

**COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2022**

<b>Members:</b>	Baroness Ann Taylor (Chair)	Shahnaz Ali	Karl Bates
	Carl Chambers	Professor Shirley Congdon	Terry Hartwell
	Victoria McKay	Karen McMahan	Ahmed Malik
	Sally Neocosmos	Sanjay Patel	Professor Rami Qahwaji
	Professor Amir Sharif	Iqra Tabassum	Prof Vishanth Weerakkody

**In Attendance:** Ailie Ferrari, Associate Director, Outreach, Recruitment and Marketing (for item 90)  
 Joanne Marshall, Director of People and OD  
 Stuart McKinnon-Evans, Chief Finance Officer  
 Jane Peverley, Associate Director, PR and Communications (for item 90)  
 Riley Power, University Secretary  
 Andrew Lang, Incoming Chief Finance Officer  
 Katherine Wass, Governance and Projects Officer (Secretary)

<b>Apologies:</b>	Kersten England	John Hinchcliffe	Jacqui Holgate
	Amir Hussain	Professor Zahir Irani	Ibrahim Mahmood
	Stuart Watson	Michael Ziff	

85.21-22 **Report from the Chair**

85.1 The Chair of Council welcomed all to the meeting and extended thanks to outgoing members, Stuart Watson, Amir Hussain, Michael Ziff and Mohammed Pandor for their contributions to the University. Thanks, were also expressed to Stuart McKinnon-Evans, outgoing Chief Finance Officer for his contribution to the University. The incoming Chief Finance Officer Andrew Lang was welcomed to the meeting as were the new Sabbatical Officers, Ahmed Malik and Iqra Tabassum.

85.2 The Chair noted this was her last meeting and reflected on a very interesting seven years which had seen several challenges and changes. Of note was the change in culture and the relationship with the City of Bradford which had been very productive. The Chair expressed confidence in the future of the University in what continued to be a challenging environment, noting the ongoing changes in the higher education environment.

85.3 The Chair thanked all Council members, particularly Terry Hartwell, Karl Bates and Sally Neocosmos who were Chairs of Committees of Council.

86.21-22 **Vice-Chancellor's Update Report (Document C110/21-22)**

86.1 The Vice-Chancellor thanked Baroness Taylor for her significant commitment and contribution to the University noting her passion, strong leadership, insight, and perspective

that had supported both the University Council and Executive Board in the execution of their duties during her tenure.

- 86.2 The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on key matters affecting the University since the last meeting of Council noting a year marked by the ongoing challenges associated with the impact of the pandemic.
- 86.3 Highlights included Bradford being awarded City of Culture 2025; the findings of the International Student Barometer which ranked the University as best in the world for careers and employability services; that HESA data showed a 5% increase in graduate employment to 78%; the launch of a new Architecture course based around sustainability; and that the University had moved up the Complete University Guide rankings by 11 places to 74 out of 130 institutions. Two academics had been awarded UKRI Future Leader Fellowships and the University had hosted the Primary Engineer competition finale. The University would also continue its relationship with Bradford Literature Festival noting that was now the biggest literature festival in the Country.
- 86.4 An update on senior staff changes was provided with Steve Gilley starting on the 4 July as Director of Infrastructure, Marian Hilditch appointed Academic Registrar and Director of Registry and Student Administration and Professor Chris Gaffney appointed as Interim PVC for Research. Andrew Lang would join the University on the 1 August as Chief Finance Officer.
- 86.5 The Vice-Chancellor also provided an overview of the National Student Survey (NSS) results that had just been received. It was noted that there had been a reduction in overall satisfaction compared with the previous year. A full analysis would be undertaken, and this would be presented to Council in due course.
- 86.6 While this result was disappointing the early indications were that the strategies in place were the right ones and this provided even more reason to implement them and produce the desired outcomes.
- 86.7 Council discussed the overall NSS results noting the differences between the experience of home and international students as well as across subject areas. The emphasis on the need to ensure focus on the student experience was noted.

87.21-22 **Report from the Students' Union: Priorities for 2022/23 (Document C111/21-22)**

- 87.1 Council received a report from the UBU Student Affairs Officer and the UBU Education Officer noting in the Student Crowd University Awards 2022 the UBU had been ranked 17 out of 120 in the UK. This was testament to the hard work of the staff and student team.
- 87.2 Council was advised the UBU was reviewing its approach to marketing and barriers to increased engagement with UBU activities and the leadership roles available.
- 87.3 In the short-term Council was advised that discussions were underway with Unique to ensure their facilities were affordable and accessible; opportunities to make better use of RAM Air

had been identified as well as making the activities space more widely available; and initiatives were in place to support students through the cost-of-living crisis, such as a dry goods shop and working with the student hardship fund to ensure it was accessible.

