



- 4.2 The Chair also noted that the University was operating in a complex and increasingly regulated environment and the role of Council in ensuring compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework was highlighted.
- 4.3 Council members were covered by the University's Director and Officers Liability Insurance policy for actions undertaken by them in the course of University business; the level of cover would be kept under review by the University Secretary in order to ensure it remained appropriate.
- 4.4 **ACTION: as part of the continued improvements to support Council members, training on the OfS regulatory framework and associated responsibilities would be developed (University Secretary).**

5.19-20 **Report on Chair's Action (Document C2/19-20)**

- 5.1 Council received a report which confirmed the action taken by the Chair of Council, Treasurer and Vice-Chancellor in relation to the completion of the new arrangements for The Green accommodation in accordance with the previous delegated authority by Council.

6.19-20 **Vice-Chancellor Engagement Activities Update (Document C3/19-20)**

- 6.1 Council received a report on the Vice-Chancellor's engagement activities. The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to:
- the development of the revised University Strategy; this would be presented to the Council in February, for approval;
  - that academic performance and growth reviews were being undertaken by the Pro-Vice-Chancellors through a review of subject and course provision. These would help the University develop and expand its academic offering to support its ambitions in terms of quality, student experience and student number growth;
  - the Executive Team were undertaking a development programme, with a renewed focus on effectiveness, performance and accountability;
  - that an estate working group would be convened to review the University estate and develop a blueprint for the longer-term estate and infrastructure.

- 6.2 **ACTION: Mr Hussain would be invited to join the Estate Working Group (Chief Finance Officer).**

7.19-20 **Report from the University Secretary (Document C4/19-20)**

- 7.1 Council received an update from the University Secretary which summarised ongoing work relating to areas of governance pertinent to the work of Council and the University.
- 7.2 Council noted that the OfS had written to 250 higher education providers, including the University of Bradford, in relation to the OfS requirements for the timely submission of

data returns and payment of registration and other fees. The OfS letter advised that its records indicated that the University had missed a recent deadline to pay the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) a fee in its role as the Designated Quality Body of the OfS. The University Secretary clarified the circumstances behind the letter and informed Council that the University understood and acknowledged the importance of adhering to regulatory deadlines. Council was informed that the University had no record of having received the original invoice to which the reminder referred. To avoid a similar situation occurring in the future, the University had agreed with the QAA that any future invoices would be sent to the University Secretary who would be responsible for ensuring appropriate and timely action was taken.

7.3 More broadly, the University Secretary would be responsible for monitoring compliance with the OfS ongoing conditions of registration and regular reports would be presented to the Executive Board, Audit Committee and Council providing further assurance that all conditions, including those relating to providing information to the OfS, were complied with; this was strongly welcomed by the Council.

7.4 Council noted the update and **approved** delegated authority for the Chair of Council and Treasurer to sign off the final form of submission for the annual financial and student number returns to the Office for Students in December 2019.

#### 8.19-20 **Report to University Council from the Students' Union 2019/2020 Student Leadership Team (Document C5/19-20)**

8.1 Council considered a report from the UBU Student Leadership Team on current issues and recent activities. This included an update on freshers' week, the election and training of Faculty and student representatives, and a new initiative which aimed to engage undergraduate students in UBU projects.

8.2 During discussion, the following points were noted:

- that Council welcomed UBU's involvement in a recent organisation-wide *Team Talk* discussion event on the University's student experience, Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor;
- that the UBU hosted an annual 'student leadership awards' where the achievements of students were celebrated;
- that the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) was a comprehensive, electronic record of student's achievements which was built up as they progressed through their student life. All Bradford-based taught students were eligible for a HEAR; this was awarded to students alongside their degree transcripts;
- that key performance indicators were in place to measure student engagement;
- that the increased presence of students on campus at evenings and weekends would be beneficial for the University.

