

COUNCIL



Loughborough
University

Minutes of the meeting of 29 June 2023

COUN23-M2

Attendance

Christine Hodgson

Kerri Akiwowo
Penny Briscoe (ab)
Marcus Collins
Malcolm Cook
Graham Corfield
Andrea Davis
Lisanne Gibson

Naomi Hudson
Harry Hughes
Nick Jennings
Chris Linton
Jennifer Maxwell-Harris
Nicky Morgan
Emma Nadin

David Price
Surinder Sharma
John Sinnott
Danny Smith (ab)
Luke Stott
Paul Taylor (ab)
Mike Wedderburn (ab)

In attendance: Charlotte Croffie; Alex Owen; Richard Taylor; Rachel Thomson; Luke Vulpiani

Apologies received from: Penny Briscoe; Dan Parsons; Danny Smith; Paul Taylor;

Mike Wedderburn

23/25 Minutes & Matters Arising

1.1 Minutes

COUN23-M1

Council **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023.

1.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

23/26 Chair's Report

Council **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the Chair who noted the following:

- The award of University Medals has been approved by Chair's Action on behalf of Council for Ladi Ogunmekan, Samuel Ola, Faith Oluwaremi and Emmanuel Shittu. All are students who had a key role in the delivery of the Black in Sport Summit.

- Luke Stott (Alumni President) has been working with the University's alumni relations team to consider how the University can engage the Alumni community optimally and how the skills and connections of Alumni can be best utilised.

SECTION A – Items for Discussion

23/27 Update on the Higher Education External Environment

COUN23-P31

Council **CONSIDERED** an update on the external environment in which the University operates and **COMMENTED** on the highlighted issues. The following key points were noted:

- There is currently national industrial action in the sector in the form of a marking and assessment boycott. The impact at Loughborough is limited and it is expected all students will receive marks and graduate on time.
- A new valuation for the USS pension scheme will likely help to resolve the current dispute about pensions, however, agreement on pay is more difficult.
- International students are critical for the sector as a whole. Loughborough's partnership with a Private Pathway Provider will enable an increase in international student numbers and diversify international recruitment both territorially and disciplinarily. Council approved the partnership in June last year and the current forecast is that it will deliver on target.
- There are opportunities in Lifelong Learning and the upskilling of the existing workforce. The expansion of apprenticeships requires significant industrial partners.
- Regulation in the sector has been increasing. Loughborough supports differentiated regulation as an appropriate risk-based approach to regulation in the sector.
- Cyberattacks are a significant area of risk for all Higher Education Institutions and a lot of work is being undertaken at Loughborough to protect and mitigate against this risk.
- EDI considerations are a key component of the current strategy and the future course of the institution.
- Loughborough remains confident as an institution and has a clear strategy and plan of action for success.

23/28 Strategy Update and Key Performance Indicators

28.1 Strategy and Enabling Project Updates

COUN23-P32

Council **CONSIDERED** an update from the Vice-Chancellor on the University Strategy, Core Plans and Enabling Projects.

- The Strategy is making a difference by building infrastructure and strengthening areas where the institution had scope for development. Recent investment has focussed on the Research and Innovation Office and the appointment of a Director of Global Engagement to support the internationalisation theme.
- Six Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellors have been appointed from existing staff to support the three strategic themes. Several regional envoys have also been appointed to support the internationalisation theme.
- A Project Management Board has been constituted for the strategic recruitment of academic staff, budgeted for a 5-year period. Increasing the current number of academic staff will support the future Research Excellence Framework and support underrepresented groups at the early stages of their academic career.
- The Strategy's achievements are listed in the paper and are being communicated proactively through termly meetings of General Assembly, which will operate as townhalls for all staff. Work is also being undertaken on communicating the Strategy digitally.
- A member of Council commended Project Expectations on changes to the Performance Development and Review appraisal process which had brought significant and tangible benefits to staff and made the process more accessible.

28.2 Partnerships Core Plan

COUN23-P33

Council **APPROVED** the Partnerships Core Plan.

Council **APPROVED** the proposed approach for setting KPIs for the Partnerships Core Plan.

