

COUNCIL 4

Minutes of the Meeting held via Skype for Business on 8 July 2020

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| Members: | Baroness Ann Taylor (Chair) | Abdulraouf Abdussalam | Shahnaz Ali |
| | Dr Pam Bagley | Karl Bates | Jo Beaumont |
| | Michael Bell | Dermot Bolton | Carl Chambers |
| | Professor Shirley Congdon | Kersten England | Terry Hartwell |
| | Amir Hussain | Karen McMahon | Sally Neocosmos |
| | Professor Rami Qahwaji | Samera Shabir | Sarah Smith |
| | Maurice Watkins | Stuart Watson | Prof Vishanth Weerakkody |
| | Michael Ziff | | |

In attendance: Professor John Bridgeman, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Knowledge Transfer
 Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head, Governance (Secretary)
 Professor Zahir Irani, Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality
 Joanne Marshall, Director of People and Campus Services
 Gary McFarlane, Associate Director of People and Campus Services (for item 103)
 Stuart McKinnon-Evans, Chief Finance Officer
 Riley Power, University Secretary
 Paul Watson, Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality Enhancement (for item 99)

Apologies: Mohammed Pandor

87.19-20 **Chair's Opening Remarks**

- 87.1 The Chair of Council formally welcomed Mr Abdulraouf Abdussalam, the new UBU Education Officer to his first meeting of Council. Thanks were extended to the former Education Officer, Ms Ayman Malik.
- 87.2 Council noted that this was Ms Sarah Smith's final Council meeting. Council recorded its appreciation for Sarah's commitment to the work of Council and its Committees over an 11-year period.

88.19-20 **Register of Interests (Document C79/19-20)**

- 88.1 Council received and noted the register of Council members interests. No further declarations of interest were received in relation to the business of the meeting.

89.19-20 **Minutes of the Meeting on 20 May 2020 (C80/19-20)**

- 89.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 20 May 2020 were **approved** by circulation prior to the Council meeting.

90.19-20 **Matters Arising and Action Tracker (Document C81/19-20)**

- 90.1 Council received a report on matters arising from the Council meeting on 20 May 2020 and the actions taken since that meeting to address them, noting that the OfS had implemented a new time-limited condition taking into consideration the responses received to its consultation on the integrity and stability of the English HE sector. The condition (Z3 Temporary Provisions for Sector Stability and Integrity) applied from 3 July 2020 until 30 September 2021 to all providers registered with the OfS:
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/e2e8c6e5-b713-416a-8abc-cb40fbed6947/regulatory-notice-5-temporary-condition-z3.pdf>

91.19-20 **Report from the Chair**

- 91.1 On behalf of Council, the Chair recorded her continued appreciation for the work of the Executive Team, and the wider University community, in their response to the pandemic. Council noted the work that had been undertaken to date and was reassured that despite the disruption caused by COVID-19 the core business of the University was continuing; this included delivering on the University's strategic framework.
- 91.2 The Chair also provided a brief report on the volatile external environment and the challenges that continued to face the sector in the current unprecedented times.

92.19-20 **Vice-Chancellor Engagement Activities Update (Document C82/19-20)**

- 92.1 Council received a report from the Vice-Chancellor on the University's post COVID-19 campus recovery plans which were being developed to support a safe and gradual return to campus-based operations, consistent with government guidelines and with risk assessments being undertaken. Council noted the success of the University's first virtual Open Day on 20 June and discussed two University league tables (Complete University Guide 2021 and the HESA Graduate Outcomes 2017/18). Results from the NSS 2020 survey would be published in mid-July and a briefing would be provided to Council in due course. A brief update on pay negotiations for 2020/21 was also presented.
- 92.2 Council noted that the University had achieved a mixed performance in the HESA Graduate Outcomes survey, with strong results in the proportion of graduates gaining highly skilled employment or entering further study, but a weaker performance in relation to unemployment levels. A range of measures would be undertaken to deliver improvements in future GO results, including the development of an action plan to address unemployment levels. Faculty, and programme level graduate outcomes reports would be produced with ethnicity, gender, and disability breakdowns where available data enabled this. Council also noted that the Graduate Workforce Bradford project, led by the University in partnership with key city organisations, aimed to address the unemployment and underemployment of BAME graduates in the Bradford Metropolitan District.