9.19-20 **Institutional KPIs (Document C6/19-20)**

- 9.1 Council considered a report on the latest performance against the University's agreed KPIs and noted that a new set of KPIs would be developed to support the new University Strategy.
- 9.2 Council had received a presentation from a data specialist in higher education recruitment in July 2018. Council **agreed** that a further report on detailing the insights from this presentation would be an appropriate agenda item for the next meeting in February.
- 9.3 **ACTIONS:**
- **a new set of KPIs would be presented to the Council in 2020. The University's competitor/benchmark group for the purposes of comparative analysis would also be reviewed (Chief Finance Officer / University Secretary);**
  - **a report on the University's student recruitment performance and market share would be presented to the Council (Director of External Affairs).**

10.19-20 **University Financial Results 2018/19 and Annual Financial Statements 31/07/2019 (Document C7/19-20)**

- 10.1 Council considered the consolidated Annual Financial Statements for the University for the year ended 31 July 2019 noting these were compliant with the OfS Accounts Direction. The Financial Statements had been through an iterative process and had been subject to considerable scrutiny by Executive Board and a joint meeting of the Finance and Audit Committees at which the accounts had been reviewed in detail.
- 10.2 The Chief Finance Officer reported that overall the statement of comprehensive income showed that the University's consolidated position finished the year £40.9M in deficit. The final position was largely dominated by pension-related charges which were driven by actuarial valuations. Performance against the internal budget was strong, with a modest operating surplus of £0.4M, compared with the forecast £2.8M deficit at quarter three (9+3 forecast). On an EBITDA basis, the result showed a £10.2M surplus, which equated to over 9% of income.
- 10.3 Following a robust discussion, Council stated there was no room for complacency in the context of the high degree of uncertainty facing the sector and the increasingly challenging environment in which the University was operating and the Chief Finance Officer reaffirmed that the University would continue to review and monitor its financial position carefully in order to maintain a financially sustainable position going forward and deliver on its financial strategy.
- 10.4 The financial performance set out in the statements presented a consistent account of the University's performance compared with the regular reports provided to Finance Committee and Council throughout the year. Council congratulated the Executive Team on executing a prudent financial strategy in 2018/19.

10.5 Council **approved** the following, for submission to the OfS:

- the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2019, as recommended by the Finance and Audit Committees; these would be signed by the Vice-Chancellor, as the accountable officer, and the Chair of Council;
- and the PwC management letter.

11.19-20 **Updated University Financial Strategy 2019/20-2022/23 (Document C8/19-20)**

11.1 Council considered and **approved** the University's Financial Strategy 2019/20-2022/23 which had been updated to reflect 2018/19 performance and developments over the last 12 months. Its primary focus was to ensure the fundamental viability and sustainability of the University; this was welcomed by Council.

11.2 In line with the OfS' Value for Money Strategy, the University would make more publicly available information on University income and expenditure and develop a more cogent narrative in relation to how it would safeguard value for money for students and taxpayers.

12.19-20 **Prevent Update and Accountability and Annual Return (Document C9/19-20)**

12.1 The University was required to make an annual return on Prevent through the Accountability and Data Return to the OfS. Attending the meeting to present the report, the Academic Registrar (the University's Prevent Lead) informed Council that the University had a range of mechanisms in place to ensure that it discharged and complied with the Prevent Duty appropriately; this provided strong assurance in this area of statutory responsibility, which was further reinforced by effective partnership working with local Prevent partners.

12.2 During discussion, the following points were noted:

- that a training matrix for staff on Prevent and related processes was in place;
- the University would continue its approach to manage Prevent as part of its welfare and safeguarding activities. The University's Safeguarding Policy was being revised and would be presented to the Executive Board in the new year;
- that the remit of the Prevent Steering Group would be broadened to include safeguarding;
- the University was responding to a UUK consultation; this would be shared with local Prevent partners;
- the withdrawal of six authors from the Bradford Literature Festival (BLF) in protest over funding from the Home Office Programme, Building a Stronger Britain Together. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that considerable efforts were made to mitigate risks around visiting speakers and a formal review of the University's contribution to the BLF would be undertaken.

12.3 Council noted that the University was in a strong position to respond to the Prevent Duty with processes working effectively, and as such **approved** the University's Prevent

statement and data return for submission to the OfS and authorised the Chair of Council to sign the statement of declaration on its behalf.

#### 13.19-20 **Academic Quality and Standards – Institutional Overview (Document C10/19-20)**

- 13.1 Council considered a report on the University's current framework and processes for monitoring, assuring and enhancing academic quality and standards. During a robust discussion, Council challenged the Executive on the work being undertaken to enhance the monitoring and reporting on academic quality lead indicators under the regulatory framework; how any risks around managing academic quality at the University were being mitigated; and the priority action required to ensure the University could continue to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework.
- 13.2 The new mechanism of assessing quality via metrics rather than methodology represented a fundamental shift for the HE sector and created a number of challenges, both for Bradford specifically and the sector more broadly. The move to an agile data-driven/outcome-led approach required robust mechanisms for analysing and reporting key data sets; this been identified as a priority for the University.
- 13.3 Based on the academic quality and standards report, and the annual report of Senate which outlined the work of Senate in 2018/19 in fulfilling its terms of reference (Document C19/19-20 refers), Council **confirmed** that it was assured of the robustness of the University's current management of academic quality and standards as required by its ongoing conditions of registration with the OfS and the ongoing work to further enhance the University's approach to quality assurance, in line with the new regulatory framework.

