**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

**COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on**

**Wednesday 8 May 2024**

**Present:**

Gary Dixon (Chair)

 George Acquah Lauren Bartlett

 Liz Blyth Jack Chambers

 Nishan Canagarajah Martin Cullen

 Sophie Dale-Black Cathy Ellis

 Kerry Law Catherine Morley

 Rishi Madlani Kevin Nagle

 Gabrielle Provan Henrietta O’Connor

 Archie Robinson Jacqui Shaw

 Richard Tapp

**In attendance:** Alison Benson (Assistant Secretary to Council); Paul Gowdridge (Chief Financial Officer); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Kevin Joyce (Secretariat); Jade Thomas (Students’ Union Liberation Officer, President-elect); Hannah Grosvenor (for 24/M23); Angela Truby (for 24/M24 and 24/M25); Alison Philips and Chris Tilbury (for 24/M28).

**Apologies:** Mehmooda Duke; Mark Purnell; Liz Jones

24/M19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

 There were no declarations of personal interest pertaining to any of the items dealt with in this meeting. It was noted that, as the candidate under discussion, Cathy Ellis would not be present for the University Treasurer appointment item (24/M21).

24/M20 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

 **Council approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2024 as a correct record.

**Council noted** the matters arising from the last meeting. The response to student complaints was considered as a separate item later in the meeting (24/M26).

24/M21 **CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

 *Cathy Ellis left the meeting*

 **Council approved** the appointment of the University Treasurer, by election, in accordance with Ordinance 5, following the recommendation by the Nominations Committee by correspondence in April 2024. Cathy Ellis was appointed as substantive University Treasurer and Senior Lay Member of Council for an initial 3-year term from 1 August 2024.

*Cathy Ellis rejoined the meeting*

The Chair reminded Council members of the difficulty facing all Higher Education institutions (HEIs) in the current economic climate and thanked all University staff for their hard work during this very challenging financial environment.

The Chair advised Council Lay members that he would be arranging individual feedback meetings with each of them during the next few weeks.

The Chair explained that the process for appointing a new Chair of Council at the end of the 2024-25 academic year had commenced.

24/M22 **PRESIDENT AND VICE CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council, which provided an update on recent developments in the HE sector and at Leicester in particular.

The President and Vice-Chancellor thanked Council members for their continued support during the current financial challenges in the HE sector.

It was highlighted that Universities had become a key feature in migration policy ahead of a forthcoming general election. International student numbers were being highlighted as a problematic area despite the £38bn annual contribution to the UK economy, as quantified by a recent Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) report.

It was noted that the University had now received the outcome of two recent employment tribunal cases arising from the Shaping for Excellence programme in 2021. In both of these cases the employment tribunal had found against the University on procedural grounds. It was noted that the University had followed professional advice on its processes in relation to both cases. One further case related to Shaping for Excellence was currently ongoing, with the final such case scheduled to be heard in February 2025.

**Council noted** the report.

24/M23 **ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN**

*Hannah Grosvenor joined the meeting*

**Council considered** the Access and Participation Plan (APP) submission to the Office for Students (OfS) for 2025/26-2028/29 and received a short presentation of the key points.

**Council noted** that APPs were required by all HE providers who were registered with the OfS as Approved (fee cap) providers i.e. are able to charge the maximum annual tuition fee.

**Council noted** the key changes, aligned to recently updated OfS requirements, which were:

* Focus on risks to equality of opportunity
* Awarding gap now aligned to strategic KPI
* Refocused financial support
* No targets focused on mature students

**Council noted** the targets and key interventions included in the submission.

**Council noted** that, although reporting to the OfS was on an annual basis, internal metrics were reviewed more frequently and full project governance was in place including regular reporting to Executive Board (ExB).

**Council approved** the University’sproposed Access and Participation Plan 2025/26-2028/29 quantitative targets and the Access and Participation Plan 2025/26-2028/29 submission.

*Hannah Grosvenor left the meeting*

24/M24 **ANNUAL SEXUAL MISCONDUCT REPORT**

*Angela Truby joined the meeting*

**Council considered** the Annual Sexual Misconduct Report which demonstrated the continued progress made by the University in response to the OfS Statement of Expectations. Council also received a short presentation of the key points.

**Council noted** that Sexual Misconduct Reporting will become an OfS condition of registration from 1 August 2024.

It was highlighted that there had been an increase in sexual harassment and assault cases, domestic violence cases and honour-based abuse cases in the last twelve months.

