



COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 September 2024

Present: Sir Keith O’Nions (Chair), Dr Pearl Agyakwa, Vicky Bailey, Michelle Haslem, Sonya Leydecker, Professor Jo Lymn, Nicola Maina, Professor Jane Norman, Stephen Odell (up to minute 4237), Dr Stuart Reeves, Nora Senior (for minutes 4228-4237 and minutes 4241-4256), Professor Shearer West, Giles Willits, Scarlett Zhang

Apologies: Lynette Eastman, Piyali Mitra, Anthony Murphy, Rakesh Sharma

In attendance: Dr Paul Greatrix (Secretary), Sally Blackamore (Finance Director), Bekki Burns (Governance Manager), Rowena Hall (Associate Director of Governance), Jason Carter (Director of Governance and Assurance, for minute 4233), Jon Grainger (Director of Health and Safety, for minute 4233), Jason Phoenix (Programme Director, for minutes 4236-4237), Dr Nalayini Thambar (Director of Planning, Performance, and Strategic Change, for minute 4240)

4228 Welcome and Apologies

- .1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. The Secretary confirmed the meeting was quorate.
- .2 Apologies were NOTED from Lynette Eastman, Piyali Mitra, Anthony Murphy, and Rakesh Sharma.

4229 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

4230 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 June 2024 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held 25 June 2024 (paper C/24/89) were APPROVED as an accurate record. The action log was NOTED.

4231 Chair’s Business

- .1 Council NOTED that this was the Vice-Chancellor’s final Council meeting before leaving to take up a new role at the University of Leeds. Council expressed wholehearted thanks to the Vice-Chancellor for her leadership over the past seven years, which had seen the exceptional challenges of a global pandemic and a difficult financial climate. It was Council’s view that the Vice-Chancellor’s many contributions, both on the national and the international stage, would serve to leave the University well-positioned for the future. Council’s thanks were formally NOTED.
- .2 It was REPORTED that the advertisement to recruit a new Vice-Chancellor was live. It was intended that applicants would be interviewed in December 2024.

- .3 The Council Effectiveness Review was progressing at pace and was not anticipated to have an impact on the process to recruit a new Vice-Chancellor, with review activities due to be completed before interviews took place.

4232 Vice-Chancellor's Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED an update from the Vice-Chancellor (paper C/24/67).
- .2 Feedback on student satisfaction recorded in the postgraduate taught experience survey were NOTED, and there would be a review of the interventions that had been most successful in order to share learnings.

4233 Health and Safety Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED a Health and Safety update from the Director of Governance and Assurance, and the Director of Health and Safety (paper C/24/91).
- .2 The importance of transparency around health and safety matters was NOTED, and an accountability framework was under development which would include health and safety responsibilities. Support for areas to meet health and safety requirements had been provided in the form of targets and the identification of clear metrics that would support performance measurement. Action had also been undertaken to consider metrics that measured work-place well-being.
- .3 The owners of key health and safety risks at the University had been identified and Council would be updated on the progress of managing those risks, which included the introduction of a risk management system. The system would provide benchmarks against legal frameworks and would support the development of an action and prioritisation plan.
- .4 Council sought further assurance that the University was meeting its legislative compliance obligations and required an update to provide such assurance at the next Council meeting.

ACTION		Owner	Due
.5	An update about the progress of managing key health and safety risks at the University would be provided to Council.	Director of Health and Safety	November 2024
.6	A paper would be submitted to the next meeting of Council to provide further assurance that the University was meeting its legislative compliance requirements.	Director of Health and Safety	November 2024

4234 RESERVED

4235 The Budget 2024/25

- .1 Council RECEIVED an update from the Finance Director on the University Budget (paper C24/78).
- .2 The work carried out to develop the budget was welcomed. Council NOTED the auditors' requirement that an amendment or waiver to the financial covenants

should be obtained to enable organisational change activity to progress without risking a covenant breach. This should be approved before accounts could be confirmed. When approved, the budget would be provided to University lenders and form part of the five-year Medium Term Financial Plan that would be submitted to the Office for Students.

