

Summary Report of Council 3

The University Council held a virtual meeting on 16 February 2022. The meeting was preceded by a presentation from Ms Kersten England, Chief Executive, Bradford Metropolitan District Council on priorities, opportunities, and challenges facing the City Council. Effective partnership working between the City and the University on key initiatives such as climate change, social care, education, and clean growth was also discussed.

This paper provides a high-level summary of the business considered by Council, which will be published on the University website. This is not a formal record of the Council meeting but presents an update on matters discussed by the University's governing body.

Baroness Ann Taylor
Chair of Council

1 Report from the Chair of Council

The Chair congratulated the University on its recent achievements including being awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for world-leading work in developing archaeological technology and techniques, this prestigious accolade was the highest form of national recognition that UK higher education institutes could achieve; and the School of Management being named Business School of the Year at the Times Higher Education Awards 2021.

The Chair also drew attention to the complex and challenging environment in which the University, and the HE sector, continued to operate.

John Hinchcliffe, the new Court member of Council was welcomed to his first meeting of Council.

2 Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on key matters affecting the University since the last meeting of Council. Among topics highlighted was the new initiative to help entrepreneur refugees in the Bradford community and the recent changes that had been made to the University's senior structure, noting that recruitment was underway for a Chief Finance Officer and a Director of Infrastructure. Council also noted that Professor John Bridgeman, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation, would leave the University in April and interim arrangements to cover his portfolio were underway to ensure continuity of delivery and staff support. The expanded role of Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Student Experience was also outlined.

Council also noted the recent Union of College Universities (UCU) letter on action short of a strike that had been sent to Members and received an update from the Vice-Chancellor and the Director of People and Campus Services on the matters raised. It was **agreed** that the Chair of Council would respond to the letter on behalf of Council.

3 Report from University of Bradford Union of Students (UBU)

Council received a report from the UBU Student Affairs Officer and the UBU Education Officer on recent activities and current issues which included an update on graduate study work visas for international students; student engagement; and the Kickstart programme, with Members welcoming the future ambitions of the programme.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Quality and Innovation reported on the work that had been undertaken, in partnership with the Students' Union, to mitigate the complex issues associated with graduate study work visas for international students.

The Vice-Chancellor also noted that additional staff resource had been approved to support the Student Casework Team. This was welcomed by the Students' Union and aligned with the University's continued commitment to support academic integrity and to provide a high-quality student experience.

4 KPI Dashboard and Delivery Plans

Council received an update on the University's supporting-and-enabling strategies and associated delivery plans, and the KPI dashboard, noting that the dashboard was an interactive, filterable tool which provided information relating to each strategic objective.

Council discussed the National Student Survey (NSS) KPI, and the importance of securing improvements in NSS scores was noted. Strategy delivery was key to enhancing the student journey and student experience, with the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy being the primary means of achieving positive changes in this indicator.

5 People Strategy Delivery Plan

Council received the People Strategy Delivery Plan, noting that it had been considered in detail by the People Committee, and approved by the Executive Board.

6 Early Financial Forecast

Council considered the early financial forecast for 2021/22 which was based on student numbers and associated income at the beginning of November 2021. The forecast, which had been subject to review by the Finance Committee, presented a favourable position which reflected strong student recruitment and continued firm cost control. Council was pleased to note that the University remained on track to deliver its planned financial results for 2021/22 which aligned with the current Finance Strategy.

Following discussion of the forecast, Council **endorsed** the recommendation from Finance Committee to increase the approved revenue budgets which would leave £2M unallocated contingency. This approach had due regard to the full year impact of increases to expenditure on the 2022/23 budget, and the need to maintain sufficient contingency in that year.

7 Annual Financial Return to Office for Students 2019/20-2025/26

Council considered and **approved** the annual financial return 2019/20-2025/26, noting that it had been endorsed by the Finance Committee. This submission formed part of the annual accountability process and would be submitted to the Office for Students.

8 Student Recruitment Update

Council received a comprehensive update on student recruitment and was pleased to note the success of the January 2022 intake for postgraduate taught programmes. An update was also provided on the 2022/23 entry cycle, with Council noting that international recruitment for the

September 2022 intake was anticipated to follow a similar trend to September 2021 and January 2022 intakes, with high levels of interest from postgraduate taught applicants, attracted by the graduate route visa. Detailed application and decision data for 2022/23 would continue to be monitored closely by Executive Board and a further briefing would be presented to Council in the May.

Members discussed the significant increase in postgraduate taught international applicants and noted that a strategic growth plan was under development which would include an approach to international recruitment and partnerships.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, AIQ also noted that work was being undertaken to develop a Joint Education Institute (JEI) between the University and Yangzhou University, a high-quality Chinese Institution, with Council noting that relevant reports on the JEI would be submitted via the University's governance framework, including, to Finance Committee and Senate.

9 National Student Survey 2022

Council received a report on the National Student Survey 2022 and noted the arrangements and timeline for the survey.

10 Report from University Secretary

Council received a report from the University Secretary on the ongoing work related to areas of governance pertinent to Council including an update on Council membership; the Chair of Council appointment process; the University Chancellor appointment process; vaccination uptake rates within the student body; Office for Students reportable events, and the Council Strategy Away Day in April.

Council also considered and **endorsed** the Committee Year Planner for 2022/23.

11 Business from Committees of Council, and Senate

Council noted summary reports from Audit Committee, Finance Committee and Senate on issues discussed since the last meeting of the Council.

Council also received a verbal report from the Chair of People Committee on the work of the Committee, noting that it had responsibility for providing governance oversight and assurance to Council on matters relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion; strategic people matters and the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

12 Council received the following reports, for information:

- Minutes from the Council meeting held on 24 November 2021 and action tracker.
- Register of interests.
- Prevent report.
- Workforce dashboard.
- Health and safety dashboard.
- Draft Council 4 agenda and Council schedule of business for 2021/22
- Council terms of reference and membership 2021/22.



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13 Meeting dates for 2021/22

Council strategy away day: 28 April 2022

Council 4: 11 May 2022

Council 5: 6 July 2022

Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance)

February 2022