#### 14.19-20 **Research Concordat (Document C11/19-20)**

- 14.1 Council considered and **approved** a report on the University's current and future activities which demonstrated compliance with the Universities UK Concordat to support Research Integrity, a national framework for good research conduct and governance. Compliance with the Concordat was part of the University Accountability and Data Return to the OfS.

#### 15.19-20 **Modern Slavery Statement (Document C12/19-20)**

- 15.1 Council considered and **approved** the University's Modern Slavery Statement for the 2019/20 academic year. The Statement was made pursuant to Section 54, Part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and set out the steps the University had taken and would take to mitigate any risk of modern slavery and human trafficking. Council noted that the statement would be published on the University website.
- 15.2 In response to a question, it was confirmed that the University had robust processes in place to monitor the engagement and attendance of international students who were sponsored on Tier 4 visas. Evidence of non-attendance at timetabled teaching events was followed up and acted upon in a timely manner. This ensured that the University supported its students and complied with its responsibilities as a Tier 4 Sponsor.

16.19-20 **Report on OfS Ongoing Conditions of Registration (Document C13/19-20)**

- 16.1 Council received a report from the University Secretary which set out how the University was able to demonstrate compliance with its ongoing conditions of registration with the OfS. The University Secretary advised that the University's compliance would be kept under ongoing review and that regular reports to Executive Board, Audit Committee and Council would provide this assurance.
- 16.2 In response to a query around grade inflation, Council was informed that concerns over grade inflation had a longstanding history in the UK HE sector. In Summer 2019, the OfS had published an analysis of changes in degree classifications which showed there had been significant and unexplained grade inflation since 2010/11. It was confirmed that the actual performance of Bradford graduates in any one year was broadly in line with the sector; this had been reported to the OfS along with further contextual information to explain the change in degree outcomes.
- 16.3 **ACTION: an enhanced monitoring report on the University's financial plan would be submitted to the OfS in December; this would ensure that the University continued to satisfy all the OfS requirements (Chief Finance Officer).**

17.19-20 **Student Recruitment Update (Document C14/19-20)**

- 17.1 Council considered a report which provided an update on enrolment numbers of full-time undergraduate and postgraduate taught Home/EU and international students for the 2019/20 entry cycle. The paper showed an overall positive position against planned new intake numbers; this was welcomed by the Council.
- 17.2 The University had performed stronger in Clearing than in the main UCAS application scheme and the importance of reversing this trend in 2020/21 was emphasised. Council was advised that immediate action was being undertaken to ensure that the main scheme featured more significantly in future recruitment cycles.

17.3

[REDACTED]

*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.*

- 17.4 The University was required to provide the OfS with a report which presented an update on progress towards student recruitment targets. This would be submitted to the OfS in January 2020.

#### 17.5 **ACTIONS:**

- **detailed application and decision data would continue to be monitored closely by the Executive Team and a detailed update on the 2020 recruitment cycle would be presented to the Council in February (Director of External Affairs);**
- **a proposal on a potential partnership opportunity would be presented to a future meeting of Council (Chief Finance Officer).**

#### 18.19-20 **Risk Management Policy (Document C15/19-20)**

18.1 Council **approved** the University's Risk Management Policy which had been updated for the 2019/20 academic year. Council was reminded that it formed part of the University's annual accountability return to the OfS to demonstrate the University had a sound approach to the identification, control and mitigation of risk.

18.2 The statement of institutional risk appetite specified the amount of risk the University was willing to seek or accept in the pursuit of its long-term objectives. It would be reconsidered in 2020 to ensure alignment with the revised University Strategy.

#### 19.19-20 **National Student Survey 2020 Briefing Paper (Document C16/19-20)**

19.1 Council considered a report on the NSS and following a robust discussion **endorsed** the short-term proposals for managing the quality of the student experience in 2019/20.

