

COUNCIL 2

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021

Members	Baroness Ann Taylor (Chair)	Abdulraouf Abdussalam	Dr Pam Bagley
	Karl Bates	Jo Beaumont	Michael Bell
	Dermot Bolton	Carl Chambers	Professor Shirley Congdon
	Kersten England	Karen McMahan	Sally Neocosmos
	Mohammed Pandor	Professor Rami Qahwaji	Samera Shabir
	Stuart Watson	Prof Vishanth Weerakkody	Michael Ziff
Apologies	Shahnaz Ali	Amir Hussain	Terry Hartwell
	Maurice Watkins		

In attendance: Prof John Bridgeman, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Innovation and Engagement
 Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head, Governance (Secretary)
 Professor Zahir Irani, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality
 Gary McFarlane, Associate Director of People and Campus Services
 Stuart McKinnon-Evans, Chief Finance Officer
 Riley Power, University Secretary

Michael Ziff left the meeting at 1515

33.20-21 **Register of Interests (Document EB35/20-21)**

33.1 Council received and noted the register of Council members interests. No further declarations of interest were received in relation to the business of the meeting.

34.20-21 **Minutes of the Meeting on 25 November 2020 (Document C36/20-21)**

34.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 25 November 2020 were approved by circulation prior to the Council meeting.

35.20-21 **Matters Arising and Action Tracker (Document C37/20-21)**

35.1 Council received a report on matters arising from the Council meeting on 25 November 2020 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

36.20-21 **Report from the Chair (Document C38/20-21)**

36.1 On behalf of Council, the Chair recorded her continued appreciation for the work of the Executive Team, and the wider University community, in their joint efforts in the current unprecedented times and for their agile response to the latest national lockdown restrictions.

- 36.2 The value of the monthly informal Council briefings was noted. Members were requested to send suggestions for future sessions to the Assistant Head (Governance).
- 36.3 The Chair also drew attention to the report which confirmed the action taken by the Chair of Council and the Pro-Chancellor and Treasurer to approve the University's submission to the SURE (Sustaining University Research Expertise) Fund.

33.20-21 **Vice-Chancellor's Update Report (Document C39/20-21)**

- 33.1 The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on key matters affecting the University, noting that the focus had been on managing the impact of COVID-19; continued engagement with students, including mental health and student hardship support, preparing for the 2021/22 academic year within the context of the University Strategy and local and national roadmaps for emerging from lockdown; welcoming, enrolling and supporting Semester 2 students; developing detailed implementation and operational plans for University sub-strategies; developing an integrated approach to planning and budget setting; and continuing to support the City and broader Leeds City Region with economic and social recovery. The Vice-Chancellor also recorded her thanks to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Engagement and his team for their work on the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021) submission.
- 33.2 Points noted in discussion included:
- that following the statement made to Parliament on 22 February on the roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions in England, the University was reviewing any programmes that required practical teaching and access to specialist equipment and facilities, and further guidance would be provided to affected students and staff who would be invited to return to campus on a restricted basis from 8 March. The University would not ask students to return to campus if their course could reasonably be continued online.
 - that COVID-19 transmission rates remained stubbornly high in West Yorkshire and the need for caution remained.
 - the University continued to engage closely with Public Health England and the Local Authority to ensure a coordinated pandemic response with all parts of the local system operating in a mutually supportive manner.
 - that the University had appointed its first Associate Dean, EDI which aligned with the University's commitment to EDI.
 - that mechanisms would be put in place to support students in the transition from school to university learning, and in the early development of appropriate study skills.
- 33.3 Despite the ongoing challenges of responding to the impact of the pandemic, Council was pleased to note that the core business of the University was continuing; this included delivering on the University's strategic framework.

34.20-21 **Report from the University Secretary (Document C40/20-21)**

- 34.1 Council received a report from the University Secretary on the ongoing work related to areas of governance pertinent to Council and the University. This included an update on the letter

from the Secretary of State for Education to the Office for Students on strategic priorities; the letter from the Secretary of State for Education regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech; and the International Foundation Year project. Work on this project continued at pace and a summary of the contractual arrangements detailing the governance, academic, management and administrative arrangements for the embedded college would be circulated to the Council in due course.

