

Summary Report of Council 2

The University Council held a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams on 24 February 2021. This paper provides a high-level summary of the business considered by Council, which will be published on the University website. This is not a formal record of the Council meeting but presents an update on matters discussed by the University's governing body.

Baroness Ann Taylor
Chair of Council

1 Report from the Chair of Council

On behalf of Council, the Chair recorded her continued appreciation for the work of the Executive Team, and the wider University community, in their joint efforts in the current unprecedented times and for their agile response to the latest national lockdown restrictions.

The Chair also drew attention to the report which confirmed the action taken by the Chair of Council and the Pro-Chancellor and Treasurer to approve the University's submission to the SURE (Sustaining University Research Expertise) Fund.

2 Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on key matters affecting the University, noting that the focus had been on managing the impact of COVID-19; continued engagement with students, including mental health and student hardship support, preparing for the 2021/22 academic year within the context of the University Strategy and local and national roadmaps for emerging from lockdown; welcoming, enrolling and supporting Semester 2 students; detailed implementation and operational plans for University sub-strategies; developing an integrated approach to planning and budget setting; and continuing to support the City and broader Leeds City Region with economic and social recovery. The Vice-Chancellor also recorded her thanks to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Innovation and Engagement and his team for their work on the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021) submission.

Despite the ongoing challenges of responding to the impact of the pandemic, Council was pleased to note that the core business of the University was continuing; this included delivering on the University's strategic framework.

3 Chief Finance Officer Overview of Key Issues

Council received a report from the Chief Finance Officer on key financial issues noting that the University's early financial forecast had been considered in detail at Finance Committee; the Annual Financial Return, approved by Council, had been submitted to the Office for Students; that based on the current enrolment data, liquidity remained strong; that overseas debt had increased and this was being monitored closely; and that capital and revenue funding had been boosted by the University's successful application for a £3.435M grant to complete the external cladding of the Richmond Building and a £0.25M capital grant from the Office for Students to update clinical facilities in the Faculty of Health Studies.

In addition, the Chief Finance Officer provided an update on the University's application for finance under the Government's Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loans Scheme (CLBILS).

Following consideration of the report, Council **approved** the University's annual calculation of the fully absorbed cost of activities (i.e., teaching, research, and other activities) in the TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) 2019/20 return, noting that it had been endorsed by Finance Committee; this would be submitted to the Office for Students.

4 Future of Emm Lane / Heaton Mount

Council received a verbal update from the Chief Finance Officer on the University's Manningham campus, which comprised Emm Lane, Heaton Mount and Waterhead. A report on the future of the Manningham site would be presented to the University Ethics Committee, Finance Committee, and the Council, for consideration and decision.

5 Student Recruitment Update

Council received an update on student recruitment for 2020/21 and commended the University on the positive student recruitment position, despite the uncertainty around the impact of COVID-19 and the challenges that continued to face the sector. Council was pleased to note the success of the January 2021 intake for postgraduate taught programmes, with current enrolments exceeding target. An update on recruitment to date by market segment for September 2021 entry was also provided.

The new innovative approaches to advertising, event delivery and outreach including the new undergraduate [Digital Open Day Anytime](#), and the undergraduate 'live' Open Day, transmitted from the University's on-campus broadcast studio in early February, were welcomed by Council who noted the sector leading developments.

Council also noted the development of a new International Strategy that would support the University sub-strategies. The University was also preparing to develop a new Brand, Communication and Marketing Strategy and further updates would be presented to Council as this work progressed.

6 Research Excellence Framework 2021 Update

Council received a comprehensive update of progress made by the University in its preparations for the forthcoming submission to the next Research Excellence Framework exercise which would be submitted to Research England by 31 March 2021.

Council welcomed the update which provided a summary of the size and shape of the REF submission and was pleased to note the University's strategic ambition and anticipated performance in REF2021. Council would receive an update on the outcome from the REF exercise in early 2022.

7 Update on Development of KPIs and Implementation Plans

Council received an update report on the development of key performance indicators and implementation plans for the University Strategy and the timescale for finalisation for the performance reporting dashboard for Council and its Committees.

Standing Items

8 Report from University Secretary

Council received a report from the University Secretary on the ongoing work related to areas of governance pertinent to Council and the University. This included an update on the letter from the Secretary of State for Education to the Office for Students on strategic priorities; the letter from the Secretary of State for Education regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech; and the International Foundation Year project.

Council also considered and **approved** the proposal on future Council and Committee meetings in 2021/22.

9 Report from Bradford Union of Students (UBU)

Council received a report from the UBU Education Officer and UBU Student Affairs Officer on current issues and recent activities which included managing the impact of COVID-19, especially with regards to the student experience, and equality and diversity work which included a review of the structure of the Sabbatical Team.

Council was pleased to note that the UBU and the Executive continued to work in partnership to support students during the pandemic.

10 Business from Committees of Council, and Senate

Council noted summary reports from Audit Committee, Finance Committee, People Committee, and Senate on issues discussed since the last meeting of the Council.

11 Council received the following reports, for information:

- Minutes from the Council meeting held on 25 November 2020.
- NSS 2021 briefing paper.
- Prevent Duty update.
- University Academy Keighley update and next steps.
- Workforce data report, quarter 1, 2020/21.
- Health and Safety report, quarter 1, 2020/21.
- Draft Council 3 agenda.
- Council terms of reference and membership 2020/21.
- Council schedule of business for 2020/21.

12 Date of next Council meeting: Wednesday 12 May 2021

Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance)
25 February 2021