

## Summary Report of Council 3

The University Council held a meeting on 1 March 2023. The meeting was preceded by a presentation from the Bank of England on the role of the Bank of England in the economy, the general market outlook and interest rates, and views on the Yorkshire economy.

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.

Eileen Milner  
Chair of Council

### **1 Report from the Chair of Council**

The Chair also drew attention to the complex and challenging environment in which the University, and the HE sector, including the fragility in the sector with regards to funding and HE policy.

### **2 Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on key matters affecting the University since the last meeting of Council and against each of the University's sub-strategies. Attention was drawn to work that was progressing on the University's institutional growth and sustainability plan; the installation of the University Chancellor; and the University enhanced performance on graduate outcomes. Council also received an update on student retention and progression.

### **3 Report from the Students' Union**

Council received a report on current issues and recent activities which included an update on Semester 2 events; UBU elections; implications associated with the cost-of-living crisis for students; student representatives; the support provided by the UBU advice centre; and Sabbatical Officer objectives for the remainder of the academic year.

Council thanked the Sabbatical Officers for their report and commended the excellent work that was being undertaken by the UBU, including their contribution to the Teaching Excellence Framework via their student submission. Thanks, were also extended to the TEF Working Group, led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience for coordinating the institutional submission. The University's commitment to be recognised for the excellence of its teaching under TEF was welcomed by Council.

### **4 Branding Project Presentation**

Council received a detailed presentation on the work that was being undertaken on the University's brand development project. Council considered the presentation and provided feedback and reflections on the approach. Council was pleased to note that a consultation and testing session would be arranged at which the brand essence, creative concept and the visual design approach would be further explored.



## 5 **Early Financial Forecast**

The Chief Finance Officer noted the early financial forecast (3+9) and provided a brief overview of the mid-year (6+6) forecast which was under-development. The mid-year forecast, which would be subject to review by Finance Committee in late March, predicted a surplus; this was ahead of budget and forecast and would generate an EBITDA which was in line with the University's Financial Strategy. This reflected strong student recruitment and continued firm cost control.

Following discussion of the report, Council **approved** the early financial forecast, and thanked the Chief Finance Officer and his team for the detailed work that was being undertaken on the mid-year financial forecast.

## 6 **EDI Annual Report 2021/22**

Council considered the University's first EDI Annual Report which provided a powerful and positive overview of the University's compliance with, and delivery of, the Public Sector Equality Duty. It reported on activities from 2021/22, noting it had been subject to detailed review at the preceding meetings of People Committee and Executive Board.

Following discussion, at which Council commended the University's achievements and future plans, Council **endorsed** the Annual Report, noting it provided assurance as to the extent and effectiveness of activities in this area and that the University continued to work on developing sector-leading practice.

## 7 **KPI Review**

Council considered and **approved** the proposed suite of institutional KPIs noting that further work would be undertaken with Executive leads to agree the targets, tolerances, and variances for the new measures.

## 8 **League Tables Presentation**

Council received a detailed presentation from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience on University leagues tables namely The Times Good University Guide, The Guardian University Guide, The Complete University Guide, The Times Higher World Rankings, and The QS Rankings.

Council welcomed the presentation noting the complexities and challenges associated with league tables. Each compiler developed their own methodology and methodological differences led to different overall positions in the different rankings. The University continued to drive institutional performance to improve the University's ranking in the league tables and to optimise and demonstrate progress with league tables metrics / indicators aligned to strategy.

## 9 **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. Following consideration of the report, Council **approved**:

- the extension of the contracts for the internal audit and external audit suppliers for a term of two years, as proposed by the Audit Committee.



- the University's Risk Management Policy, following endorsement by the Audit Committee.
- the acceptance of the donation following endorsement by the University Ethics Committee.
- the Research Concordat.

Council also noted the minor amendments to the Council Member Privacy Notice; the change of the University's Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Lead; that following a tender exercise, an external company had been appointed to lead the Council Effectiveness Review; and that the University had engaged executive search consultants to support in lay governor recruitment, including a new Chair of Audit Committee.

## **10 Reports from Senate and Council Committees**

Council received and noted the summary reports from Senate, Audit Committee, Finance Committee, University Ethics Committee, and People Committee.

## **11 Council received the following reports, for information:**

- Minutes from the Council meeting held on 30 November 2022 and action tracker.
- Register of interests.
- Student recruitment update.
- Prevent report.
- Draft Council 4 agenda and Council schedule of business for 2022/23.
- Council terms of reference and membership 2022/23.

## **12 Date of Next Meeting:**

Council 4: 24 May 2023

Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance), March 2023