- 34.2 The recent Government policy announcements had formed the basis of a discussion at the Council and Executive Board informal briefing event on 16 February. The University would continue to engage closely with the consultation processes associated with the announcements and would continue to assess the opportunities in any policy or regulatory change that would occur as a result.
- 34.3 In response to a query about academic freedom and freedom of speech, it was confirmed the University supported academic freedom and its commitment to freedom of speech was articulated in several different policies and procedures, including an explicit Freedom of Speech Policy. This enabled the University to take all reasonable steps to ensure that freedom of speech 'within the law' was secured for staff, students, visitors, external speakers, and anyone operating on behalf of the University or on its campus. The University would engage with the government's consultation on academic freedom and freedom of speech and would provide its views on the proposals.
- 34.4 Council discussed the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism and the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia. The University Secretary explained the University's published position on the IHRA and APPG definitions and Council requested a further discussion on this at its next meeting.
- 34.5 Council considered and **approved** the proposal on future Council and Committee meetings in 2021/22, noting that to the extent permitted, all Council meetings in 2021/22 would be conducted as face-to-face meetings, and that the first meeting of each Committee of Council would be conducted on campus, with subsequent meetings being arranged as virtual meetings on MS Teams. Should local or national restrictions prevent in person meetings, all meetings would revert to MS Teams.
- 34.6 **ACTIONS:**
- **circulate final proposal for the embedded college outside of the committee cycle, for review and approval (University Secretary)**
 - **discuss IHRA and APPG definitions at May Council (University Secretary)**

35.20-21 University of Bradford Union of Students (UBU) Quarterly Report (Document C41/20-21)

- 35.1 Council received a report from the UBU Education Officer and UBU Student Affairs Officer on current issues and recent activities which included an update on the Union's response to managing the impact of COVID-19. The UBU continued to work closely with the Executive on student welfare, student accommodation, student hardship concerns, and mental health

support. Council was pleased to note that the UBU and the Executive continued to work in partnership to support students during the pandemic.

- 35.2 The UBU annual election process had commenced, and nominations were open for full-time and part-time officer roles. Council noted that the UBU was reviewing its structure with a view to creating additional opportunities, including enhancing the diversity of representation in its part-time Executive Team and on the UBU Council. The University Secretary would continue to work closely with the UBU on their approach to internal governance and an update would be presented to the Council in due course.

36.20-21 **Chief Finance Officer Overview of Key Issues (Document C42/20-21)**

- 36.1 Council received a report from the Chief Finance Officer on key financial issues noting that the University's early financial forecast had been considered at Finance Committee; the Annual Financial Return, approved by Council, had been submitted to the Office for Students; that based on the current enrolment data, liquidity remained strong; that overseas debt had increased and this was being monitored closely; and that capital and revenue funding had been boosted by the University's successful application for a £3.435M grant to complete the external cladding of the Richmond Building and a £0.25M capital grant from the Office for Students to update clinical facilities in the Faculty of Health Studies.

- 36.2 In addition, the Chief Finance Officer provided an update on the University's application for finance under the Government's Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loans Scheme (CLBILS), noting that the University's application for a revolving credit facility from Lloyds Bank had been approved, subject to a specific condition on security. Given that current cashflow forecasts did not necessitate the revolving credit facility, acceptance of the facility would be considered by the Chief Finance Officer, advised by the Finance Committee, and an update would be presented to the Council in May.

- 36.3 In response to a question, it was confirmed that the University's bank covenants remained within the contractual agreement. This would be continually monitored, and quarterly updates would be presented to the Finance Committee.

- 36.4 Following consideration of the report, Council **approved** the University's annual calculation of the fully absorbed cost of activities (i.e., teaching, research, and other activities) in the TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) 2019/20 return, noting that it had been endorsed by Finance Committee; this would be submitted to the Office for Students.

- 36.5 **ACTION: present update on CLBILS to May Council (Chief Finance Officer)**

37.20-21 **Future of Emm Lane/Heaton Mount Site**

- 37.1 Council received a verbal update from the Chief Finance Officer who reported that:
- an extensive local and national marketing campaign for the sale of the Manningham site (comprising Emm Lane, Heaton Mount and Waterhead) had been undertaken by the University's appointed property agent.

- a shortlist of four credible bids had been derived from the proposals submitted.
- the criteria used to evaluate the bids had been approved by University Council in February 2020.

37.2 An extraordinary meeting of the Finance Committee, held on 17 February 2021, considered an options appraisal of the bids received as part of the marketing exercise to determine the future of the Manningham site. Finance Committee considered a range of matters associated with the bids and requested that the Chief Finance Officer assist the Committee in forming a recommendation from this exercise.

