

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held on
Wednesday 14 December 2022

Present:

Gary Dixon (Chair)

George Acquah

Nishan Canagarajah

Cathy Ellis

Rishi Madlani

Kevin Nagle

Vijay Sharma

Richard Tapp

Huw Barton

Martin Cullen

Kerry Law

Catherine Morley

Mark Purnell

Jacqui Shaw

In attendance: Alison Benson (Assistant Secretary); Alex Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Liz Jones (PVC Education); Paul Gowdridge (Chief Financial Officer); Kevin Joyce (Secretariat); Michael Flanagan (Director of Estates and Digital Services, for M/72); Steve Corbett (Director of DARO, for M/74);

Apologies: Craig Brown, Sophie Dale-Black, Rhiannon Jenkins, Ian Johnson, Azam Mamujee

The formal meeting was preceded by a development session focused on HE sector issues and trends, led by Nicola Dandridge, Professor of HE Policy at University of Bristol and former CEO of Office for Students (2017-22) and Universities UK (2007-17).

22/M66 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest pertaining to any of the items dealt with in this meeting.

22/M67 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2022 as a correct record and **noted** the responses to the matters arising from that meeting.

22/M68 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair updated Council on a confidential matter concerning an ongoing legal case.

22/M69 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council which provided a comprehensive update on recent developments in the HE sector generally, and at Leicester specifically.

Thanks were expressed to members of Council for their support during 2022 in what had been a very successful year for the University.

Attention was drawn to planned industrial action by the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) which had taken place on 24, 25 and 30 November 2022. No significant issues had been reported; initial indications were that approximately 20% of UCU members had taken part in full strike action. This had resulted in minimal operational impact but the situation continued to be monitored. Should further UCU strike action be planned, then the University was required to receive 14 days' notice.

It was highlighted that a package of support was being provided to staff and students to help with the cost-of-living and that work was underway with Leicester City Council to explore supporting the wider community.

It was reported that partnerships with two Ukrainian Universities had been agreed, one of which would be formally signed on 15 December 2022.

In response to a query, it was reported that the University aimed to maintain its 'Silver' rating as a minimum requirement in the forthcoming Teaching Excellence Framework submission.

Council noted the report.

22/M70 **UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTS AND OFS RETURNS 2021/2022**

Council considered in detail the full-year 2021/22 Financial Performance Report, the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2022, an assessment regarding Going Concern, the report of the External Auditors and the associated Management Representation Letter, the final 5-year Financial Plan and the OfS Annual Assurance Return. Council received assurance that all items had been scrutinised by the Finance and Infrastructure Committee and Audit and Assurance Committee.

a) 2021/22 Financial Performance Report

A matter of Reserved Business was **noted**.

Council approved the Financial Performance Report for 2021-22.

b) Financial Statements 2021/22

Council noted that the report reflected the conclusion of the external audit, and the signing of all subsidiary financial statements earlier in December 2022. Council **noted** the contribution from Committee chairs in reviewing an early draft, a welcome step in the process which would be incorporated for future years.

Three matters of Reserved Business were **noted**.

Council approved the Financial Statements and endorsed the proposed process for signing.

c) Assessment of Going Concern

A matter of Reserved Business was **noted**.

Council approved the Going Concern assessment report.

d) External Auditors' Audit Report 2021/22

Council noted that the University was pleased with the overall position.

A matter of Reserved Business was discussed.

Council approved the External Auditors report.

e) Management Representation Letter to the External Auditors

Council noted a summary of assurances. It was noted that the Letter for 2021/22 largely retained the same format to that signed in respect of 2020/21.

Council noted the letter, and **authorised** the Chair to sign this on behalf of Council.

f) Final 5-year Financial Plan

The 5-year Financial Plan had previously been reported to Council on 5 July 2022 and had now been updated in line with the Q1 reforecast.

One matter of Reserved Business was **noted**.

Council approved the 5-year Financial Plan.

g. OfS Annual (Financial) Assurance Return

Council noted that the template and commentary relating to the OfS Annual Financial Return had been inadvertently omitted from the papers. It was agreed that this would be circulated to members on 15 December 2022 and any comments to be sent to the Chief Financial Officer by Wednesday 21 December 2022.

Council noted that the initial draft had been submitted on 1 December 2022 with the next deadline of 9 January 2023 and final sign off by the President and Vice-Chancellor by 23 January 2023.

Council approved the return, subject to addressing any comments following the circulation of the template and commentary. **Council confirmed** that delegated authority was given to the President and Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer to update and conclude the return.

22/M71 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Council considered the latest Strategic University Risk Register (SURR), updated for the autumn term 2022, and the University's Risk Management Policy. **Council noted** that these had received prior scrutiny from the Audit and Assurance Committee.

Several matters of Reserved Business were discussed.

Council recommended that a future development session takes place for Council members on the end-to-end risk process.

Council noted the report.

22/M72 Reserved Business was considered.

22/M73 Reserved Business was considered.

22/M74 Reserved Business was considered.

22/M75 **OFS COMPLIANCE – PREVENT DUTY ANNUAL REPORT**

Council noted a report which set out the necessary information and evidence required in order to sign off the Prevent Duty accountability return for 2021-22 ahead of submission to the Office for Students (OfS).

Council noted the approval given on its behalf by the Chair of Council in order to meet the submission deadline of 1 December 2022.

22/M76 **SCHEDULE OF DELEGATION**

Council approved the proposed changes to the Schedule of Delegation which reflected recent changes in organisational structure.

22/M77 **STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS**

Council approved that Professor Elizabeth Jones, Pro-Vice Chancellor Education, be appointed to inspect the conduct of the Students' Union elections in 2022-23, in accordance with the provisions of Ordinance 22(8).

22/M78 **COURSE FEES**

Council received and noted a summary statement of tuition fees charged by the University in 2022-2023.

22/M79 **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Council approved one recommendation for the appointment of a new lay member, subject to the usual checks.

22/M80 **FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted a report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 28 November 2022.

It was reported that the majority of this meeting was given over to reviewing and recommending approval of the University's Financial Statements and OfS returns which were considered and approved by Council earlier on the agenda.

22/M81 **AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted a report of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held on 30 November 2022, the Audit and Assurance Committee's Annual Report for 2021-22 and the Internal Auditors' Annual Report for 2021/22.

22/M82 **REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

Council **considered** the University's remuneration annual report. Following the requirements of the 2018 Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code, the report provided assurance to the governing body that the Remuneration Committee had effectively discharged its responsibilities during the 2021/22 financial year.

Council approved the University's Remuneration Annual Report 2021-22 for publication on the University's website and **approved** the revised Committee Terms of Reference for 2022/23.

22/M83 **PEOPLE, EDI AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted a report of the People, EDI and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 9 November 2022.

The Committee had undertaken a deep dive into the Research theme of the University Strategy. It highlighted that EDI considerations had become embedded into the research process, and there were a number of positive examples where this had taken place.

Council approved the updated Terms of Reference for 2022-23.

22/M84 **VAN GEEST BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Council noted a report of a meeting of the van Geest Board Trustees on 22 November 2022.

22/M85 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

Council noted a report of sealed documents.

22/M86 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates of meetings scheduled for 2022-2023:

- Wednesday 8 March 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
- Wednesday 10 May 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
- Wednesday 5 July 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm

Duration of meeting: 1 hour 55 minutes

CHAIR