

Summary Report of Council 3

The University Council held a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams on 12 May 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

The Chair provided a brief update on the series of informal 1:1 meetings that were being held with members of Council. These were positive meetings in which common themes were emerging. The Chair also drew attention to the meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group that would take place 18 May. Relevant highlights from the meeting would be shared with Council as appropriate.

2 Vice-Chancellor's Report

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on key matters affecting the University, noting that plans for next year's student and staff offers continued to be developed within the context of the University Strategy and local and national roadmaps; that the University continued to prepare for the return of campus student activities post 17 May; and the development of the Taught Student Offer Framework for 2021/22 which would be campus-based and deliver a meaningful, engaging, and inclusive student offer.

Recent successes were also highlighted, and Council was pleased to note that the University had retained its institutional Athena Swan Bronze award and achieved an additional Athena Swan Bronze award in the Faculty of Engineering and Informatics. These awards clearly demonstrated the University's commitment to fostering and embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion in all activity; this was strongly welcomed by Council.

Council also noted that Tracy Brabin had been elected as the first Mayor of West Yorkshire, and the first female metro mayor in England. A congratulatory letter would be sent to Ms Brabin on behalf of Council.

3 Report from Bradford Union of Students (UBU)

Council received and discussed a report from the UBU Education Officer and UBU Student Affairs Officer on recent activities and current issues which included student welfare and safety and the outcome of the recent UBU elections. Council noted the high-profile events that had been undertaken by the Students' Union which included hosting a live hustings for the West Yorkshire Mayoral Election Candidates, and was pleased to note the high level of student engagement with sports and volunteering activities. The value and impact of the UBU Kick Start programme was also noted.

Council recognised the work of the outgoing Student Affairs Officer, Samera Shabir, who would reach the end of her final term of office in June and extended thanks to Ms Shabir for her valuable contribution and engagement in the business of Council and the Committees of which she had been a member over the last two academic years. Abdulraouf Abdussalam, Education Officer, would continue as a member of Council for 2021/22 and would be joined by his colleague Inshaal Ahmed, the incoming Student Affairs Officer from July 2021.

4 **Draft Key Performance Indicators**

Council considered in detail a proposed new set of key performance indicators which would assist Council, Senate and Committees to understand how the University was performing against its eight core strategic objectives. Outstanding data and yearly targets needed to be confirmed as part of this work; however, the report showed the current progress based on ongoing discussions with strategic leads. Further work would be undertaken to stress test the targets and a final suite of KPIs would be presented to Council at its strategy discussion in early June.

Council noted that more detailed and granular performance indicators would be captured within each of the sub-and-enabling strategy implementation plans, the delivery of which would be considered and scrutinised by relevant Committees of Council and Senate, with the status of those implementation plans reflected in the high-level performance indicators at Senate and Council.

5 **Draft People Strategy**

Council considered and **approved** the draft People Strategy, an enabling strategy of the University Strategy which placed staff at the heart of its plans and recognised that their collective talents, efforts, and commitments would deliver the University's vision, mission, and values over the next five years. Council noted that a delivery plan was in development to support implementation of the new strategy.

6 **Mid-Year Financial Forecast and Budget Assumptions 2021/22-2024/25**

Council considered a report on the University's 2020/21 financial position, noting that the mid-year financial forecast predicted a surplus in the management accounts which was ahead of the original budget. This reflected strong student recruitment and continued firm cost control.

Council **agreed** the budget assumptions outlined in the report noting that these would inform the planning and budgeting process in 2021/22. Attention was drawn to the increasing cost of the USS pension scheme, and the adverse impact that this would have on the 2021/22 budget and on employees. Council also noted the University's decision not to proceed with the Government's Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loans Scheme (CLBILS).

7 **Financial Regulations**

Council considered and **approved** the revised Financial Regulations which set out the responsibility for financial management and control within the University; these would be published on the University's website in due course.

8 Recommendations on Future of Emm Lane / Heaton Mount Site

Following a robust discussion, Council **approved** the recommendations on the future of the Manningham Site which comprised Emm Lane, Heaton Mount and Waterhead.

9 Student Recruitment Update

Council considered a report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality on applicant, offer and acceptances across all markets for September 2021 and on marketing and recruitment activity for conversion, late applications. Council was reassured that mechanisms were in place to deliver a resilient and fit for purpose service during the Clearing period. Council was also updated on the challenges facing institutions in respect of the potential exposure caused by new and returning students from 'red list' countries and competitor pricing strategies. Detailed application and decision data would continue to be monitored closely by Executive Board and a further briefing would be presented to the Council in July.

10 The Taught Student Offer 2021/22 and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy

Council received an update on the 2021/22 Student Offer and **endorsed** the principles and approach which was being used by each Faculty to design their programme-based offer in order to promote a high-quality teaching, learning and assessment student experience. A comprehensive communications plan had been produced to share key messages about the 2021/22 Student Offer with enquirers, applicants, current students, and key external stakeholders.

Council commended the work that was being led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Innovation and Quality on the design of the 2021/22 Student Offer, noting that it was being developed within the context of the University Strategy, local and national roadmaps and the new Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy (LTSE).

Council noted that the 2021/22 Student Offer provided an opportunity to commence with the implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy (LTSE) that was approved by Council in Summer 2020.

11 Mandatory Gender Pay Gap Reporting 2020

Council considered a report on the University's gender pay gap for 2020, noting that whilst the overall median gender pay gap for 2020 had improved (20.2% compared to 24.9% in 2019), this continued to be adverse to the sector median benchmark of 15.5%. Council noted that the reduction in pay gaps would be a key performance indicator for the University and would be addressed through the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sub-strategy and the People enabling strategy.

12 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:

- revised Council Committee Terms of Reference for 2021/22.
- new Court Terms of Reference for 2021/22.
- updated Statement of Primary Responsibilities which detailed the principal responsibilities of University Council: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/governance/committees/council/>
- revised Regulation 15 on Elections to the Council, Senate and Faculty Boards.
- nominations for Honorary Awards.

13 Business from Committees of Council, and Senate

Council noted summary reports from Senate; Audit Committee; Finance Committee; University Ethics Committee; Governance and Nominations Committee; Honorary Degrees Committee; People Committee; and Remuneration Committee on issues discussed since the last meeting of the Council.

14 Council received the following reports, for information:

- Minutes from the Council meeting held on 24 February 2021.
- Access and Participation Plan 2019/20 Monitoring Return.
- Prevent Duty update.
- USS Pension Scheme update.
- Workforce data report, quarter 2, 2020/21.
- Health and Safety report, quarter 2, 2020/21.
- Draft Council 4 agenda.
- Council terms of reference and membership 2020/21.
- Council schedule of business for 2020/21.

15 Date of next Council meeting: Wednesday 7 July 2021

Jacqui Holgate, Assistant Head (Governance)
May 2021