- 92.3 Extensive internal and external engagement activities that had been undertaken by the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Team during this period were also highlighted; this included staff, students, and local / City, regional and national engagement.
- 92.4 Council noted that the University continued to play an important role in the local effort to mitigate and recover from the impact of COVID-19, and the Chief Executive of the Bradford Metropolitan District Council thanked the University for working in close partnership with the BMDC, the NHS and businesses during the pandemic. It was further noted that the University was developing a local lockdown contingency plan in conjunction with the BMDC, should this be required.
- 92.5 **ACTION: circulate NSS briefing following a release of results in mid-July (University Secretary).**

93.19-20 **Report from the University Secretary (Document C83/19-20)**

- 93.1 Council received an update from the University Secretary which summarised ongoing work relating to areas of governance pertinent to the work of Council and the University. Following consideration of the report, Council **approved**:
- revised Council Committee Terms of Reference. These were reviewed annually to ensure their remit and operation remained appropriate and effective.
 - the establishment of a new People Committee and its associated Terms of Reference. The Committee would have overall governance oversight on how the university was assuring Council that it was complying with its corporate duties with regards to people, EDI and health and safety matters.
 - proposed amendments to the UBU Constitution.
 - proposed amendments to Ordinance 10 'Honorary Awards'.
 - proposed Honorary Degrees Policy.
 - nominations for honorary awards.
- 93.2 Council noted that Dr Pam Bagley had been reappointed as the Deans' representative of Senate for a further term of three years (July 2023), and that Ms Jo Beaumont's term of office had been extended by six months (August 2020-January 2021) to allow an open and inclusive election process for the position of non-academic staff member of Council.
- 93.3 Additional meetings of Council would be convened between August and October, if required, to address any matters arising from the University's recovery to campus or any further possible disruption caused by COVID-19.
- 93.4 **ACTION: propose additional meetings to diaries (University Secretary).**

94.19-20 **UBU Student Voice Report (Document C84/19-20)**

- 94.1 Council received a report from the UBU Education Officer and UBU Student Affairs Officer on current issues and recent activities. This included an overview of student engagement 2019/20; an update on the sabbatical training programme; plans for 2020/21 which included

an increased focus on social media, development of the UBU web presence and video communications; and the UBU cycle hire scheme, developed in partnership with the University.

94.2 Council noted that the Students' Union was planning its Freshers Week activities and proposed to use a blended approach to online and on-campus contact for new and returning students, in line with social distancing guidance and health and safety best practice.

95.19-20 **Budget for 2020/21 and Future Years – Baseline and Variations (Document C85/19-20)**

95.1 Council considered and **approved** the 2020/21 baseline budget for the University, noting that the staged budget and decision-making approach had been designed to enable the University to manage the significant risks and uncertainties of the pandemic, and to secure financial viability over the next three years. Council noted that the budget had been subject to significant scrutiny by the Finance Committee and Executive Board during its development both of which concluded that the baseline budget was credible and robust.

95.2 The Chief Finance Officer reported that an application for finance under the Government's Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loans Scheme (CLBILS) had been submitted. In line with University governance, the CLBILS application had been considered and endorsed by Finance Committee at its meeting in June 2020.

95.3 The following observations were noted:

- that cash and capital management were critical functions in the current climate.
- the need for the staffing efficiency saving to be effectively managed.
- that only essential investment emerging from the return to campus plan would be allocated against the baseline budget contingency.
- that investment would be reviewed in line with the early forecast once enrolment had commenced and the University had a greater degree of certainty of its financial position; spending plans would be adjusted as required.
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- that the OfS had confirmed they were supportive of the University's approach for managing its financial position in the current exceptional and unprecedented times.
- the importance of continued internal communication to support staff moral during this time of financial challenge.
- that investment and loan funds should be used in a way that supported the delivery of the new strategies to ensure a more resilient future rather than only funding status quo; this was strongly supported by the Council.

