**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

**COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on**

**Wednesday 4 December 2024**

**Present:** Sophie Dale-Black (Chair)

Lauren Bartlett (via Teams) Liz Blyth

Nishan Canagarajah Martin Cullen

Mary Curnock Cook Mehmooda Duke

Cathy Ellis Stewart Fishwick

Rishi Madlani Catherine Morley

Kevin Nagle Henrietta O’Connor

Gabrielle Provan Linda Ralphs

Richard Tapp Joshitha Venkataraman

Glynis Wright

**In attendance:** Paul Gowdridge (Chief Financial Officer); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Liz Jones (PVC Education); Kevin Joyce (Governance Office); Liam Davis (Chief Executive Students’ Union) for minute 24/M83; Elizabeth Warhurst (Deputy Secretary & General Legal Counsel)

**Apologies:** George Acquah,Jack Chambers, Gary Dixon, Kerry Law

24/M74 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

24/M75 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Council approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 as a correct record and **noted** the responses to the matters arising from that meeting.

Council **noted** that the Schedule of Delegation had been updated to reflect changes in the Remuneration Committee powers.

24/M76 **CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

The Chair **reminded** members that the annual meeting of Court would take place on 7 February 2025.

The Chair **updated** members on progress in relation to the Chair of Council recruitment.

The Chair **updated** members on recent events related to VentureVersity, a new funded collaboration between Leicester, Loughborough and De Montfort Universities plus the wider local entrepreneurial community, which was helping turn more academic ideas into commercial reality via spinouts and business collaborations.

The Chair **highlighted** a letter sent to the University from the UCU Trade Union related to recent arrests following a student protest, had been circulated to Council members today. The President and Vice-Chancellor would provide further information in his update.

24/M77 **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.

It was highlighted that the Office for Students (OfS) had undertaken a review into the sector’s finances, which includes modelling on changes to tuition fees and the increase in national insurance contributions.

It was highlighted that the President and Vice-Chancellor was in dialogue with the Department of Education in relation to the Government’s work on the Higher Education reform bill.

It was highlighted that the University had received a letter from the UCU Trade Union related to recent arrests following a student protest on 15 November 2024 in the Attenborough Tower. The President and Vice-Chancellor had responded to the letter confirming that the University supported peaceful protests within the law and had processes in place for students and staff to engage with the University on any planned activity. No engagement had taken place on this occasion and due to the risks involved, the Police were contacted as a last resort to resolve the situation.

It was agreed that an update would be provided to Council members at a future meeting on the University’s approach to the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), which was due to be launched in September 2026.

It was highlighted that the Executive Board were reviewing options related to increasing tuition fees following the Governments recent announcement.

**Council noted** the report.

24/M78 **UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTS AND OFS RETURNS 2023/2024**

**Council considered** in detail the full-year 2023/24 Financial Performance Report, the report of the External Auditors, the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2024, the associated Management Representation Letter, an assessment regarding Going Concern, 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) 2023/24 Financial Performance Report

**Council noted** the Financial Performance Report for 2023/24.

b) External Auditors’ Audit Report 2023/24

**Council noted** that the University had been pleased with the overall audit process and conduct.

**Council noted** the External Auditors’ report.

c) Financial Statements 2023/24

**Council noted** that the report reflected the conclusion of the external audit and the signing of all subsidiary financial statements earlier in December 2024.

**Council approved** the Financial Statements.

d) Management Representation Letter to the External Auditors

**Council noted** that the Letter for 2023/24 had largely retained the same format to that signed in respect of 2022/23.

**Council approved** the letter, and authorised the Chief Financial Officer to sign this on behalf of Council.

e) Assessment of Going Concern and 5-year financial plan

**Council approved** the Going Concern assessment report.

**Council noted** that an update on the Apollo Partnership programme would be provided to Council members at its meeting in March 2025.

**Council approved** the 5-year financial plan.

f) OfS Annual (Financial) Assurance Return including 5-year Financial Plan

**Council noted** that the return was consistent with the 2023/24 Financial Statements and 5-year Financial Plan.

**Council noted** that the 5-year plan was included in the OfS Assurance Return.

**Council noted** the OfS Annual (Financial) Assurance Return.

24/M79 **2024/2025 Q1 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND FINANCIAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN [RESERVED]**

**Council considered** the 2024/25 Q1 financial performance report and financial improvement plan.

**Council noted** the Q1 Financial Performance Report and FPI Plan.

24/M80 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Council considered** the latest Strategic University Risk Register (SURR), updated for the autumn term 2024, and the University’s Risk Management Policy, which had received prior scrutiny from the Audit and Assurance Committee.

