainment; and the intervention strategies which the University would deploy to address the gaps and risks there were identified. It was noted that the APP was the driving mechanism for substantial aspects of the EDI sub-strategy and would play a significant role in delivering the strategy, and that it provided a framework to decolonise the University.

75.3 Clarification was provided on how progress against the APP would be monitored noting that a delivery plan was underdevelopment, and that regular updates on progress would be provided to Executive Board and Senate. With respect to the financial commitment associated with the plan, it was confirmed that the majority of activities were either ongoing in accordance with the current APP, or as pilot projects for the new APP, with existing resources being ringfenced to support delivery of the plan. It was also noted that due to the level of consultation undertaken, there was much wider awareness of the APP across the University.

75.4 Following discussion, and having welcomed the APP as a positive development, Council **approved** the Access and Participation Plan 2025/26-2028/29 for submission to the OfS.

76.23-24 **Risk Management (Document C89/23-24)**

76.1 Council **approved** the University's Risk Appetite Statement 2024/25 noting it had been subject to detailed consideration by the Risk Oversight Group, Executive Board and Audit Committee. The Statement, which was updated annually, set out the University's Risk Management Framework.

76.2 It was acknowledged that the level of risk appetite varied from one activity to another depending on the potential for that risk to materialise and have a detrimental effect on the reputation and financial sustainability of the University and whether that risk might undermine the University's ability to comply with relevant laws, regulations, codes, and practice.

77.23-24 **Report from University Secretary (Document C89/23-24M)**

77.1 Council received a report on the ongoing work related to areas of governance relevant to Council and the University. Following consideration of the report, Council **approved**:

- the Audit Committee be renamed as the 'Audit and Risk Committee' which would ensure that its critical role in the risk management framework was clearly outlined and given appropriate focus throughout the annual cycle of business.
- the terms of reference for Audit and Risk Committee; Remuneration Committee; Governance and Nominations Committee; People Committee, Finance Committee; Investment Committee; Honorary Awards Committee; and University Ethics Committee.
- the revisions to the Council Code of Conduct and University Ordinance on the Removal of Pro- Chancellors, Lay and Appointed Members of Council noting the contribution from lay member, Simon Lewis as part of the review process.
- the recommendations from the Honorary Awards Committee.
- the Statement of Primary Responsibility.

77.2 Council **agreed** that an extraordinary meeting of Council be arranged w/c 19 August to consider and approve the appointment of the incoming Chair of Council.

77.3 Council also noted the update on lay member vacancies; the proposal to establish an Academic Assurance Committee of Senate and Council noting that a proposal would be

considered by the Governance and Nominations Committee and that a recommendation would be brought forward to Council in due course; and the proposal to dissolve and reconstitute the Ethics Committee business within other fora. A proposal would be presented to Senate in advance of Council.

77.4 **ACTIONS:**

- **arrange extraordinary Council w/c 19 August (Governance Team)**
- **present reports outlined in M77.3 to GNC and Senate in advance of Council (University Secretary)**

77.5 Secretary's Note: An extraordinary Council meeting will take place on 22 August via Teams to consider the recommendation from the Chair Selection Panel on the appointment of the new Chair of Council.

78.23-24 **Presentation on The Bradford Renduchintala Enterprise Ecosystem (BREE)**

78.1 The Director of the BREE attended the meeting to deliver a detailed and insightful presentation on the range and breadth of the work that was in train with The Bradford Renduchintala Enterprise Ecosystem.

78.2 Council welcomed the presentation noting the University's aim to become the UK's number one destination for new start-ups with the goal being to provide financial and mentoring support from business leaders to help young entrepreneurs. The overall message from the presentation was one of ambition and optimism, with evidence of good progress since its launch in January 2024. Points debated included the governance of BREE; investment; and the opportunities for students, students, and members of the public to inform, co-develop, and co-create business ideas. The impact on the city was also noted.

79.23-24 **Report from Senate, and Council Committees (Documents C90-96/23-24)**

79.1 Council received the summary reports from Senate and Council Committees including Audit Committee, Finance Committee, Governance and Nominations Committee, Honorary Awards Committee, People Committee, and Remuneration Committee.

80.23-24 **Update Paper on the District Heating Network (Document C97/23-24)**

80.1 Council received an update report on the City District Heating Network noting that Council would receive periodic updates on how the contract was performing.

81.23-24 **Progress Update on Prioritised Project Charters (Document C98/23-24)**

81.1 Council received an update report on the current position of the Project Charters, and the proposed reporting process. Updates on the implementation and delivery of the Charters would be provided to Council in 2024/25.

82.23-24 **Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 (Document C99/23-24)**

82.1 Council received the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25.

83.23-24 **Safeguarding and Prevent Update (Document C100/23-24)**

83.1 Council received an update report on Safeguarding and Prevent, noting the continued work in this area.

84.23-24 **Register of Interests (Document C101/23-24)**

84.1 Council received and noted the report.

85.23-24 **Minutes of the Meeting on 15 May 2024 (Document C102/23-24)**

85.1 The minutes of the meetings held on the 15 May 2024 were approved by circulation prior to the meeting.

86.23-24 **Action Tracker (Document C103/23-24)**

86.1 Council received a report on matters arising from the Council meeting on 15 May 2024 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

87.23-24 **Terms of Reference and Membership 2023/24 (Document C104/23-24)**

87.1 Council received and noted the report.

88.23-24 **Draft Council 1 Agenda, September 2024 (Document C105/23-24)**

88.1 Council received and noted the report.

89.23-24 **Council Schedule of Business (Document C106/23-24)**

89.1 Council received and noted the report.

90.23-24 **Any Other Business: Update on Executive Board**

90.1 An update on Executive Board was provided by the Vice-Chancellor noting that the relevant matters had been considered in detail by the Remuneration Committee which was working under a delegated authority from the Council in determining the terms of any settlements that might be agreed for senior staff.

Secretary: Jacqui Holgate, Head of Governance

Date: August 2024