

COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024

Members:

John Hinchcliffe (Chair)	Matthew Atkinson	Professor Shirley Congdon
Dame Sally Dicketts	Terry Hartwell	Kate Ireland
Faiz Ilyas	Hamza Khan	Simon Lewis
Victoria McKay	Ash Mehta	Sally Neocosmos
Iqra Tabassum		

In attendance: Martin Conway, University Secretary
Steve Gilley, Director of Infrastructure (for item 61)
Jacqui Holgate, Head of Governance
Andrew Lang, Chief Finance Officer
Dr Anne Miller, Interim Academic Registrar (for item 57)

Apologies:

Raja Waseem Ahmad	Dr Stewart Davies	Dr Paul Donovan
Professor Maryann Hardy	Professor Zahir Irani	Ibrahim Mahmood
Professor Amir Sharif	Professor Vishanth Weerakkody	

53.23-24 **Welcome and Report from the Chair**

- 53.1 The Interim Chair of Council welcomed Members to the meeting and extended thanks to the outgoing Sabbatical Officer for their valuable contributions and engagement in the business of Council and the Committees of Council. The incoming Sabbatical Officers, Raizana Razeen (Education Officer) and Sanskrity Baraili (Student Affairs Officer) would join the Council from July 2024.
- 53.2 The Interim Chair noted the success of the recent Council Strategy Day which focussed on issues relating to the University's reputation and 'why Bradford', with specific sessions on the City, research and innovation, learning and teaching, and the University's approach to building the quality and reputation of the undergraduate Pharmacy offer. The Interim Chair also noted that a meeting had been held with the University and College Union (UCU) in relation to the financial challenges facing the University and the HE sector.

54.23-24 **Vice-Chancellor's Update Report (Document C65/23-24)**

Secretary's Note: Simon Lewis declared an interest in relation to M54.1(a) [REDACTED] and left the meeting for this item.

- 54.1 Council considered the Vice-Chancellor's report which provided information on key matters affecting the University since the last meeting and against each of the University's sub-strategies. Among topics highlighted were:

(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- (b) the Migration Advisory Committee Review of the Graduate Route had been published which recommended retaining the UK's Graduate Route in its current form. This was a positive and welcome outcome.
- (c) the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme had been launched on 29 April and would close on 15 May. There had been a healthy interest in the scheme to date which would enable permanent employees of the University to leave the University on 30 August through a Settlement Agreement. MARS applications were being considered to ensure there would be no detrimental impact on Faculties and Directorates, and on the student/staff experience in line with organisational needs and strategic objectives.
- (d) the launch of the Bradford-Renduchintala Enterprise Ecosystem initiative noting that a detailed briefing on the BREE would be provided in July.

Note: Parts of the above minute have been redacted as they is considered to be exempt information as defined by section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which covers commercial interests

54.2 Council sought clarification on student mental health provision noting that more proactive approaches to managing student mental health had been developed, including a plan for wider staff training and embedding mental health awareness and management within the curriculum. A briefing on this topic would be provided to a future Council outside of the formal meeting cycle to allow consideration of this important issue. The Santander University Partnership was welcomed with Council noting that the University had also approached Barclays and NatWest under the umbrella of BREE.

54.3 An update on the Executive Board was requested, recognising that not all Council Members were present when information was provided at the recent Council Strategy Day; this would be circulated to Council outside of the meeting.

54.4 **ACTIONS:**

- provide update to Council via email circulation (Vice-Chancellor)
- schedule briefings on BREE and student mental health (Governance)

55.23-24 **Report from the Students' Union (Document C66/23-24)**

55.1 Council discussed a report from the Students' Union on current issues and recent activities noting the report was a means to increase Council's exposure and engagement with the

Students' Union. Highlights included an update on student engagement and representatives; the success of the Unions Annual Awards Night; the launch of the UBU Strategy 2024-27; and the recent UBU elections.

55.2 It was confirmed that a Code of Practice was in place between the University and the Students' Union, and the University Secretary would work in partnership with the CEO of the Students' Union and the incoming Sabbatical Officers to update the Code as appropriate. A Memorandum of Understanding that set out the working relationship between the Students' Union and the University would also be developed, noting this was not a legal requirement.

55.3 Council requested that UBU reports provide more data to demonstrate the impact of activities and engagement; this would be incorporated into future reports.

55.4 **ACTION: strengthen future UBU reports to make them more data driven (Sabbatical Officers)**

56.23-24 **Student Recruitment Report (Document C67/23-24)**

56.1 Executive Board received a high-level overview of the September 2024 recruitment position against each market segment, noting the risks and mitigations associated with home and international recruitment. Attention was now focussed on late applications and the operational and strategic interventions which sought to optimise recruitment and preparations for Clearing noting the University would continue to seek to maximise its position as outlined in the report.