- The Chief Financial Officer reported on the development of the Partnerships Core Plan, which aims to intensify and extend the University's partnerships at the local, national, and international levels. The plan proposes a more deliberate and cohesive approach to strategic partnership activity to ensure tangible benefits are delivered.
- The Partnerships Core Plan is an enabler for the other themes, so rather than having its own separate KPIs, the proposed approach is linked directly to the relevant KPIs in other Core Plans.
- The Chief Financial Officer has been talking to current partners about how the University operates as a partner and how the University can develop its partnership working.
- There are risks associated with partnerships and the Chief Financial Officer will report to Audit and Risk Committee in September on how the assurance of partnerships will be undertaken.

- The Students' Union asked to be included in discussions about potential partners so that the student view can be taken into account.

28.3 Key Performance Indicators

COUN23-P34

Council **RECEIVED** an update on Key Performance Indicators.

- The KPI framework remains transitory as the Core Plans are developed and come on stream.
- The June update to Council constitutes a minor technical update, including adding the KPIs for the Education and Student Experience Core Plan. The target for Carbon Emission Reduction has been edited to provide differential targets for Scope 1 & 2 (Net Zero by 2035) and Scope 3 (Net Zero by 2045). Annualised targets are yet to be set.
- Council will receive a major KPI update in November 2023 which will include the addition of the remaining core plans, data updates and confirmation of the underpinning support measures, particularly financial and staff.
- Council asked that KPIs should be precise and measurable. It was noted that the Education and Student Experience KPIs are supported by a basket of metrics, including data from the Teaching Excellence Framework, in order to provide assurance to Council.

23/29 Finance

29.1 Financial update 2022/23 and budget for 2023/24

COUN23-P35A

Council **RECEIVED** a financial update for 2022/23.

Council **APPROVED** the budget for 2023/24 and the 5-year forecast.

- The Chief Financial Officer reported on the current financial position, including surplus and cash position, which had both improved since the meeting in March. Further contingency has been released and budgeting for contingency remains prudent.
- While operating budgets for 2023/24 will be approved before the start of the new financial year, Council will not be asked to formally approve any longer-term forecasts for submission to the Office for Students (OfS) until November 2023.
- The approach to the budget setting cycle for 2023/24 has been amended. Finance Committee reviewed and approved the major budget assumptions and targets used to prepare the 2023/24 budget in March. The budget then followed the normal internal process of preparation and the Finance Committee reviewed the full budget in June,

recommending its approval to Council. If there are no material changes the budget will not come back to Council, if there are material changes the budget will come back to Council.

29.2 Financial Strategy and KPIs

COUN23-P35B

Council **APPROVED** the revised Financial Strategy and KPIs based on the recommendation from Finance Committee.

- The Financial Strategy has been developed to support the University Strategy but must also comply with regulatory and funder requirements.
- Under the Financial Strategy the Chief Financial Officer will be required to provide a robust, solvent and sustainable financial position that supports ongoing activities and makes provision for continued investment in excellence, within the constraints imposed by funding uncertainty and a difficult macroeconomic climate.
- The University has an established system of financial governance, primarily through Council, Finance Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Operations Committee and Infrastructure Committee. A statement of corporate governance is provided annually as part of the University's financial statements.

23/30 Audit & Risk Committee

30.1 Report from Audit and Risk Committee

COUN23-P36

Council **RECEIVED** a report from the meeting of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) held on 12 June 2023:

- ARC received an update from the Chief Operating Officer on contracting and compliance. There have been no significant issues of non-compliance with the new approach, and the changes have led to greater operational efficiency in the areas where it has been introduced. ARC will continue to monitor by way of an annual report and by exception reporting as necessary. The new risk management approach will be broadened to other areas.
- ARC received and reviewed the updated Oversight Committee Strategic Risk Summaries and were pleased to note that strategic risk reviews are now on-going at committee level.
- ARC undertook a comprehensive review of the strategic risk of Staff Wellbeing, including the challenges, approaches and plans currently in place. The internal audit report on Staff Wellbeing provided assurance that the University's approach is well developed when benchmarked across the sector.

30.2 Office for Students Regulatory Compliance

COUN23-P37

Council **RECEIVED** assurance on the University's compliance with its Office for Students regulatory duties.

