

COUNCIL – MINUTES

10 July 2020

PRESENT: Lord Liddle (Pro-Chancellor) (in the Chair); Professor A. J. Schofield (Vice-Chancellor); Mr D. J. Barron (lay member); Professor S. Bradley (Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor); Professor Sir Ian Diamond (lay member); Mrs R. S. Georghiou (lay member); Professor S. C. Guy (Senate representative); Mr I. Johnson (lay member); Professor K. C. Jones (Senate representative); Ms B. T. Morgan (student representative); Ms A. M. Mullan (Senate representative); Baroness Neville-Jones (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Lord Price (lay member); Mr S. N. Reynolds (lay member); Professor E. Ritchie (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Mr O. Robinson (President, Students' Union); His Hon. Judge P. Sycamore (lay member); Mrs V. Young (lay member).

IN ATTENDANCE: Professor Dame Sue Black (*for items 6-8*); Professor Nigel Davies (*for items 6-8*); Mrs C. L. Geddes (Committee Secretary); Professor A. L. Heathwaite (*for items 6-8, and 13*); Mr S. J. Jennings (Director of Strategic Planning and Governance); Ms N. C. Owen (Deputy Chief Executive (Operations)); Professor M. Piacentini (*for items 6-8, and 14-16*); Mrs S. J. Randall-Paley (Director of Finance) (*for items 9-11*).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Council noted that there were no apologies for absence for this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 Oliver Robinson declared that he was a serving member of Lancaster City Council, Ian Diamond declared an interest in item 6 and the Chair indicated he would absent himself for discussion of item 19.

3. COUNCIL AWAY DAY NOTES: 15 JUNE 2020 PAPER A

3.1 Council approved the away day notes.

4. COUNCIL FORMAL MINUTES: 15 JUNE 2020 PAPER B

4.1 Council approved the formal minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 The Chair recorded Council's thanks to Victoria Hatch (Interim Students' Union President 2019-2020) for her services to the Council.

6. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE AND QUESTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE

6.1 Professor Andy Schofield reported on the following:

- (i) the Government's interventions and support package for higher education in response to the current and potential negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic particularly on international student numbers and research, including grant extensions and loans for research intensive universities;
- (ii) the Office for Students' introduction of a further temporary condition of registration, Condition Z3, regarding unconditional offer schemes;
- (iii) the further developments and consultation regarding the USS pensions scheme, which would require Council's engagement;
- (iv) the government announcements on its roadmap for research and the University's response to it to date;
- (v) the continued preparatory work being undertaken to reintroduce face-to-face teaching wherever possible for the new academic year and to manage issues around study abroad programmes; and
- (vi) recent public statements made in relation to the Black Lives Matter campaign and the University's commitment to work towards the Race Equality Charter.

7. PRESIDENT OF LU STUDENTS' UNION: REPORT

PAPER C

7.1 The President of the Students' Union, Oliver Robinson, reported on the following:

- (i) his commitment to improve the student experience for the current cohort of students and to act in good faith as a critical friend to the University; and
- (ii) the aim to stabilise the Students' Union: rebuilding trust and reinvigorating student democracy.

7.2 The Chair of Council welcomed this approach and reaffirmed the importance of effective student representation in the current uncertain times as part of maintaining and improving the student experience.

8. STRATEGIC PLAN 2025: DRAFT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

PAPER D

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9. ORAL UPDATE FROM THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (FGPC) MEETING

9.1 The Chair of FGPC reported that the Committee had considered in detail the proposed budget and capital programme and were recommending both to Council. Members noted the Committee's view that there was no imminent resolution to the USS pensions issue and that the Scheme valuation would be going ahead and would need to be completed by the legal of deadline of 30 June 2021.

9.2 Members noted that tax positions in relation to international partnerships and the challenges around producing the Statement of Accounting Policies due to the impacts of Covid-19.

