

COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of 03 July 2025

COUN25-M2

Attendance

	Christine Hodgson	
Rachael Alvey	Matthew Inglis	Luke Stott
Kerri Akiwowo	Nick Jennings	Paul Taylor (ab)
Penny Briscoe	Jennifer Maxwell-Harris	Rachel Thomson
Graham Corfield	Nicky Morgan	Mark Thurston
Andrea Davis	Emma Nadin	Mike Wedderburn
Natalie Gasson-McKinley (ab)	James Peat	Sheryl Williams
Naomi Hudson	David Price (ab)	Jon Woods
	Surinder Sharma (ab)	

In attendance: Sam Grogan; Jo Maher; Sam McGinty (item 25/37 only); Jennifer Nutkins; Alex Owen; Dan Parsons; Richard Taylor; Julie Turner; Luke Vulpiani

Apologies received from: Natalie Gasson-McKinley; David Price; Surinder Sharma; Paul Taylor

25/31 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25/32 Minutes and Matters Arising

2.1 Minutes

COUN25-M1

Council **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2025.

2.2 Matters Arising

March Council had requested comparative benchmarking for the staff survey results segmented by department/service area. Unfortunately, due to the differential structures of Universities this information is not available from the supplier.

Philanthropy sector benchmarking figures were expected to be reported to July Council but have not yet been published; it is expected that these will be available for reporting to October Council.

25/33 Chair's Report

The Chair reported that Infrastructure Committee had approved the purchase of Longcliffe Care Home below the threshold which requires approval by Council but additional governance sign-off was undertaken by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Council. The purchase was opportunistic and aligns with the strategic aim to provide a variety of accommodation to students.

25/34 University Finances and Strategy

34.1 2024/25 Quarter 4 Forecast Update

COUN25-P38

Council **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** the 2024/25 Quarter 4 forecast update on the recommendation of Finance Committee

All main revenue and expenditure lines had been reviewed and the updated Quarter 4 forecast indicated a £0.5 million surplus, which may increase to £1m by end of year. The current position assures Council that the university will be in surplus at year end. Achieving a breakeven position in the current year is important to remain compliant with the Council KPI of not making a deficit in more than two consecutive financial years. The financial position of the HE sector remains challenging but achieving a breakeven position in 2024/25 ensures a stable basis for Loughborough to plan for the future.

4.2 External Environment

COUN25-P39

Council **CONSIDERED** an update on the external environment and its relation to discussions on strategy, budgets and financial forecasts featured elsewhere on the agenda.

It is anticipated the Government may announce inflation-linked increases for home undergraduate tuition fees and an assumed increase has been included in the financial forecasts. The University works collectively through Universities UK (UUK) to engage government. UUK has established a transformation and efficiency taskforce focussed on financial stability and ensuring the sector responds to government priorities. Loughborough has engaged with the work of UUK directly and through professional sector groupings.

Loughborough has also successfully engaged with ministers and a number of Chief Scientists have visited campus. Council requested further information about the work UUK undertake on behalf of the sector.

4.3 Strategy Review

COUN25-P40

Council **CONSIDERED** a review of the Strategy in light of the financial position of the sector and **ENDORSED** the approach and timeline for progressing the review, including reworked 5-year financial forecasts to be available in the autumn to reflect the outcome of the review.

The Strategy is reviewed every year through executive groups and by Council at the strategic away day. Additional scrutiny is being undertaken this year in light of the external environment. The review of the strategy will ensure that areas of activity are aligned with priorities and Council will receive further detail in October.

Council requested a report on the London campus at the away day.

4.4 Budget for 2025/26

COUN25-P41

Council **APPROVED** the 2025/26 budget and **COMMENTED** on the provisional five-year forecast to 2030.

The 2025/26 budget indicates a £5m deficit in 2025/26, and the provisional 5-year forecast indicates a deficit of £6.5m in 2026/27, returning to surplus in 2027/28 onwards. Following endorsement of key assumptions around student numbers and capital spending by Finance Committee in March, the figures in the budget and 5-year forecast were scrutinised and challenged in detail at the two budget days in May and by Strategic Portfolio and Resources Committee. June Finance Committee received the full minutes of these discussions and undertook further scrutiny. The Financial Sustainability Project Management Board will continue to scrutinise budgets and seek betterments.

The executive are identifying priorities to achieve the additional tasking/contribution in the forecast and developing the proposed underpinning plan to achieve this, which will be shared with Council in October. The five-year forecast will be approved by Finance Committee and Council in November, before submission to the Office for Students in December in the normal way. In conclusion the financial headwinds were noted as was the need for close support from Council for the executive.

4.5 Key Performance Indicators

COUN25-P42

Council **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** revised (interim) trajectories for the three Key Performance Indicators relating to research awards, research student population and international student population.