Note: part of 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.

95.4 Recognising the volatility of the current environment, Council welcomed the cautious and measured approach outlined by the Chief Finance Officer, noting that the University would continue to review and monitor its financial position carefully in order to maintain a financially sustainable position going forward.

96.19-20 **Student Recruitment Update (Document C86/19-20)**

96.1 Council considered a report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality on the current student recruitment position for 2020/21 entry, noting that contingency planning continued to be undertaken to ensure recruitment and marketing activities continued across all markets segments in order to minimise the business risks associated with the pandemic.

96.2 Council noted the positive trajectory for undergraduate home students which placed the University in a good position for Clearing. Council was reassured that mechanisms were in place to deliver a resilient and fit for purpose service during the Clearing period.

96.3 Clarification was provided by the PVC, AIQ with regards to questions on predicted GCSE and A Level grades, contextual admissions; and returning students.

96.4 Council was also updated on the challenges facing all institutions in respect of overseas student recruitment. As expected, the pandemic continued to have an impact on overseas recruitment, but mitigation was in possible, where possible. The importance of overseas recruitment was noted, and the scale of the challenge was acknowledged.

97.19-20 **International Foundation Project Update (Document C87/19-20)**

97.1 Council considered and **endorsed** the approach to the next phase of the International Foundation Project that had been developed following detailed discussions at Executive Board and Finance Committee. Academic standards and governance issues had been reviewed in detail by Senate.

97.2 Council noted that Executive Board had approved the selection of a preferred supplier to deliver an international foundation route on campus from 2021/22; this was part of a longer-term strategy to increase market share which would help to achieve the University's international recruitment targets. Further work was being undertaken with the preferred supplier to further define the detail of the proposed arrangements.

98.19-20 **Strategy Development Update (Document C88/19-20)**

98.1 Council received an update on the development of the supporting and enabling strategies, noting that while the pace of the strategy development had slowed down as the University focussed its efforts on the campus recovery, this work remained a priority for the Executive Team. Outstanding strategies (Business and Community Engagement, Estates and Infrastructure, People, Finance and Performance, and Brand, Communications and

Marketing) would be presented to the Council in in 2020/21, along with KPIs and a new Performance Dashboard.

98.2 Council was reminded that in line with its values, the University was committed to driving social inclusion and social mobility through its learning and teaching, research and innovation, equality, diversity, and inclusion, and business and community engagement strategies.

98.3 **ACTION: add to Council schedule of business for 2020/21 (University Secretary).**

99.19-20 **Learning Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2020-2025 (Document C89/19-20)**

99.1 Council considered and **approved** the draft Learning Teaching and Student Experience Strategy 2020-2025, a sub-strategy of the new overarching University Strategy, which would ensure that the quality of the student experience was enhanced, and that students were supported to succeed both in their studies and beyond.

99.2 Council noted that it had been developed in consultation with the Students' Union, the Executive Team, Senate, and Faculties and would ensure that learning and teaching continued to thrive within the context of a rapidly changing environment. Further work was ongoing to finalise specific targets for identified KPIs in line with the other sub-strategies.

99.3 The Vice-Chancellor reported that a fundamental part of the new University Strategy was to create an individual, inclusive, and transformational approach to learning and teaching and the student experience, and that the new LTSE strategy supported this approach.

99.4 Council requested regular progress reports on the LTSE strategy; this would be added to the Council schedule of business for 2020/21.

99.5 **ACTION: add to Council schedule of business (University Secretary).**

100.19-20 **Development Plan for the University Estate 2020-2025 (Document C90/19-20)**

100.1 Council considered and **approved** the draft Development Plan for the University Estate, which had been developed as part of the enabling Estate and Infrastructure sub-strategy. The plan set out the overarching, realistic ambition for the University property and building for the next five years, in support of the University's mission and strategic objectives, whilst recognising the constraints of the current financial environment, and the legacy of the existing estate.

