

Council

7 July 2022

Minutes of the University Council meeting held on Thursday 7 July 2022 at 2.00pm, ending at 4:00pm, at the Aura Innovation Centre.

Present: George Garlick (Chair), Huey Arslan, Dr David Barrett, Frances Hanson, Matt Jukes, Professor Susan Lea (until item 13), Vanessa Lee, Dr David Richards, Neil Robinson, Rosalyn Schofield, Julia Whittaker, Denise Wilson.

In attendance: Stephen Dale (item 79 only), Ola Fapide, Professor Philip Gilmartin, Professor Paul Hagan, Professor Stephen Hardy, Jeremy Hartley, Professor Andy Heyes, Professor Becky Huxley-Binns, Dr Chris Ince, Dr Darren Mundy, Derek Ord, Sarah Wilson.

Minutes: 73 - 93

Action by

73 Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declarations

Huey Arslan was welcomed to his first meeting of Council.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Ursula Lidbetter, Matthew Swindells and Richard Thompson

There were no declarations of interest.

74 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2022 were approved as a correct record. It was agreed that the minutes be published on the University website.

75 Matters arising

(a) Action Summary

The Committee received the action summary. It was noted that the Capital Plan was in progress and that individual capital projects would come to future meetings for approval, in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

(b) Capital Programme Project Governance– CIC and CIB Terms of Reference

The Terms of reference for the University Capital Investment Committee and Continuous Improvement Board were received. It was noted that these would form the underpinning governance of new projects and that formal approval would remain with Finance and Investment Committee and Council, in accordance with the Financial Regulations..

76 Chair’s Report

The Chair reported that this was the final meeting of Council for the Vice-Chancellor. Council noted her significant achievements and outstanding leadership which had set the University on a new trajectory. She was thanked for her excellent work and wished well for the future.

It was noted that the new Vice-Chancellor had met with key staff including the Chair on several occasions and that there was a thorough and smooth transition taking place.

77 Management Report & Student Recruitment

(a) Management Report

The Committee received the Management Report to Council. The report highlighted the work ongoing in Higher Education public policy, including the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill. It was reported that the OfS had published its business plan for 2022/23.

The work of the Social Justice and Inclusion Board was outlined, and the recent launch of the Strategy was highlighted.

It was noted that the University had entered into a partnership with Mariupol State University, supporting it to deliver its courses through the supply of IT and other equipment, with further links to be explored.

It was reported that the new faculty structures were being implemented ready for the new academic year.

Reviews of apprenticeship provision were taking place and as a result recruitment for new apprentices had been temporarily suspended on some programmes. It was clarified that there was

very low interest in some areas and focus may be moved to CPD provision instead, depending on the results of independent reports.

It was noted that the University had received excellent results through the International Student Barometer, with useful comment on areas to address such as student accommodation.

Several senior staffing appointments were noted, with recruitment underway to further key positions.

A number of awards and successes, particularly in league tables, were noted.

It was reported that the 2022 NSS results had been released and that the University had slipped down to a position just below sector average on the overall satisfaction measure. It was noted that the differences were very marginal and that the University was above the benchmark in some areas, below on others and significantly below on a small number. It was confirmed that more work was required to analyse the results in detail and to examine the varied results between individual departments. It was agreed that the results must be analysed thoroughly and used to inform future work on the student experience.

It was agreed that a more detailed report on the NSS results be brought to the next meeting of Council.

PVC(Ed)

It was reported that ULT had approved an exceptional one-off payment of £500 to staff, to reflect and reward the performance over the last three years.

It was reported that a number of students had suspended their studies during the Covid pandemic, and that a process of follow-up had taken place. 90% had indicated that they planned to return to studies, with a recent intake showing actual returns of 45%.

(b) Student Recruitment and Marketing

The Committee had received a background presentation of the current and future Student Recruitment and Marketing position.

It was noted that an external review had identified capability gaps, the need to digitally modernise and transform, the need to invest in impactful insights, the need to invest in the website, and the

need to review and optimise lead generation and conversion activities.

It was reported that there were a number of actions already underway in student recruitment and marketing, and in admissions to identify improvements, and an Admissions Steering Group formed to drive further change.

Figures had been presented showing the current application and conversion figures, with the current challenges and opportunities highlighted.

It was noted that the most recent Open Day had been disrupted by rail strikes, and that an Open Week was being planned for August.

It was agreed that a virtual briefing on recruitment figures could be valuable for the Committee.

COO / Sec

78 University Strategy

The Committee received a presentation on the progress made against the Strategy 2030.

Highlights of each of the People, Place and Partnerships months were outlined, with themes of discussions and progress made. Work made towards communicating and embedding the strategy were highlighted. The sustained improvement in KPIs was outlined, and welcomed.

It was clarified that the new Director of Student Success would have a focus on keeping students on their courses and reaching their full potential. A particular focus would be on personal supervisors, enhancing the reassurance and support that they can offer students.

79 Sustainability and Solar Farm Business Case

a) Sustainability

The Committee received an update on progress against the Sustainability Strategy, together with the Energy Management and Carbon Reduction Annual Report.