56.2 Council reiterated the importance of improving student retention noting the financial implications associated with this. This would continue to be closely monitored by the Executive with mechanisms being put into place to maximise student progression and success. Increasing the number of final year undergraduate transitioning onto postgraduate programmes was also raised, as was the use of scholarships and bursaries. It was noted that scholarships and bursaries were being managed for maximum efficiency, and a report on this would be shared with Council, for information. The importance of Clearing was noted, and Council was assured that mechanisms were in place to effectively support this priority activity.

56.3 **ACTION: provide report on scholarships and bursaries to future Council (Chief Finance Officer)**

57.23-24 [Redacted]

57.1 [Redacted]

57.2 [Redacted]

57.3 [Redacted]

57.4 [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

58.23-24 Update on First Draft Five Year Plan Based on Revised Student Number Plans and Roll Forward of 6 + 6 Forecast (Document C69/23-24)

58.1 The Chief Finance Officer provided an update on the draft Five-Year Plan noting key headlines from the plan had been shared with Council at its Strategy Day in late April.

58.2 [Redacted]

58.3 [Redacted]

58.4 **ACTION: present final Five Year Plan (to include scenario/financial planning) to Executive Board, Finance Committee and Council (Chief Finance Officer)**

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59.23-24 **Action Plan from Council External Effectiveness Review (Document C70/23-24M)**

59.1 The University had commissioned Gatenby Sanderson to undertake a Council effectiveness review during the 2022/23 academic year. The reviewers met with Council and University staff between March-June 2023 to provide the feedback that informed the review and considered the outputs of Council against sectoral corporate governance codes and best practice.

59.2 The report, which was circulated to Council for information, found that the University was compliant with relevant sector codes and showed evidence of using good practice in its governance arrangements. It also found that there were good structures in place to support the work of Council and there was a good level of risk management to enable effective decision making. However, some opportunities for improvement were identified within the report including a number of recommendations for Council and the Executive to consider.

59.3 An outline action plan in response to the report had been developed, and this would be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Governance and Nominations Committee.

60.23-24 **Report from the University Secretary (Document C71/23-24)**

60.1 Council received a report on the ongoing work related to areas of governance relevant to Council and the University. Attention was drawn to the following:

- that a search process for a new Chair of Council was underway noting that the Chair Selection Panel would undertake relevant recruitment/EDI training in line with university processes in advance of the interviews.
- the new legislation for Freedom of Speech.
- updated guidance on tackling harassment and sexual misconduct on university campuses.

61.23-24 **Infrastructure Update**

61.1 The Director of Infrastructure attended the meeting to deliver a detailed and insightful presentation on the University's estate challenges and issues, highlighting key risks, challenges, and priorities, and introducing a set of principles that would inform the development of a draft Estates Strategy.

61.2 Council welcomed the presentation noting the University needed to address the underinvestment in its estate/infrastructure which would require significant investment. Members debated the importance of the estate/infrastructure in facilitating delivery of the

University's ambitions; enhancing the learning experience by providing inclusive and flexible environments; the development of a short-medium term framework aligned to the University Strategy; reduction in the size of the estate noting the low space utilisation which had become more evident in the post pandemic environment; the need to put sustainability at the heart of decision-making; the need to consider the shape and alignment of the estate; and the suggestion to source external grants and levelling up funding to support and enhance the development of the campus. Council also noted there was a tension to balance between managing the 'here and now' via tactical investments in the infrastructure versus a longer-term strategy, as well as the significant costs associated with the future development of the campus.

62.23-24 **Report from Senate, and Council Committees (Documents C72-75/23-24)**

62.1 Council received the summary reports from Senate, Audit Committee, Finance Committee, and People Committee.

63.23-24 **Safeguarding and Prevent Report (Document C76/23-24)**

63.1 Council received an update report on Safeguarding and Prevent, noting the continued work in this area.

64.23-24 **KPI update (Document C77/23-24)**

64.1 Council received an update report on the University's key performance indicators.

65.23-24 **Register of Interests (Document C78/23-24)**

65.1 Council received and noted the report.

66.23-24 **Minutes of the Meeting on 21 February 2024 (Document C79/23-24)**

66.1 The minutes of the meetings held on the 21 February 2024 were approved by circulation prior to the meeting.

67.23-24 **Action Tracker (Document C80/23-24)**

67.1 Council received a report on matters arising from the Council meeting on 21 February 2024 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them.

68.23-24 **Terms of Reference and Membership 2023/24 (Document C81/23-24)**

68.1 Council received and noted the report.

69.23-24 **Draft Council 5 Agenda, July 2024 (Document C82/23-24)**

69.1 Council received and noted the report.

70.23-24 **Council Schedule of Business (Document C83/23-24)**

70.1 Council received and noted the report.

Secretary: Jacqui Holgate, Head of Governance

Date: 22 May 2024