- 10. HEADLINE BUDGET 2020/21** **PAPER E**
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- 11. CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE 2019/20 TO 2021/22** **PAPER F**
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- 12. UNIVERSITY RISK REGISTER** **PAPER G**
- 12.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance provided an overview of the development of the risk register: the abstraction of risks back to their highest level; the focus on material risks and its impact on the RAG ratings; the role of Audit Committee in assurance; the mechanisms to manage risks beneath the plans; the relationship to the National Risk Register and Local Resilience Forum; and the incorporation of Covid-19 considerations and mitigations.
- 12.2 Council considered the risks and noted that the current high levels of uncertainty had raised risk scores. Members advised that consideration should be given as to how the Lancaster specific and national dimensions of risks could be better captured within this more concise format.
- 12.3 Council approved the risk register.
- 13. SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT** **PAPER H**
- 13.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) provided Council with the context for the development of the statement and the UKRI's development of their own policy framework supported by Lancaster and published in May 2020. Members noted the safeguarding framework would be a requirement to secure UKRI grants from March 2021.
- 13.2 Council approved the University's safeguarding statement.
- 14. STUDENT CONDUCT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS** **PAPER I**
- 14.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) introduced the paper and highlighted the work undertaken to produce the policies. Council considered the policies and affirmed the importance of summary guidance for students.
- 14.2 Council approved the Dignity in Student Life and Student Sexual Misconduct Policies.
- 15. LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS POLICY** **PAPER J**
- 15.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) gave an overview of the revised Admissions Policy which had been designed to be a fair and inclusive policy responding to changes concerning age, disability and the treatment of criminal convictions for the 2021 admissions cycle.

15.2 Council confirmed that the policy provided satisfactory assurance that the new Admissions Policy, as considered and approved by Senate, met the conditions of ongoing registration in relation to admissions.

16. DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENT PAPER K

16.1 The Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) gave an overview of the requirement by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment guidance (QAA) for universities to produce a Degree Outcomes Statement and the approach taken by the University in order to achieve this.

16.2 Council approved the establishment of a Degree Outcomes Statement Sub Group with the delegated authority to approve the University's statement prior to the 31 July 2020 deadline.

**17. REVIEW OF TEMPORARY GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS PAPER L
APPROVED AS PART OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

17.1 The Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) introduced the review of alternate governance arrangements agreed at the start of the pandemic for Council (and Senate), the arrangements deployed, the experiences of members to date and the feedback received.

17.2 Members welcomed the review and considered the range of impacts from these arrangements noting both the advantages and disadvantages of digitally run meetings. Council noted that committee business would be conducted using the Teams platform from August 2020, that further guidance and support would be available over the summer, and that potentially hybrid meetings would most likely to run from the start of the new committee cycle for 2020-21 where possible.

17.4 Council approved the adoption of the recommendations from the review outcomes as outlined in Section 4.1 of Paper L.

**18. REVOCATION OF HONORARY AWARDS AT LANCASTER UNIVERSITY PAPER M
PROPOSED PROCEDURE**

18.1 The Director of Strategic Planning and Governance presented members with the background to the paper, noting that the proposal had been considered at the April meeting of Senate. The proposal sought to address an identified gap in processes in relation to revocation of Honorary awards and to support the appropriate and timely consideration of urgent matters that may arise. Members noted a small number of proposed revisions from the published papers which had arisen through scrutiny of the process subsequent to Senate's consideration. Council considered the proposals including proposed amendments to clauses 1.4, 1.6 and 1.8 and its role in the management of risk and protecting the University's reputation whilst ensuring proper consideration and due process.

- 18.2 Council noted the information provided in Annexes A-C and approved the procedure and criteria for the revocation of an Honorary Award including minor amendments as outlined by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance, including the delegation to of any prima facie case for review to the holder of this role.
- 18.3 Council approved the addition to Ordinance 17 to allow for the revocation of honorary awards to be dealt with using this separate procedure.
- 19. PRO-CHANCELLOR SEARCH COMMITTEE PROGRESS** **PAPER N**
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- 20. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS** **PAPER O**
Restricted and Confidential
- 21. PROFESSOR EMERITUS APPOINTMENTS: ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20** **PAPER P**
- 21.1 Members noted the report.
- 22. WRITTEN REPORTS OF MEETINGS** **PAPER Q**
- 22.1 Members noted the reports.
- 23. FORWARD SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL BUSINESS** **PAPER R**
- 23.1 Council noted the Forward Schedule.
- 24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- 24.1 Members were reminded that Council’s next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Friday 25 September 2020.