

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting held on

Wednesday 5 July 2023

**Present:**

Gary Dixon (Chair)

Liz Blyth	Martin Cullen
Nishan Canagarajah	Cathy Ellis
Sophie Dale-Black	Catherine Morley
Rishi Madlani	Archie Robinson
Kevin Nagle	Jacqui Shaw
Vijay Sharma	Richard Tapp

**In attendance:** Alex Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office); Paul Gowdridge (Chief Financial Officer); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Liz Jones (PVC Education); Kevin Joyce (Governance Officer); Aash Khadia (Director of for item 23/M41)

**Apologies:** George Acquah; Huw Barton; Ian Johnson; Kerry Law; Mark Purnell

23/M36     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Sophie Dale-Black declared an interest regarding EarthSense, the University's spin-out business mentioned in paper C/23/49. This paper was not being discussed at this meeting.

23/M37     **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Council noted** that Liz Jones sent her apologies for the last Council meeting which was not reflected in the minutes.

**Council approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2023 as a correct record and noted the responses to the matters arising from that meeting.

23/M38     **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair recorded thanks to Vijay Sharma whose term was ending in July 2023 after an exceptional 10 years, including serving as Vice-Chair and Chair of People EDI and Wellbeing Committee.

The Chair recorded thanks to Ian Johnson who was stepping down from the role of Treasurer from July 2023.

The Chair recorded thanks to Huw Barton whose term as a Senate member was ending in July 2023.

The Chair welcomed Archie Robinson as the new President of the Students' Union.

The Chair highlighted that the process to recruit new lay members of Council and a new Treasurer was underway with interviews scheduled over the coming weeks.

23/M39 **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 reported that the marking and assessment boycott would not prevent any students from graduating during the July 2023 graduation ceremonies. The University had been able to achieve this whilst adhering to the University's strict academic quality standards and the President and Vice-Chancellor was grateful to colleagues for taking mitigating actions to support students being awarded their degrees and progressing this summer.

It was reported that the University was proud to launch a new scheme to celebrate staff members reaching long service awards for both twenty and forty years' service.

It was reported that the University had six fellowships awarded funding from the Leverhulme Trust following a recent competition for early career academics.

It was highlighted that an event had taken place this week celebrating the first cohort of students with a medicine foundation programme that were graduating this year.

In response to a comment about the University league tables, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted that the senior leadership team were focussing on how to optimise the University's league table position and an action plan would be shared with Council in due course.

In response to a comment about the Institute for Policy, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted that the University was planning to recruit a new member of staff based in London. In addition, there would be representatives at the Conservative and Labour party conferences in 2023 covering the subjects of Health and Space.

**Council noted** the report.

23/M40 **FINANCIAL PLANNING**

**Council considered** the 2023/24 budget which had already received scrutiny from the Finance and Infrastructure Committee.

Council **noted** that the budget included forecast inflationary cost pressures, such as the 5% pay award and a 30%+ increase in utility costs. Modest expenditure contingencies were budgeted to help mitigate uncertainties in a high inflation environment.

Council **noted** that covenant breaches were reportable events to the Office for Students (OfS) and were also monitored by the Executive Board (ExB) and Finance and Infrastructure Committee.

Council **recommended** that future proposed annual budgets be linked more clearly to the three key strategic themes.

Council **approved** the 2023/24 budget.

Council **noted** the final 5-year financial forecast which would be presented for approval prior to submission to the OfS in December 2023.

23/M41 **UNIVERSITY STRATEGY**

*Aash Khadia joined the meeting*

**Council considered** a presentation on the annual progress made against the University's strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

**Council noted** the KPI reporting mechanism and the different components and milestones that made up the overall status.

**Council noted** the continued work being undertaken to embed the strategy across the University.

It was highlighted that the report had broken down the KPI targets year-on-year through to 2029-30.

Council **noted** the report.

*Aash Khadia left the meeting*

23/M42 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Council considered** the latest Strategic University Risk Register (SURR), updated for the summer term 2023. **Council noted** that the SURR had received prior scrutiny from the Audit and Assurance Committee.

It was highlighted that a number of the actions expected to be completed were still incomplete. The University Risk Committee (URC) was adjusting how it monitors the completion of actions and an updated methodology and template was being presented to the URC next week in an attempt to improve this. Enhanced training was also being sought for managers who were accountable for actions. **Council recommended** target dates be added to the action log, as well as a clearer view on where additional actions had been added by previous discussions in the risk management process.

**Council noted** the report.

23/M43

**STRATEGIC THEME UPDATE – RESEARCH INSPIRED EDUCATION**

**Council considered** a presentation on the annual update of progress made against the Research-Inspired Education (RIE) strategic theme which had received prior consideration from Senate and ExB.

It was highlighted that governance and oversight of the RIE strategic theme was carried out by the University Education Committee, on behalf of Senate and Council.

**Council noted** the progress reports for each of the strategic aims outlined within the paper along with the risks related to staff culture, resource, capacity and infrastructure.

**Council noted** that performance was being measured via the KPIs related to the Research Inspired Education strategic theme.

It was reported that the RIE strategic theme was supported by two key enabling plans, Student Employability and Wellbeing. Education Services, together with key stakeholders were working together to ensure these plans align and contribute to the delivery of objectives.

**Council noted** the emerging priorities for 2023-24.

It was highlighted that milestone KPIs were still to be developed and would be reported on in the future.

**Council noted** that progress had been made on improving the experience of black students including continued engagement with the Students' Union and the University's EDI team. Further work was still required and this topic was included in the belonging theme priorities for 2023-24.

**Council noted** the report.

23/M44 **STUDENTS' UNION ANNUAL REPORT**

**Council considered and noted** a presentation on the Students' Union key achievements for 2022/23.

It was highlighted that the SU had three core student facing departments which were:

- Opportunities – Sports and society focussed
- Voice – Student led opportunities
- Advice – Student support service

It was highlighted that there were 1538 committee members across 226 student groups, a significant increase now taking engagement back to pre-COVID levels which was to be welcomed.

**Council noted** the new Students' Union executive team for 2023/24.

**Council noted** that, should this be required, the Students' Union would hold a vote in October 2023, canvassing students in relation to whether they would continue to support industrial action.

**Council noted** that the Students' Union had representation on the Sexual Violence working group which monitors serious safety concerns.

**Council noted** the report.

23/M44 **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE [RESERVED]**

**Council noted** a report of the Nominations Committee meeting held on 12 June 2023.

23/M45 **SENATE**

**Council noted** a report of Senate held on 14 June 2023.

**Council approved** minor amendments to Ordinance 34, which related to clarification over the membership of Senate.

23/M46 **FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]**

**Council noted** a report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 20 June 2023.

23/M47 **AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]**

**Council noted** a report of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023.

23/M48 **PEOPLE, EDI AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

**Council noted** a report of the People, EDI and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 22 June 2023.

23/M49 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates of meetings scheduled for 2023-2024:

- Tuesday 19 September mid-day to Wednesday 20 September 4.30pm  
(exact times and schedule TBC) - Council/Executive Board Awayday
- Tuesday 24 October 2023 at 4pm
- Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 4pm
- Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 4pm
- Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 4pm
- Tuesday 2 July 2024 at 4pm

23/M50 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Council thanked** the University Executive Board for their hard work during the academic year 2022-23.

**Council thanked** the Governance team for the excellent structuring of papers and clear, concise minutes from committee meetings which supported key discussion and decision making for Council.

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 1 hour 40 minutes