37.3 Due diligence on the bids was being undertaken in line with the University's Due Diligence Framework. This included an assessment on compatibility with the University's mission, including its strategies and values.

37.4 Following completion of the due diligence process, a recommendation from the Chief Finance Officer on the future of the Manningham site would be presented to the University Ethics Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Council, for consideration and decision.

37.5 **ACTION: present recommendation on future of Manningham site to Ethics Committee, Finance Committee and Council (Chief Finance Officer)**

38.20-21 **Student Recruitment Update (Document C43/20-21)**

38.1 Council received an update on student recruitment for 2020/21 and commended the University on the positive student recruitment position, despite the uncertainty around the impact of COVID-19 and the challenges that continued to face the sector. Council was pleased to note the success of the January 2021 intake for postgraduate taught programmes, with current enrolments exceeding target. An update on recruitment by market segment for September 2021 entry was also provided.

38.2 The new innovative approaches to advertising, event delivery and outreach including the new undergraduate Digital Open Day Anytime, and the undergraduate 'live' Open Day, transmitted from the University's on-campus broadcast studio in early February, were welcomed by Council who noted the sector leading developments. These would be replicated for the Applicant Visit Days and postgraduate recruitment.

38.3 Council also noted the development of a new International Strategy. The University was also preparing to develop the Brand, Communication and Marketing supporting strategy and further updates would be presented to Council as this work progressed.

38.4 Clarification was provided by the DVC, AIQ with regards to questions on recruitment from China with Council noting that a new China strategy was currently being developed to broaden exposure to this market; that financial implications associated with hotel quarantine for international students was being considered as part of the revised student offer for 2021/22; and an update on the high visa refusal rate from India was provided. Council noted that this mirrored the experience across the sector, and that a visa refusal rate action plan to

address this issue had been implemented, and the situation was being monitored closely by the Academic Registrar and the Student Visa Compliance Group.

39.20-21 **Research Excellence Framework 2021 Update (Document C44/20-21)**

39.1 Council received a comprehensive update of progress made by the University in its preparations for the forthcoming submission to the next Research Excellence Framework exercise which would be submitted to Research England by 31 March 2021.

39.2 Points noted in discussion included:

- the University's commitment to EDI ensured that its processes were fair and proactive in ensuring all eligible staff had the opportunity to submit to the REF.
- that the University's REF submission had been broadened to include Psychology and Chemistry which reflected the investment that had been made in these disciplines.
- that impact case studies would be published on the University's website to champion the excellent work undertaken at Bradford.
- that the REF fed into UK league tables and as such its influence extended beyond research and impact.
- the importance of the exercise, with the outcome having a substantial medium to long-term impact on the University's reputation and finances.

39.3 Council welcomed the update which provided a summary of the size and shape of the REF submission and was pleased to note the University's strategic ambition and anticipated performance in REF2021. Council would receive an update on the outcome from the REF exercise in early 2022.

40.20-21 **Strategy Development Update (Document C45/20-21)**

40.1 Council received an update report on the development of key performance indicators and implementation plans for the University Strategy and the timescale for finalisation for the performance reporting dashboard for Council and its Committees.

41.20-21 **Business from Committees (Documents C46-49/20-21)**

41.1 Council received and noted summary reports from the following committee meetings: Senate; Audit Committee; Finance Committee; and People Committee.

42.20-21 **NSS 2021 Briefing Paper (Document C50/20-21)**

42.1 Council received and noted the report.

43.20-21 **Prevent Duty Update (Document C51/20-21)**

43.1 Council received and noted the report.

- 44.20-21 **University Academy Keighley Update and Next Steps (Document C52/20-21)**
- 44.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 45.20-21 **Workforce Data Report, Quarter 1, 2020/21 (Document C53/20-21)**
- 45.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 46.20-21 **Health and Safety Activity Report, Quarter 1, 2020/21 (Document C54/20-21)**
- 46.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 47.20-21 **Terms of Reference and Membership 2020/21 (Document C55/20-21)**
- 47.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 48.20-21 **Draft Council 3 Agenda: 12 May 2021 (Document C56/20-21)**
- 48.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 49.20-21 **Council Schedule of Business for 2020/21 (Document C57/20-21)**
- 49.1 Council received and noted the report.

Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance)
26 February 2021