The research award figure is a percentage of market share. The revised figures were determined following careful scrutiny by the Research and Innovation Office and consultation with David Price (member of Council and former Vice-Provost for Research at UCL).

25/35 Student Accommodation Project

COUN25-P43

Council **CONSIDERED** an update on the Student Accommodation Project and **NOTED** Finance Committee's discussion on funding options.

Subject to the approval of the final business case by SPaRC Part B and the recommendation of Infrastructure Committee and the receipt of planning approval, the University will bring forward formal proposals to October Council.

The affordability of halls was important and returners should not be priced out. The hall community is a unique point of the University which it is important to maintain. New halls will tend to be more expensive and the University aims for a portfolio of accommodation that ensures choice, quality and affordability for all students at different pricing points.

Consideration is also being given to whether other assets can be used to provide additional student accommodation. Car parking is being considered as part of the accommodation project; the University has sufficient parking but it is not always located where people wish.

25/36 Commercial Strategy

COUN25-P44

Council **APPROVED** the Commercial Strategy.

The Commercial Strategy provides a holistic view of commercial activity across the University, and identifies the potential to grow existing commercial revenues by creating a step change in existing activities and identifying new opportunities. Finance Committee will hold overall oversight of the strategy. There are two Council KPIs related to the Commercial Strategy which sit under the Partnerships Core strand: revenue generation and actual contribution. It is important there is sufficient resource to deliver commercial growth and there are also opportunities to engage the alumni community.

The Commercial Strategy includes frictionless retail as new build accommodation will have less catered provision. LSU provide retail services on campus and the University will work with LSU to ensure services are appropriately aligned and complementary.

Council requested more information about commercial activities be brought to October Council to identify where there might be opportunities.

25/37 Freedom of Speech

COUN25-P45

Council **CONSIDERED** an update on Freedom of Speech and **APPROVED** amendment to the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice to reflect the provisions of the Act which will be implemented.

Sam McGinty, General Counsel and Director of Legal Services joined Council for this item.

Freedom of Speech is a priority for the Office for Students and the regulator recently imposed a £585,000 fine on the University of Sussex for failure to uphold freedom of speech and academic freedom, as well as failings in the university's management and governance processes.

The OfS have just published its regulatory advice on Freedom of Speech

Loughborough is in a good place in terms of compliance, the Code of Practice on Freedom of Expression was approved by Council in November 2023 and the Policy on University statements in March 2025. Further work may be required, in particular considering the balance between Freedom of Expression and the University's Public Sector Equality Duties.

25/38 Audit and Risk Committee

COUN25-P46

38.1 Audit and Risk Committee Update

Council **RECEIVED** a report from the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 09 June 2025.

The Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing attended ARC for a deep dive on staff wellbeing. ARC noted the mitigating actions taken by the University and were assured by the continued investment in this important area, including the Occupational Health Service, the Employee Assistance Programme and the SPaRC project prioritisation process. Whilst there are still significant challenges ARC was assured that the University is focussing on clear priorities and not complacent about this risk. As a result of the mitigating actions introduced this year and the improved data to show the effectiveness of the University's support mechanisms, Human Resources Committee have reduced the net risk score to Amber (Impact Medium and Likely).

ARC also welcomed the Director of Legal Services and General Counsel for an update on a proposed new approach to support ARC's oversight of compliance activity with an annual report that includes assurances from relevant Committee Chairs and Senior Officers. It was agreed that the annual report would focus on those areas requiring high levels of assurance and the assigned assurance levels were agreed subject to an increase to high for the assurance level for the Freedom of Expression Code of Practice.

ARC re-iterated their concerns about heightened cyber security risk levels, considering the recent large-scale attacks in the retail sector, and were assured that the University is continuing to reinforce the importance of information security to all staff as a priority.

38.2 Office for Students Regulatory Compliance

COUN25-P47

Council **RECEIVED** assurance on the University's compliance with its Office for Students regulatory duties. Three minor risks were marked as elevated and the University is monitoring these areas closely, however Council could be assured the risk of any breach was low.

25/39 Governance and Nominations Committee

39.1 Council Effectiveness Review

COUN25-P48

Council **CONSIDERED** an update on the 2024 Council Effectiveness Review indicating completion of the actions arising from the review.

A formal proposal for a schedule of deep dives (recommendation 1.3) will come to Council in October. Council members had received a briefing earlier in the week from the Committee of University Chairs on the governance review currently being undertaken.

39.2 University Committees

COUN25-P49

Council **APPROVED** the discontinuation of Infrastructure Committee, and the establishment of an Estates Management and Sustainability Committee and a new Information Technology and Governance Committee with effect from 2025/26. Council **APPROVED** terms of reference for Estates Management and Sustainability Committee and Information Technology and Governance Committee. The new structure would particularly provide enhanced scrutiny for cyber security and information and data protection.