- The Chief Operating Officer reported that all conditions of registration are rated green and that there is currently minimal risk of the University breaching any of the conditions.
- For Condition A1, most, but not all, targets in the Access and Participation Plan for 2021-22 were met.
- For the B Conditions related to quality and standards, Council will receive a paper in November outlining the processes for the assurance of academic quality and standards.
- There are two significant expected future regulatory conditions:
 - i. Freedom of Speech – new legislation has been passed and a Freedom of Speech Czar appointed by the government. Loughborough will review policies and procedures as appropriate in light of the new legislation.
 - ii. Sexual harassment – it is not expected that this should cause any significant issues and Loughborough remains committed to dealing with any reports through its disciplinary procedures.
- The results of the National Student Survey will be released in August.
- The Office for Students has recently taken on the role of designated quality body for Higher Education after the Quality Assurance Agency withdrew from the role.

23/31 Effectiveness Review of Senate

COUN23-P38

Council **CONSIDERED** a report on the Effectiveness Review of Senate...

- Professor Steve Christie, Chair of the Senate Effectiveness Review working group, reported on the outcomes and recommendations of the Effectiveness Review, particularly as they were relevant to Council.
- Senate is the sovereign body for academic matters. The responsibility of Council is to assure itself that there are measures in place to secure academic quality and standards.
- Council receives assurance on academic standards in November each year and will receive a detailed document in November 2023 related to the Office for Students conditions of registration and how council can take assurance on academic matters.
- Every meeting of Council receives a report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience with an update on matters relating to academic standards, which also provides assurance for Council.

- The Senate Effectiveness Review highlighted that lay member of Council would welcome more information about how academic standards are assured. It was agreed that Council induction would be reviewed to ensure lay members were briefed on the assurance of academic standards when assuming their role.
- Some Council members had visited Schools prior to this meeting of Council and this had been a valuable experience. It was suggested a School visit could be incorporated into the standard induction process for lay members.

23/32 Governance & Nominations Committee

32.1 Appointment of new lay member.

COUN23-P39

Council **APPROVED**, on the recommendation of Governance and Nominations Committee, the appointment of Mark Thurston as a new lay member of Council from 01 August 2023. Mark will also be a member of Infrastructure Committee.

*32.2 Finance Committee Lay Composition

COUN23-P40

Council **APPROVED** a change to the lay composition of Finance Committee; one of the existing Council lay seats will be replaced with a non-Council lay seat.

23/33 Health, Safety and Environment

Council **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the Provost on the meeting of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee held on 17 May 2023.

- Work is continuing on ensuring compliance with the human tissue act related to the large number of samples the University stores for research purposes.
- The demolition of a building that had previously been used for radiochemistry was nearing completion after many years. The Provost thanked Julie Turner (Strategic Scientific Technical Lead) and her team for their work on this complex project.

23/34 Honorary Degrees and Medals

COUN23-P41

Council **APPROVED**, on the recommendation of Senate and the advice of the University Honours Committee, the award of Honorary Degrees and University Medals to recipients.

23/35 Matters for Report by the Vice-Chancellor

Council **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the Vice-Chancellor who reported the following items:

- Jo Maher has been appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sport. Jo is currently principle of Loughborough College and has significant experience in sport, including working with the Women's Football Association.
- A number of other new appointments have been made, including a Commercial Director, Director of Sport and Director of the Research and Innovation Office.
- The Vice-Chancellor visited the Middle East - including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the Emirates - meeting universities, government department, trade commissioners, ambassadors and others. There are opportunities for Loughborough in these territories, particularly in terms of sports leadership and sports governance.
- The Vice-Chancellor will visit China later in year.
- Loughborough has had success in recent University Guides:
 - In the Complete University Guide 2024 Loughborough was ranked seventh in the UK and the top University in the Midlands.
 - In the QS rankings Loughborough has attained its highest ever ranking of 212 and is close to meeting the KPI of being top 200 in the QS.
 - In the THE Impact Rankings Loughborough was top in the UK and 15th globally for Sustainable Development Goal 7 - Affordable & Clean Energy, and top 10 in the UK and 61st in the world for Sustainable Development Goal 8 - Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth.
- An extraordinary meeting of General Assembly was held on 16 June following requisition of 25 signatories from staff. The report of the meeting is contained in paper 62 in Section C under committee minutes.