- .3 Conversations with debt advisors to consider the options for increasing budgetary headroom would take place. £80m of revolving credit was available which was sufficient for this financial year, subject to the delivery of the Budget.
- .4 Council APPROVED the 2024/25 budget.

4236 Future Nottingham Report

- .1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Programme Director provided an update on the Future Nottingham programme.
- .2 Future Nottingham would deliver improvements in University performance. A review of KPIs was planned, the outputs of which would be shared with Council.
- .3 The suggestion from the Students' Union to recruit a group of students on a part-time basis for three years during the implementation of Future Nottingham, in order to facilitate the student voice and support different strands of the activity, was NOTED. Further conversations about how best to involve students were underway.
- .4 Council was supportive of planned senior appointments and developments to support governance and accountability as part of Future Nottingham.

4237 Castle Meadow Campus Programme Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED a report from the Programme Director (paper C/24/69).
- .2 The project's current focus was to deliver Phase 2 in full and to propose a plan to the Castle Meadow Campus (CMC) Board that would drive an increase in the campus's footfall and revenue and would utilise the main building on CMC as a collaborative space and commercial venture.
- .3 The CMC project had changed in scope since the last report to Council. A pause of Phase 3 would facilitate re-consideration of a potential move by the Business School to the campus.
- .4 The benefit of reviewing the original business case for the project was NOTED and, while it was likely that NUBS would need a new building in the future, consideration could be given to other academic units or working areas using the Castle Meadow space.

4238 Financial Performance for the 2023/24 Financial Year

- .1 Council RECEIVED a financial performance report from the Finance Director (paper C/24/77).
- .2 As a result of an accounting adjustment related to the USS Pension Scheme valuation, the University's balance sheet showed a financial benefit of £200m. Council NOTED that a statement would be included in the statutory reporting to clarify this was not a cash benefit to the University.

- .3 The Medium-Term Financial Plan would be submitted to the next meeting of Council for approval. It would be informed by Future Nottingham plans. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor and Finance Director would ensure that communication about financial matters to University colleagues would be clear.

4239 University Risk Management

Council RECEIVED and NOTED an interim update from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (paper C/24/68).

4240 University Performance Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED and DISCUSSED a report (paper C/24/74).
- .2 Council NOTED that work was underway to demonstrate how the University was actively monitoring performance using KPI data. A lead indicator framework was under development to assist with more timely reporting. Milestones were in place to review accountability for performance KPIs, and these would take place in November 2024 and May 2025. Discussions were ongoing to integrate outcomes from the November 2024 review into Future Nottingham activities.
- .3 Each KPI was owned by a Senior Responsible Officer, who was typically a member of the University Executive Board (UEB). Work was ongoing to utilise local data on performance and consider future KPI modelling.
- .4 Council was keen that the University reached a position where monitoring of performance was possible in real time, noting that some indicators only updated annually. Some performance data was held locally and Council NOTED it should be consolidated and used for forward planning.

ACTION		Owner	Due
.5	UEB would provide an update to Council about its monitoring of performance and related data in real time, where possible, and how it could be used in forward planning.	Secretary	November 2024

4241 Project Stay Stage 0 Briefing

- .1 Council RECEIVED and DISCUSSED a briefing from the Programme Director, Project Stay, and the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Engineering (paper C/24/79).
- .2 Council sought assurance that student accommodation within the project would be affordable and NOTED that the accommodation costs to students would be related to the level of maintenance loans. It was intended that a proportion of student accommodation within the project would be rent-protected. A further condition of the project was that rooms would be usable for a minimum number of years. Contractual discussions with potential partners would include requirements relating to limiting inflation of rent levels.
- .3 While Project Stay would also address internal refurbishments to existing buildings, further details about risks should be included in the next iteration of the paper considered by Council. Due diligence was underway in order to determine risks.