It was noted that the University Sustainability Board managed the Strategy through eight implementation groups, covering Carbon and Energy, Waste, Biodiversity, Travel and Transport, Water,

People and Engagement, Procurement and Investments and Catering.

The successes and progress in each area were outlined, with progress shown in all areas.

It was noted that although progress had been made and that the efforts were a key part of the overall strategy of the University, it was felt that student awareness of the issues was low. There was felt to be a need to ensure that students were more aware of the Strategy and could in turn play their part in achieving the goals.

b) Solar Farm Business Case

The Committee received a full business case for a Solar Photovoltaic Development, and a presentation from the Director of Estates and Facilities.

It was noted by the Chair of Finance and Investment Committee that the proposal had been discussed at length at its recent meeting, and that the Committee had recommended approval to Council. It was noted that energy costs were high and rising and that the proposed development fitted into the wider Carbon Neutral agenda and commitments. There would be a need to ensure that costs were tightly controlled so as not to diminish the returns.

It was reported that a number of scenarios had been considered for the energy production and storage and the optimal solution had been presented, which would supply 40% of current energy demand, with peak generation exceeding campus demand, with headroom.

It was noted that the anticipated carbon savings would be 3,891 tonnes – 52% of the University 22/23 carbon footprint.

It was reported that the post tender capital cost would be around £20m (green funded) and that grant funding was being explored, including via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

It was clarified that replacement of equipment was planned for 10 and 20 years and had been built into the Business Case.

It was noted that the recommendation was to create a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to manage the finances and it was clarified that expert advice would be taken from both a legal and charity

aspect to ensure that the development does not affect the University's charitable status.

It was confirmed that engagement with the local community had been limited to date but that full engagement was planned as permissions for work are granted. It was clarified that historically, there were fewer objections to solar panels than to wind turbines, and that the solar panels project at Castle Hill hospital had been generally welcomed. It was felt that positive PR could be gained from the development.

It was noted that the data gained from the development could be used for teaching and research. It was also confirmed that improvements in relevant technology could result in better than planned performance and results in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Business Case for the creation of Solar Farms be approved and the relevant capital funding be allocated.

80 Finance

(a) Finance Update

The Committee received a Financial Performance Update and presentation from the Chief Finance Officer.

The Chair of Finance and Investment Committee reported that the update, budget and projections had all been the subject of lengthy debate in the Committee meeting. The Committee acknowledged the significant amount of work that had gone into the reports and had recommended them for approval to Council.

It was noted in the Period-9 YTD update that the deficit was favourable to budget and prior year, with cash in line with expectations.

An update was provided on the sale of The Lawns, which had stalled with the current buyers and alternative bids were being sought.

It was noted that the UHPAS actuarial valuations had been concluded.

The University energy supply contract was to end shortly, with an expected doubling of costs.

(b) 2022/23 Budget and 5-year financial projections

The Committee received the Budget and 5 year Projections, and a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer.

It was reported that the budget and plans were carefully designed to support the Strategy 2030, and the enabling strategies for education, international, research, knowledge exchange, people and capital. The plans allowed the embedding of work on People, Place and Partnership, in line with the aims of the Strategy.

Operational plans for faculties, research institutes, and professional services were presented, showing the drive towards greater expansion, retention and support for the student experience.

Detailed figures were presented regarding the current and expected student number growth, linked to the demographic trends in the area. It was noted that significant growth was the aim and would be necessary in order to reach the financial targets.

The current and expected financial challenges to the Higher Education sector were highlighted, including high inflation, frozen tuition fee levels, and increased costs.

It was noted that the 5-year projections did include an expected second private placement in 2026/27, in line with plans. All banking covenants were expected to be met.

It was reported that a number of scenarios had been analysed and mitigating actions identified.

It was clarified that the University would be seeking to recruit approximately 600 students through clearing this year, and there was cautious optimism that this could be achieved. It was noted that there were increasing numbers of students with high anticipated grades without offers and that the University would be targeting and supporting these students.

It was noted that the increase in student numbers was key to the University's ambitions and that recruitment numbers must be closely followed and managed. This was in line with the 2030 Strategy and the associated KPIs. It was noted that the

international student figures were very high, but that this could not be relied upon in the long term. However, it was confirmed that international students were part of the core business and there was a need to diversify countries, courses and modes of study.

It was confirmed that within the staffing plans, there were opportunities for increased staff numbers, to ensure that any increase in student numbers would not lead to a decrease in teaching quality.

It was confirmed that an informal briefing session for Council members on recruitment progress would be valuable.

It was reiterated that the recruitment targets were ambitious and would require the University to have the best possible recruitment, marketing and teaching.

It was noted that with large numbers of international students, there should be scope to vary and diversify the catering available on campus. It was confirmed that this was under consideration, and an update would be provided.

PVC(Int)

RESOLVED:

That the 2022/23 Budget and financial plans for 2023/24 – 2026/27 be approved.

81 Appointment of Vice-Chancellor

It was reported that the new Vice-Chancellor had been appointed via email approval of members of Council. The decision was now presented for formal ratification and inclusion in the minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Professor Dave Petley as Vice-Chancellor be approved.