SECTION B – Starred Items for Approval

23/36 *Loughborough University Students' Union Annual Report

COUN23-P42

Council **RECEIVED** the annual report.

23/37 *Loughborough University Students' Union Code of Practice

COUN23-P43

Council **APPROVED** an update to the Loughborough Student's Union Code of Practice.

23/38 *Ethical Policy Framework**COUN23-P44**

Council **APPROVED** the updated Ethical Policy Framework for 2023/24.

23/39 *Ordinance VIII Composition and Election of Academic Staff to Council (first hearing)**COUN23-P45**

Council **APPROVED** an amendment to Ordinance VIII relating to the Composition and Election of Academic Staff members to Council.

23/40 *Ordinance XVII Conduct and Discipline of Students (first hearing)**COUN23-P46**

Council **APPROVED** amendments to Ordinance XVII Conduct and Discipline of Students but asked the wording for Section 2.iii was reviewed. The Chief Operating Officer will report back to the Student Disciplinary Committee.

23/41*Ordinance XXIII Traffic and Parking in the University (second hearing)**COUN23-P47**

Council **APPROVED** amendments to Ordinance XXIII Traffic and Parking in the University. It was noted that parking is a sensitive issue. The proposed changes take account of the University's Health and Safety obligations; accessibility and EDI considerations were also key factors in the proposed amendments.

23/42*Student Complaints Annual Report**COUN23-P48**

Council **APPROVED** the Student Complaints Annual Report 2021/22.

SECTION C – Starred Items for Information**23/42 *Matters for Report**

Council **RECEIVED** the following reports:

42.1 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience)**COUN23-P49**

42.2 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equity, Diversity & Inclusion)

COUN23-P50

42.3 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)

COUN23-P51

23/43 *Office for Students

43.1 Prevent Duty

COUN23-P52

Council **NOTED** that the Office for Students has concluded the 2021/22 process for monitoring the University's compliance with its Prevent duties.

43.2 Reportable Events

COUN23-P53

Council **NOTED** that there have been no reportable events since the last meeting of Council and no event which needed to be considered if it qualified as a reportable.

23/44 *Loughborough University Students' Union Executive Officer Elections

COUN23-P54

Council **RECEIVED** assurance that the election of Students' Union Executive Officers in 2023 for 2023/24 were free and fair.

23/45 *Annual Report on Academic Partnerships

COUN23-P55

Council **NOTED** the annual report on major academic partnerships.

23/46 *Capital Framework Progress Report

COUN23-P56

Council **RECEIVED** a progress report.

23/47 *Council Membership 2023/24

COUN23-P57

Council **NOTED** the membership of Council for 2023/24.

23/48 *Common Seal

COUN23-P58

Council **RECEIVED** a list of documents to which the University Seal has been attached.

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23/49 *Reports from Committees

Council **RECEIVED** reports from the following Committees:

COUN23-P59	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee – 05 May 2023
COUN23-P60	Ethics Committee – 23 May 2023
COUN23-P61	Finance Committee – 17 March 2023
COUN23-P62	General Assembly – 16 June 2023
COUN23-P63	Health, Safety and Environment Committee – 17 May 2023
COUN23-P64	Infrastructure Committee – 23 February and 23 April 2023
COUN23-P65	Operations Committee – 06 March 2023, 03 April 2023 and 02 May 2023
COUN23-P66	Remuneration Committee – 30 March 2023
COUN23-P67	Research and Innovation Committee – 25 April 2023
COUN23-P68	Governance and Nominations Committee – 29 March 2023 and 25 May 2023

23/50 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 12 October 2023, 9:00AM, All-day, Away Day and Meeting, Loughborough Campus

Future Meetings

Thursday 23 November 2023, 9:00AM-12:00PM, Online

Thursday 21 March 2024, 14:00-16:30, Loughborough University London

Thursday 27 June 2024, 13:30-17:00, Loughborough Campus

23/51 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked the following Council members whose term of office was ending for their contribution to Council: Dr Marcus Collins, Professor Malcolm Cook, Professor Lisanne Gibson, Harry Hughes and Danny Smith.

[Secretary's Note: A list of notable Alumni has been published on Board Intelligence.]

Author – Luke Vulpiani

Date – June 2023

Approved by Council and signed by Chair of Council

Signed _____

Dated _____