19.2 The Executive Team reaffirmed its commitment to deliver a consistent and high-quality student experience. Council was assured that the NSS was being given priority action across the University and that an extensive suite of actions were being undertaken at both University and Faculty level to enhance the student experience and secure improvements in NSS scores.

19.3 Points of note included:

- the core approach and activities for managing the student experience within Faculties;
- that academic ownership and leadership in every role and at every level was key to the success of the NSS;
- the collective commitment to and responsibility for the student experience;
- the alignment of the student experience to the performance and development review (PDR) process;
- that the University was working in partnership with Students' Union in relation to the NSS. Several University-wide student listening sessions had been held with the Vice-Chancellor and the UBU to understand the needs and challenges of students at Bradford. Engagement with students was a key element of the Vice-Chancellor's engagement approach.

#### 20.19-20 **Access and Participation (Document C17/19-20)**

20.1 Council received and noted the report.



21.19-20 **The Times Good University Guide and THE World University Rankings 2020 Edition (Document C18/19-20)**

21.1 Council received and noted the report.

22.19-20 **Report and Recommendations from Senate, October 2019 (Document C19/19-20)**

22.1 Council noted the Senate Annual Report which provided a high-level summary of Senate's business for the academic session 2018/19. It was received as part of the assurance process of the robustness of the University's academic governance arrangements at the University (M13 refers).

23.19-20 **Report and Recommendations from Audit Committee, November 2019 (Document C20/19-20)**

23.1 Court considered a report on substantive items which the Audit Committee had considered at its meeting on 7 November 2019. This included the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2018/19 which set out the work of the Audit Committee in its fulfilment of its terms of reference and compliance with OfS requirements. The Chair of the Audit Committee briefly explained the key highlights from the report and invited Council to approve the Annual Report as part of the requirement of the OfS accountability and assurance process. Court considered the report and **approved** its submission to the OfS in December 2019.

24.19-20 **Report from Remuneration Committee, November 2019 (Document C21/19-20)**

24.1 Council received and noted the report.

25.19-20 **Report from University Ethics Committee, November 2019 (Document C22/19-20)**

25.1 Council received and noted the report.

26.19-20 **Report and Recommendations from Finance Committee, November 2019 (Document C23/19-20)**

26.1 Council received and noted the report.

27.19-20 **Report and Recommendations from Governance and Nominations Committee, November 2019 (Document C24/19-20)**

27.1 Council **approved** the recommendations as recommended by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

28.19-20 **Report from Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee, October 2019 (Document C25/19-20)**

- 28.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 29.19-20 **Report and Recommendations from Honorary Degrees Committee, September 2019 (Document C26/19-20)**
- 29.1 Council **approved** eight candidates and the removal of an Honorary Award, as recommended by Senate. The Honours, as itemised in the report, would be conferred at appropriate future ceremonies.
- 30.19-20 **Terms of Reference and Membership 2019/20 (Document C27/19-20)**
- 30.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 31.19-20 **Draft Council 2 Agenda 2019 (Document C28/19-20)**
- 31.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 32.19-20 **Council Schedule of Business (Document C29/19-20)**
- 32.1 Council received and noted the report.
- 33.19-20 **Any Other Business: Industrial Action Update (Tabled Document)**
- 33.1 Council received a report from the Director of People and Campus Services on the impending industrial action and the continuing negotiations at sector level.
- 33.2 The Executive reaffirmed their committed to ensuring that any impact to students was minimised and that students experienced as little disruption to their learning experience as possible. Appropriate mitigation measures would be put in place and a communication to students would be issued in advance of the industrial action.
- 34.19-20 **Any Other Business: Proposed Process for Winding Up DHEZ Ltd (Document C30/19-20)**
- 34.1 In July 2018, Council approved the closure of the University subsidiary company, DHEZ Ltd and the write off of the accumulated debt owed to the University (M110/17-18 refers) and Document C30/19-20 presented the proposed process for winding up the company.
- 34.2 The Council considered and **approved**, in principle, a proposal to provide limited financial support to the company to enable a solvent winding up, subject to external legal advice on the possibility of a cap being placed on the overall potential liability of the University. Council **agreed** that the final proposed arrangement would be provided to the Chair, Treasurer and Stuart Watson prior to the next meeting for final approval, following receipt of the external advice.
- 34.3 ██████████

[Redacted content]

*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.*

Secretary: Assistant Head (Governance)  
Date: December 2019