

## UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 7 May 2025 at 4.00pm

**Location:** Conference Room, Space Park Leicester, Space City, 92 Corporation Rd, Leicester LE4 5SP

**Attendees:** Gary Dixon (Chair), Professor Nishan Canagarajah, Professor Henrietta O'Connor, Kerry Law, Cathy Ellis, George Acquah, Lauren Bartlett, Liz Blyth, Jack Chambers, Reed James, Rishi Madlani, Kevin Nagle, Richard Tapp, Professor Catherine Morley, Dr Gabrielle Provan, Professor Stewart Fishwick, Professor Linda Ralphs, Mehmooda Duke, Dr Sophie Dale-Black, Mary Curnock-Cook, Glynis Wright, and Martin Cullen

**In attendance:** Neil Goulden, Paul Gowdridge, Geoff Green, Professor Liz Jones, Sally Priddle and Emma Stevens (Item 6).

*Secretary's note: Reserved items minutes are removed ahead of publication.*

#### 1. Welcomes and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Council welcomed Reed James, the new Students' Union representative, and Neil Goulden, who would be the new Chair of Council from 1 August 2025.
- 1.2 Professor Catherine Morley and Professor Stewart Fishwick declared an interest in relation to item 5 on the agenda.
- 1.3 Professor Elizabeth Jones, an attendee of Council, declared an interest in relation to item 5 on the agenda.

#### 2. Minutes

- 2.1 Council **considered** the draft minutes from the previous meeting and the updates on the action log, including the rearticulated strategic aim two.

#### Resolved:

- 2.2 Council **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2025 as an accurate record.
- 2.3 Council **APPROVED** the proposed revised wording for Aim two is as follows: *Engage the public, shape policy and influence decision-making to improve lives and livelihoods in the region, nationally and globally.*

#### 3. Chair's Business

- 3.1 There was no business to report.

#### 4. President and Vice-Chancellor's Business

- 4.1 Council **received** an update from the President and Vice-Chancellor. It was reported that the Government would be publishing its immigration white paper on 12 May 2025 and it was anticipated to have significant impact on the Higher Education sector, as it was likely to include measures for international students. Measures being considered included limiting the number of international students able to obtain study visas, revising terms of postgraduate visas or revising the terms of graduate visas to focus on certain roles and/or salaries. The Government had expressed concerns about the number of international students coming to the country on study visas and then applying for asylum. The sector continued to express concerns about the proposed measures and the negative impact the reduction in international recruitment had already had on the sector.
- 4.2 Council **noted** that the Free Trade Agreement with India was a positive opportunity for the sector as it contained good education provisions, however it would take a while to be implemented.
- 4.3 Council **noted** that the Office for Students had published its outcome of the Freedom of Speech investigation at the University of Sussex and that the University of Sussex intended to legally challenge the findings. The University of Leicester had reviewed the findings and its current policies and was comfortable with the arrangements it had in place to ensure compliance with the conditions of registration. The Office for Students had not yet published its expectations for regulating the new Freedom of Speech requirements and therefore the University had sought external legal advice to support its work. A new Governance and Management condition on addressing sexual harassment would also be implemented on 1 August 2025, the University was also seeking legal advice as to its planned approach to compliance.
- 4.4 Council **noted** that the University had received a £10 million award to establish a Leverhulme Centre for Humanity and Space. The Centre would aim to increase the understanding of how humans engage with and experience space through a series of research projects over a 10-year period.
- 4.5 Council **discussed** the University's response to the Supreme Court ruling that sex was binary and noted that the University, and the wider sector, was waiting for guidance to be published so it could work through the implications. The Vice-Chancellor's priority was reassuring staff and students that the University would continue to support them.
- 4.6 Council *discussed* that there had previously been agreement between all local councils to develop a Mayoral Combined Authority for Leicester and Leicestershire. However, the recent local elections and different proposals for local government re-organisation would likely delay the implementation of the proposals.

#### STRATEGIC BUSINESS

#### 5. Financial Sustainability [RESERVED]

- 5.1 Council **received** an update on the University's financial position and proposed actions.

#### SECRETARY'S BUSINESS

**6. University Seal**

- 6.1 Council **noted** that one document had the University Seal affixed since the last meeting of Council.

**7. Changes to Students' Union Council Membership and Election Update [RESERVED]**

- 7.1 Council **received** an update on Students' Union Council membership and election outcomes. Council **noted** assurance that the Students' Union elections were fairly and properly conducted in line with Education Act 1994 Part 2 Students' Union.

#### REPORTED BUSINESS

**8. Audit and Assurance Committee [RESERVED]**

- 8.1 Council **noted** the minutes from the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting on 8 April 2025 and noted that the External Auditor appointment, approved by Council at its March meeting, had proceeded.

**9. Finance and Infrastructure Committee [RESERVED]**

- 9.1 Council **noted** the minutes from the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 15 April 2025.

#### ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

**10. Dates and times of future meetings\***

- 10.1 Council **noted** the dates and times of future meetings.

**11. Any other business**

- 11.1 No additional business was raised.

**Estimated total duration of meeting: 130 minutes**

***Minutes approved as an accurate record by Council on 1 July 2025.***