4242 Professional Services Report – Human Resources

- .1 Council RECEIVED and DISCUSSED a report from the Interim Director of Human Resources and Deputy Director of Human Resources (paper C/24/87).
- .2 The negotiation of the University's recognition agreement with Trades Unions was progressing well, and unions had engaged with a pilot of performance management.
- .3 The following points were NOTED:
 - .1 work to develop performance culture at the University was ongoing. Training and engagement with managers was planned in order to support these activities;
 - .2 HR data would be interrogated to identify training opportunities, and opportunities for management support. The data would also provide clarity around the safeguards required to prevent performance tools being utilised in an unsupportive way.
- .4 Further detail about HR's requirement from Future Nottingham in order to support its activities, such as clarity of roles, would be included in a subsequent paper.

4243 Human Resources Annual Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED a report from the Interim Director of Human Resources and Deputy Director of Human Resources (paper C/24/88).
- .2 The paper outlined HR's priorities and that key thematic focuses were on pay and career development. The challenge of accessing meaningful data to inform the report was NOTED and would be addressed in subsequent updates to Council.

4244 Faculty of Social Sciences Report

- .1 Council RECEIVED and NOTED a report on the Faculty of Social Sciences presented by the Interim Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Social Sciences (paper C/24/70).
- .2 The cultural challenge of integrating a large Faculty and supportive actions to address this were recognised. There was a slight lag of data around FTE and careful consideration would continue to be given to Faculty expenditure until Postgraduate Taught student recruitment was clearer.
- .3 The following key updates were provided:
 - .1 2023-24 had been the Faculty's best performing year in terms of external grant capture;
 - .2 Significant risks on the Faculty Risk register had been identified, such as continued reduction in resources which could affect Faculty performance;
 - .3 Priorities for 2024-25 including Faculty alignment with core strategic priorities in Education and Student Experience, and Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategic Delivery Plans.

- .4 Council NOTED that the Faculty would continue to undertake its priorities while ensuring business continuity, engaging with Future Nottingham, implementing Unicore, and prioritising initiatives that maximised value while managing costs.

4245 Modern Slavery Act 2015: Annual Statement 2024

Council RECEIVED and APPROVED the University's Annual Modern Anti-Slavery Statement 2024 (paper C/24/76).

4246 Programme Review Transparency Statement

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Programme Transparency Statement (paper C/24/71).

4247 Whistleblowing Report to Council

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Whistleblowing Report (paper C/24/78).

4248 Finance Committee Report to Council

Council RECEIVED and NOTED a Finance Committee Report to Council (paper C/24/75).

4249 Senate Report to Council [17/06/2024]

- .1 Council RECEIVED and DISCUSSED the Senate Report to Council (paper C/24/85), and made the following key points:
- .1 The current Ordinance XV empowered Senate to comment on matters within its remit;
 - .2 It was important and expected that Senate would provide input to Future Nottingham activities, and Senate's opportunity to do so would not be curtailed by the revised Ordinance XV;
 - .3 Ordinance XV would not be revisited or restored to a previous version at this time. Collaborative relations between Senate and Council, and Senate's continued contributions to Future Nottingham were encouraged.

4250 Council Forward Plan

- .1 Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Forward Plan (paper C/24/90) and made the following COMMENTS:
- .1 The Chief Executive of the Office for Students had been invited to speak at the next meeting of Council in November 2024;
 - .2 Consideration should be given to circulating papers to Council members where appropriate, rather than being included in a paper pack for a meeting.

4251 Council Members: Requirements and Expectations

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the paper Council Members: Requirements and Expectations (paper C/24/81).

4252 Scheme of Delegated Financial Authority

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Scheme of Delegated Financial Authority (paper C/24/82).

4253 Council Member Attendance 2023/24

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Council Member Attendance 2023/24 (paper C/24/86).

4254 Membership and Periods of Office of Council 2024/25

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Membership and Periods of Office of Council 2024/25 (paper C/24/72).

4255 Conflict of Interest Procedure

Council RECEIVED and NOTED the Conflict of Interest Procedure (paper C/24/80).

4256 Any Other Business

. 1 Due to insufficient meeting time, the following papers would be circulated to Council members for APPROVAL:

- .1 Standing Orders of Council (paper C/24/83);
- .2 Role, Powers and Responsibilities of Council: Delivery and Scheme of Delegation (paper C/24/84).