82 Tackling Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

The Committee received the Guidance for Chairs and Governing Bodies on Tackling Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, produced by the CUC in May 2022.

The importance of the issue and the guidance was noted and it was agreed that it could form the subject of a special session of Council or at an Away Day.

Sec

It was noted that work in this area had taken place previously, with HUSU, and that more work will be required.

It was noted that the guidance includes an expectation that Council receive routine information on the approach to harassment and sexual misconduct, as well as data and information on cases. It was agreed that this should be in the form of a formal report to Council in future.

Sec

It was also noted that the CUC guidance suggests that a champion in this area could be appointed by Council. This would be considered.

It was clarified that campus security are available 24 hours a day, using CCTV to monitor the campus. Training may be required for security staff who are likely to be the first responder to any incident.

83 Honorary Degrees

The Committee received a list of individuals recommended for the award of an honorary degree by the Honorary Awards Committee and by Senate. Council was reminded that the names must remain strictly confidential, to ensure that the process of contacting the individuals can be made in an appropriate manner.

RESOLVED:

That the award of Honorary Degrees to the listed individuals be approved.

84 HUSU Report

The Committee received an update from the HUSU President Team.

It was reported that the team had been restructured to have four members, three of whom were new to the role this year.

The manifestos of each President were introduced, together with the many campaigns that are planned for the next academic year.

It was noted that work on welcoming new students was underway, and that capital works would be taking place over summer to improve the facilities for students of all demographics.

85 HUSU/University Code of Practice

The Committee received the revised Code of Practice. It was noted that the document had been updated to reflect new titles and current practice, but with no significant changes.

RESOLVED:

That the revised HUSU/University Code of Practice be approved.

86 Risk Management and Risk Register Update

The Committee received the updated Institutional Risk Register and the Risk Management Policy.

It was reported that changes had been made in response to the appointment of the new internal auditors, which had been welcome and had led to a tightening up of management of local risk registers. It was noted that training had been provided to local risk owners.

87 University of Hull Performance Trends and KPIs

The Committee received and noted the Performance Trends and KPIs.

88 Hull Alumni Association Annual Report

The Committee received and noted the Hull Alumni Association Annual Report.

89 Office for Students Update

The Committee received the OfS Update. It was noted that the appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor and the recent Private Placement funding had been reported to the OfS as formal Reportable Events.

90 Minutes/Executive Summary of Committees

(a) University Ethics Committee – 4 May 2022

The minutes of the University Ethics Committee on 4 May 2022 were received and noted.

(b) Honorary Awards Committee – 10 May 2022

The minutes of the Honorary Awards Committee on 10 May 2022 were received and noted.

(c) Senate – 8 June 2022

The minutes of Senate held on 8 June 2022 were received and noted.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the award of Honorary Degrees be approved (see minute 83 above).

(d) Audit and Risk Committee – 13 June 2022

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 13 June 2022 were received and noted.

(e) Governance and Nominations Committee – 21 June 2022

The minutes of the Governance and Nominations Committee held on 21 June 2022 were received. It was noted that the Governance and Nominations Committee had approved the following:

- (a) Revised Code of Practice on Register of Interests
- (b) Revised Policy on Use of the University Seal
- (c) Revised Schedule of Delegated Authority and Decision Making Powers

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the appointment of Dr Catherine Murray as a lay member on the Audit and Risk Committee from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2025 be approved.
- (ii) That the appointment of Heidi Broadhead as the newly elected non-academic staff member on Council from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2025 be approved.
- (iii) That the changes to the University Charter, subject to such changes as the Privy Council may require and which are agreed by the University, be approved.

(g) Finance and Investment Committee – 23 June 2022

The minutes of the Finance and Investment Committee held on 23 June 2022 were received. It was noted that the Finance and Investment Committee had approved the following:

- (a) UHPAS Proposal
- (b) Policy on Socially Responsible Investment
- (c) DAIM Business Case

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the 2022/23 Budget and Financial Plans for 2023/24 to 2026/27 be approved (see minute 80 above).
- (ii) That the Solar PV Development Business Case be approved (see minute 79(b) above).

91 Valedictions

Frances Hanson, Richard Thompson, Prof. Susan Lea were all thanked for their contribution to Council.

It was noted that Becky Huxley-Binns would be the nominated PVC on Council next year. Dave Richards was thanked for his contribution.

92 Dates of Meetings 2022-23

Date of Meeting	<i>Deadline for papers</i>
Monday 17 October 2022, 2 pm	<i>03/10/2022</i>
Thursday 8 December 2022, 2 pm	<i>24/11/2022</i>
Thursday 23 February 2023, 2 pm	<i>09/02/2023</i>
Thursday 27 April 2023, 2 pm	<i>13/04/2023</i>
Thursday 6 July 2023, 2 pm	<i>22/06/2023</i>
Other dates to note	
Monday 27 October 2022, 7 pm Council Dinner	
Wednesday 24 May 2023, 11.30 am Away Day	

93 Any other business

There was no other business.

Signature of Chair _____

Date of signature _____