87.4 The culture in the Students' Union was being considered to ensure it was a welcoming and safe space. This included the environment around events and activity to ensure that it was clear that certain behaviour was not welcome.

87.5 It was noted that engagement levels had fallen as the University emerged from the pandemic and activity had been planned to address this. It was the role of Sabbatical Officers to engage with as many students as they could and be as visible as possible to all students.

87.6 Engagement activity included working with the Deans of Faculties to ensure that events were available to all students and to understand the diversity of student's lives with University just one aspect of the wider picture.

88.21-22 **UUK and YU Responses to the Government Consultation on Higher Education Reforms and the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (Document C112/21-22)**

88.1 The Vice-Chancellor presented the paper noting it provided an overview of the feedback that Yorkshire Universities and Universities UK had provided to the Government consultation.

88.2 The Consultation was yet to be reported on although it was expected that some of the proposals would not be taken forward.

88.3 Council was advised that the Chief Finance Officer's team had modelled the impact of the proposals for the foundation year fee changes and concluded it would impact on the ability to deliver the programmes.

89.21-22 **KPI Dashboard and Delivery Plans (Document C113/21-22)**

89.1 Council considered a report from the Chief Finance Officer noting that it had been produced before the NSS results were published. With this one exception, all KPIs were showing positive progress toward targets and overall performance was strong.

89.2 Council discussed the delay on the CRM project noting this had been a set of deliberate choices and that the ambition to develop an integrated platform remained. The impact of the current separated approach was more on processes than student experience.

90.21-22 **Update on University Brand Project**

90.1 Council received a presentation from the Associate Directors, PR and Communications, and Outreach, Recruitment and Marketing on the project to distil the essence of the University to develop the brand for use in marketing.

- 90.2 An overview of the approach taken was provided noting that the brand had a clear link to the vision, mission, and values of the University. The aim had been to identify what made the University of Bradford distinctive. The outcome had been that the University was a place 'to belong', 'to thrive' and 'to make a difference'.
- 90.3 The next steps related to brand articulation and a brief was being developed with external marketing specialists who had been appointed as the creative agency. At the end of this process there would be a clear brand identity and visualisation that would bring the brand to life for different audiences and across the University. The first element of this would be the corporate brand to be used for the 2024 recruitment cycle.
- 90.4 Council discussed the presentation and brand noting the opportunities to be gained from the sense of place given the City of Culture 2025. There was an opportunity to create a link between the two brands and for the University to reflect the experience of studying in a small city and all this had to offer.
- 90.5 Council discussed the themes that would feature across the brand including entrepreneurship, place, and belonging. Council also discussed Bradford being known as a University City and noted that the Business and Community Engagement sub-strategy was making good progress towards this.

91.21-22 **Late Financial Forecast 2021/22 (Document C114/21-22)**

- 91.1 The Chief Finance Officer provided an overview of the operating budget noting that the result was well ahead of budget, and this was not expected to change significantly.
- 91.2 The forecast had been discussed at Finance Committee and it was noted that Faculties were performing at the level needed in terms of percentage of income.
- 91.3 Council discussed the report and noted that planning for student numbers had been prudent. There had been a stronger than expected mid-year intake and the contingency had been managed to ensure funds were released as appropriate.
- 91.4 Council discussed staff associated costs and reward noting that Remuneration Committee in October would consider any proposals in relation to additional reward. It was noted that one-off payments had been awarded by some HEI's however this needed to be carefully considered in the context of ongoing pay negotiations.
- 91.5 It was noted that significant cost savings had been made due to unfilled vacancies and this was being reviewed to ensure vacancies were not being held too long by managers.
- 91.6 The Chief Finance Officer advised that the budget had been set based on lower mid-year recruitment than had been the case. There were a range of factors linked to this and an emerging issue in relation to student accommodation had been identified. This was being progressed in discussion with local accommodation providers to ensure appropriate quality provision of housing for students.

92.21-22 **2022/23 Delivery Plan and Budget, and Financial Estimates 2024/25 (Document C115/21-22)**

- 92.1 The Chief Finance Officer provided an overview of the report that had been considered at Finance Committee. The budget was the result of several months' work to develop a proposition with a dynamic view of student recruitment as well as risks and emerging issues, it also recognised the more stable financial footing the University was experiencing.
- 92.2 Increased student numbers had enabled additions of £7m to the expenditure budget and bids totalling £11m had been received for this pot of funding. A filtering process had been undertaken and discussed with Executive Board to agree investment allocations and ensure all factors were taken into consideration.
- 92.3 Council was advised that the budget included contingency for the potential pay award, still under national negotiation. The integrated planning round had been undertaken and included the development of delivery plans for all Faculties and Departments developed with the strategic objectives at their core. Almost every area of the University was expanding.
- 92.4 Capital expenditure would be maintained at the same level and supplemented with funding from external sources such as the Office for Students and Salix. The plan was for a 1.4% surplus in 2022/23 increasing in future years.
- 92.5 Council discussed the report noting the need to review the marketing budget to take account of growth in postgraduate student recruitment. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that some contingency funding had already been released with this in mind.
- 92.6 The Chair of Finance Committee confirmed that the Committee had endorsed the recommendations in the report. It was noted that the 2-3% target had not been abandoned but some relaxation for the coming year had been considered appropriate. The majority of additional funds related to staff costs.
- 92.7 Council **approved** the recommendations as they were stated in the report.
- 92.8 The Chair noted that this was the last meeting for the Chief Finance Officer and thanked him for the significant leadership and commitment had he had demonstrated to the University.