**Council received** a summary of key developments implemented during the past twelve months in relation to regulations, policy, governance, engagement, training and development.

**Council noted** that previous concerns related to resource levels in the team had been resolved and the team was now at full capacity.

**Council approved** the report.

24/M25 **SUICIDE SAFER FRAMEWORK**

**Council considered** a discussion paper and update on the Suicide Safer Framework which was established in 2022 and was updated every two years. Council also received a short presentation of the key points.

It was reported that a number of prevention steps had been implemented which included the use of Concerned@, Personal Tutor dashboards and Engagement dashboards to monitor and manage students at risk and provide early warning indicators.

It was highlighted that student engagement activities marking key mental health related awareness dates and campaigns had happened throughout the year, with a specific focus on male mental health.

It was noted that a number of intervention steps had been implemented including introducing step care, an approach based on providing a series of timely interventions at all levels and within a hub and spoke approach with academic schools.

It was highlighted that a postvention process had been implemented which included an updated student fatality procedure.

**Council noted** the importance of ongoing support from the Students’ Union on aspects such as campaign development and implementation, and joint training sessions. Further support and collaboration would also be welcomed.

**Council noted** collaboration on many aspects of student support services via the Universities Partnership, with Loughborough University, De Montfort University and Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust.

**Council noted** the good working relationship between the University, the Police and relevant legal services.

**Council approved** the report.

*Angela Truby left the meeting*

24/M26 **RESPONSE TO STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

**Council considered** a summary report on Stage 2 student complaints received in 2021-2022.

**Council noted** that the summary concluded that in 2021-2022 the majority of Stage 2 complaints had been submitted by Home UG students. Each complaint had introduced individual circumstances which were addressed in full. All complaints raised with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) had been carefully reviewed and no justified complaints had been recorded.

**Council noted** that, although the data was historical due to OIA reporting requirements, the University maintained up to date complaint numbers which were closely monitored. These would be provided within the Annual Academic Assurance Statement in future years.

**Council noted** the report.

24/M27 **REVISED STRATEGIC KPI (FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY)**

**Council considered** the proposed revision to the strategic KPI currently titled ‘Resilient cash balance’ to ‘Operating cash as a percentage of income’.

**Council noted** that the revision would ensure continued focus on the priority to increase operating cash, whilst reflecting the position of the University within both the current and forecasted operating environment.

**Council approved** the revision to the strategic KPI.

24/M28 **NETWORK REFRESH AND TRANSFORMATION [RESERVED]**

*Alison Phillips and Chris Tilbury joined the meeting*

 **Council considered and approved** the business case for the network refresh and transformation project.

*Alison Phillips and Chris Tilbury left the meeting*

24/M29 **APOLLO PARTNERSHIP**

**Council received** an update on the recent developments of the Apollo Partnership.

It was reported that the Provost and Deputy Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professional Services) had visited the Apollo head office and TAU University in India in April. This had been a positive visit with synergies identified between Apollo and University of Leicester.

The signing of the Articulation Agreement with TAU was announced during the visit, confirming a programme where students complete two years’ study in India with a final year in Leicester.

**Council noted** that the full business case was now planned to be presented at the next Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting in June 2024 prior to Council in July 2024.

**Council noted** the report.

24/M30 **RESEARCH INTEGRITY ANNUAL REPORT**

 **Council received and noted** the Annual Research Integrity Report.

**Council noted** that, during the reporting period, no formal investigations of Research Misconduct were conducted.

**Council approved** the report.

24/M31 **AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

**Council received and noted** the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Assurance Committee held on 16 April 2024.

24/M32 **FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

**Council received and noted** the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee held on 23 April 2024.

**Council noted** the change in reporting and governance arrangements relating to IP and Spin Out companies. The delegation of authority for the formation of new Spin Out companies would move to a sub-committee of the Innovation Board. The Innovation Board would report to the Finance and Infrastructure Committee, submitting a bi-annual report commencing in June 2024.

24/M33 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

 **Council noted** the date of the final meeting scheduled for 2023/2024:

* Tuesday 2 July 2024 at 4pm

 **Council noted** the dates of the meetings scheduled for 2024/2025:

* Tuesday 17 September 2024/Wednesday 18 September 2024 – Away Day
* Wednesday 16 October 2024 at 4pm
* Wednesday 4 December 2024 at 4pm
* Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 4pm
* Wednesday 7 May 2025 at 4pm
* Tuesday 1 July 2025 at 4pm

CHAIR Duration of meeting: 1 hour 47 Minutes