100.2 Further work was being undertaken in relation to the IT infrastructure at the University in order to ensure more technology-enhanced learning, teaching and research activity; this would be closely aligned with the LTSE and the Research and Innovation strategies.

100.3 Council noted that the plan had been considered by the Estate Infrastructure Group, a Group convened to review the University estate and develop a blueprint for the longer-term estate and infrastructure. The Group concluded that it was a pragmatic short-term plan, but that

more work should be undertaken within the next 6-12 months in relation to longer-term (10-15 years) estate planning and alignment to learning spaces and environments for the future, whilst recognising the key constraints in relation to funding and capacity.

101.19-20 Business and Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025 (Document C91/19-20)

101.1 Council considered the draft Business and Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025, a sub-strategy of the new overarching University Strategy noting that further consultation would be undertaken with Council members and trusted stakeholders during the summer. The strategy described a vision in which Bradford would be a university city that shared knowledge in order to strengthen health, wealth and confidence across the many communities in which students, staff and alumni participated. A final version would be presented to the Council in October / November 2020, for approval.

101.2 **ACTION: add to Council schedule of business (University Secretary).**

102.19-20 Corporate Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework (Document C92/19-20)

102.1 Council considered and **approved** the proposed changes to the University's Corporate Risk Register, noting that it had been endorsed by the Audit Committee at its meeting in June. The changes would be implemented by the Legal and Governance Department and overseen by the Risk Oversight Group and Executive Board.

102.2 Council queried whether a specific COVID-19 risk would be included in the risk register. The University Secretary advised Council that the University did maintain a separate COVID-19 risk and managed the risks of the recovery through the COVID-19 Recovery Risk Register, but that Council could be provided sight of this at its next meeting. This would continue to be monitored by the Project Board and the Risk Oversight Group.

102.3 **ACTION: present COVID-19 risk to November Council meeting (University Secretary).**

103.19-20 Presentation on Equal and Gender Pay Review 2019 (Document C93/19-20)

103.1 Council received an informative presentation on the Gender Pay Gap 2019 which set out a detailed analysis behind the University's pay gap results and its comparison with benchmark data.

103.2 The University reaffirmed its commitment to developing an environment which promoted equality of opportunity and confirmed that it would continue to address gender imbalance and progress its University-wide equality, diversity and inclusion agenda; this was strongly welcomed by the Council.

103.3 Actions being taken to address and mitigate against gender pay issues were outlined by the Director and Associate Director of People and Campus Services. These included the development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy; work on the Institutional and Faculty Athena Swan submissions and the Race Equality Charter Mark; and the development

of the Bradford Academic career pathway for academic staff which included improved probation and promotion procedures.

103.4 Council acknowledged that gender pay was a wide scale problem across society and noted the efforts at the University to drive social and economic inequality. Given the importance of this issue, Council requested a progress report in 2020/21. Council also noted that gender pay would form part of the new People Committee work programme.

103.5 **ACTION: add to Council schedule of business (University Secretary).**

104.19-20 **Business from Committees (Documents C94-100/19-20)**

104.1 Council received and noted summary reports from the following committee meetings: Senate; Audit Committee; Ethics Committee; Finance Committee; Governance and Nominations Committee; Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee; and Honorary Degrees Committee.

105.19-20 **Annual Report – Academic Appeals and Student Complaints 2018/19 (Document C101/19-20)**

105.1 Council received and noted the report.

106.19-20 **Prevent Duty update (Document C102/19-20)**

106.1 Council received and noted the report.

107.19-20 **Terms of Reference and Membership 2019/20 (Document C103/19-20)**

107.1 Council received and noted the report.

108.19-20 **Draft Council 1 Agenda (November 2020) (Document C104/19-20)**

108.1 Council received and noted the report.

109.19-20 **Council Schedule of Business 2020/21 (Document C105/19-20)**

109.1 Council received and noted the report.

Secretary: Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance)

Date: 15 July 2020