93.21-22 **Research Excellence Framework 2021 (Document C116/21-22)**

- 93.1 Council considered a report that detailed the outcomes and areas of reflection following REF 2021, noting that the recommendations had been endorsed by Executive Board at its meeting in June.
- 93.2 It was noted that REF was a retrospective measure that assessed the University's research between 2014-2020. A key feature had been the use of the workload model to identify those with significant responsibility for research which resulted in a considerable increase in the

number of staff providing submissions. While the grade point average had reduced slightly this approach to including a larger number in the REF was seen as being a positive and inclusive development from the approach taken in the previous REF. Feedback from staff had been very positive.

93.3 The lessons learned were clearly provided and budget had been identified to fund necessary activity. REF took place every seven years and did not produce any rankings as it was intended to be about increasing the volume and quality of research activity. This meant a long-term view and plan were needed.

93.4 Council noted this was an excellent paper, noting that REF2021 was more inclusive which would build confidence and result in a better return next time around.

#### 94.21-22 **National Student Survey 2022**

94.1 This item was discussed under the Vice-Chancellors update (Minute 86.21-22 refers).

#### 95.21-22 **Student Recruitment Update (Document C117/21-22)**

95.1

[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.*

95.2 Council was advised that PGT home programmes were still recruiting with PGT international significantly over target. Work was being undertaken with the Deans of Faculties to review the support needed for these students and review estimates of conversion for next year so a focused approach could be taken.

95.3 Recruitment figures reflected a positive overall position. Further work was being undertaken on the size and shape of the student population to assess the dynamics of the University in the future, this included considering how best to manage sustainable growth and where further investment was required to support these ambitions.

#### 96.21-22 **Risk Appetite Statement (Document C118/21-22)**

96.1 The University Secretary presented the Risk Appetite Statement for its annual approval by Council noting that it had been discussed and endorsed at Audit Committee. It was confirmed that the risk appetite relating to the IT security risk was being refined in light of these discussions.

96.2 Council **approved** the Risk Appetite Statement.

97.21-22 **Report from the University Secretary (Document C119/21-22)**

97.1 The University Secretary provided an update on the appointment of a new Chancellor, noting this was progressing and a joint meeting of Senate and Council would be convened to approve the appointment.

97.2 Council was advised of sponsorship discussions with Bradford City Football Club that included shirt and stadium naming rights for a period of four years. The benefits for the University and its students had been explored and an agreement was in the process of being drawn up.

97.3 Council **approved** the removal of Regulation 21 and its replacement with the Acceptable Use of IT Policy that had been approved by Executive Board.

97.4 The Chair of People Committee confirmed her endorsement of the updated Health and Safety Policy by Chair's action. Council **approved** the updated policy.

98.21-22 **Business from Committees of Council and Senate (Document C120-123/21-22)**

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

99.21-22 **Register of Interests (Document C124/21-22)**

99.1 Council received and noted the report.

100.21-22 **Minutes of the Meeting on 11 May 2022 (Document C125/21-22)**

100.1 The minutes of the meetings held on the 11 May were approved by circulation prior to the meeting.

101.21-22 **Matters Arising and Action Tracker (Document C126/21-22)**

101.1 Council received and noted the report.

102.21-22 **Prevent Report (Document C127/21-22)**

102.1 Council received and noted the report.

103.21-22 **Access and Participation Update (Document C128/21-22)**

103.1 Council received and noted the report.

104.21-22 **Annual Report – Student Casework 2020/21 (Document C129/21-22)**

104.1 Council welcomed the report and discussed the level of academic misconduct. Council also noted the appointment of an Interim Director of Student Casework who was overseeing a comprehensive review of the policy and process related to this area of activity.

105.21-22 **Council Terms of Reference and Membership (Document C130/21-22)**

105.1 Council received and noted the report.

106.21-22 **Draft Council 1 Agenda, September 2022 (Document C131/21-22)**

106.1 Council received and noted the report.

107.21-22 **Council Schedule of Business (Document C132/21-22)**

107.1 Council received and noted the report.

108.21-22 **Any Other Business**

108.1 There was no other business for this meeting.

Secretary: Katherine Wass, Governance & Projects Officer

Date: 13 July 2022