**Council noted** that a review of the risk appetite category for Risk EB9 would be carried out at the next University Risk Committee.

**Council noted** that a clear plan for catastrophic building failures had been developed and would be in place by end December 2024, with priority buildings being addressed in Spring 2025.

**Council noted** the updated Strategic Risk Register.

**Council noted** that progress made towards implementing activity to manage the University’s strategic risks.

**Council approved** the updated risk appetite levels and statements.

**Council approved** the updated Risk Management Policy.

24/M81 **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024**

**Council considered** the annual report of the Alumni Association.

**Council noted** that key events related to the Alumni Association Centenary would be shared with Council members in due course.

**Council noted** the report.

24/M82 **COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS**

**Council considered** the proposed approach for the forthcoming Effectiveness Review.

**Council noted** that the questions in Section 2 of Appendix 1, related to effective governance, would be reviewed to ensure it covered Council providing the correct level of strategic oversight.

**Council approved** the proposed approach for the forthcoming Effectiveness Review.

24/M83 **STUDENTS’ UNION REVISED CONSTITITION AND PRIORITIES 2024-2025**

Following a review of the Students’ Union Governance and Constitution, **Council approved** changes to the Articles of Association, with effect from 1 July 2025.

**Council noted** that Officers and Student Trustees would be elected or recruited in accordance with the new structure so that they were ready to take up their posts within the new structure on 1 July 2025.

**Council noted** an update on progress made against each of the Students’ Union Officers’ priorities.

24/M84 **STUDENTS’ UNION ELECTIONS**

**Council noted** that Ordinance 22(8) required that the conduct of the election of Officers of the Students’ Union be subject to inspection by a person appointed by the Council.

**Council approved** Professor Elizabeth Jones, Pro-Vice Chancellor Education, be appointed to inspect the conduct of the Students’ Union elections in 2024-2025.

24/M85 **CHANGES TO STATUTES AND ORDINANCES**

**Council approved** the proposed changes to Statute Six, to be submitted to the Privy Council**.**

**Council approved in principle**, the proposed amendments to Statute Four, ahead of submission to Senate for comment and then back to Council for final approval. Thereafter, the amendments would be submitted to the Privy Council for approval.

24/M86 **COURSE FEES**

**Council noted** the summary of the course fees charged by the University in 2024-2025.

23/M83 **FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]**

**Council received and noted** a report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 21 November 2024.

24/M85 **AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]**

**Council received and noted** a report of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held on 19 November 2024, the Audit and Assurance Committee’s Annual Report for 2023/24, the Internal Auditors’ Annual Report for 2023/24 and the Annual Information Compliance Report for 2023/24.

24/M86 **REMUNERATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Council approved** the Remuneration Committee annual report 2023/24 for publication on the University’s website.

**Council approved** the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference for 2024/2025.

24/M87 **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Council received** a report of business conducted by email circulation November 2024.

**Council noted** the approval by Nominations Committee of a potential £1.5m donation from the National Lottery Community Fund.

**Council noted** the approval by Nominations Committee of a £4m donation from Isaac Jimmy Mayer in support of the Centre for Phage Research.

**Council approved** the extension of tenures of Court members with an end date of 31 December 2024, by an additional year, to 31 December 2025 in the first instance to enable a full review of Court members’ end dates during 2025.

**Council approved** the five Emeritus Professors identified within the paper to become Associate Members of Court.

24/M88 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Council noted** the dates of meetings scheduled for 2024/2025:

Tuesday 4 March 2025 - Ordinary meeting 4pm, at Brookfield\*

Wednesday 7 May 2025 - Ordinary meeting 4pm, at Space Park Leicester

Tuesday 1 July 2025 - Ordinary meeting 4pm

\* preceded by a networking event with the School of Business

Forward Business Schedule (regularly updated) [[links to SharePoint site](https://uniofleicester.sharepoint.com/sites/committees/council/reserved/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fcommittees%2Fcouncil%2Freserved%2FCouncil%20Meetings%202024%2D25%2FCouncil%20Forward%20Business%20Schedule%20v8%202024%202025%20as%20at%2027%20November%202024%2Epdf&viewid=266f71be%2Dbcd2%2D4f2c%2Daa57%2D15a890cd80d5&parent=%2Fsites%2Fcommittees%2Fcouncil%2Freserved%2FCouncil%20Meetings%202024%2D25)]

CHAIR Duration of meeting: 2 hours 7 minutes