39.3 Approval of New Lay Member

COUN25-P50

Council **APPROVED** Dan Rodenhurst as a lay member of Council for a 3-year term from 01 August 2025.

25/40 Health, Safety and Environment Update

Council **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the meeting of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee held on 14 May 2025. Monthly Health and Safety Bulletins are available on the BI bookshelf.

The committee has reflected on its operation during the last year and is piloting a new structure that will provide assurance from Schools and Professional Services on a more regular basis.

A review of the serious incident review processes has been undertaken; the process is robust but it was important to ensure it is clear how reviews are concluded and actions completed following a review.

25/41 University Honorary Degrees and Medals

COUN25-P51

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

25/42 Matters for Report by the Vice-Chancellor

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

- Two new Deans have been appointed as noted under item 25/54. Recruitment of Deans for the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences and the School of Design and Creative Arts is ongoing.
- 12 fractional Associate Deans and Principals for EDI have been appointed to embed EDI across academic Schools and Professional Services.
- The University is engaging at a local and regional level in plans for the reorganisation of the local authority at County level and how these fit into the East Midlands Combined Authority levels, which Leicestershire is not currently part of.
- Loughborough Lightning are playing in the women's netball final at the O2 on Sunday.
- Open days were successfully held last weekend, with over 16,000 visitors attending over two days.
- The University has just received its biggest ever philanthropic gift from Chris Gill, a Loughborough alumnus. Chris's generosity will enable the university to establish the Loughborough University Research Academy, which will drive the transformative culture change required for the University to become a global research powerhouse.

SECTION B – Starred Items for Approval

[These items will be approved unless otherwise decided]

25/43 *Loughborough Students 'Union

43.1 *Annual Report

COUN25-P52

Council **RECEIVED** the Students 'Union Annual Report.

43.2 *Constitution Review

COUN25-P53

Council **APPROVED** the outcome of the Loughborough Students' Union Constitution Review.

43.3 *Executive Officer Elections

COUN25-P54

Council **RECEIVED** assurance that the elections for Students' Union Executive Officers in 2025 (offices to be held in 2025/26) were free and fair.

25/44 *Alcohol, Drug, and Substance Misuse Policy for Students

COUN25-P55

Council **APPROVED** the Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy for Students.

25/45 *Student Complaints Annual Report

COUN25-P56

Council **APPROVED** the Student Complaints Annual Report 2023-24.

25/46 *Compliance Assurance

COUN25-P57

Council **APPROVED** the compliance areas that require high levels of assurance, via annual reporting to Audit and Risk Committee; and **DELEGATED** authority to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee to amend the list of compliance areas requiring high levels of assurance from time to time.

25/47 *Ordinance IV – Titles of Degrees and Conditions of Award

COUN25-P58

Council **APPROVED** amendments to Ordinance IV – Titles of Degrees and Conditions of Award. Second Hearing.

25/48 *Ordinance XVII – Conduct and Discipline of Students

COUN25-P59

Council **APPROVED** amendments to Ordinance XVII – Conduct and Discipline of Students. First Hearing.

25/49 *Ordinance XXXV – Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

COUN25-P60

Council **APPROVED** amendments to Ordinance XXXV (Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure). First Hearing.

SECTION C – Starred Items for Information

25/50 *Matters for Report

Council **RECEIVED** the following reports:

- *50.1 Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost COUN25-P61
- *50.2 Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) COUN25-P62
- *50.3 Executive Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion COUN25-P63
- *50.4 Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) COUN25-P64
- *50.5 Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Sport) COUN25-P65

25/51 *Office for Students

*51.1 Prevent Duty

COUN25-P66

Council **NOTED** that the Office for Students has concluded the 2023/24 process for monitoring the University's compliance with its Prevent duties.

*51.2 Reportable Events

COUN25-P67

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

25/52 *Capital Framework Progress Report

COUN25-P68

Council **RECEIVED** a progress report.

25/53 *Common Seal

COUN25-P69

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

25/54 *Senior Appointments

Council **NOTED** the following Senior appointments:

Professor Moataz Attallah has been appointed as Dean of the School of Aeronautical, Automotive, Chemical and Materials Engineering from 01 September 2025 for a 5-year term.

Professor Rajkumar Roy has been appointed as Dean of the Wolfson School of Mechanical, Electrical and Manufacturing Engineering from 01 August 2025 for a 5-year term.

25/55 *Reports from Committees

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

COUN25-P70	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governance Committee – 26 February 2025
COUN25-P71	Finance Committee – 14 March 2025
COUN25-P72	Governance and Nominations Committee – 27 February 2025 and 27 May 2025
COUN25-P73	Health, Safety and Environment Committee – 05 February 2025 and 14 May 2025
COUN25-P74	Human Resources Committee – 21 May 2025
COUN25-P75	Remuneration Committee – 27 March 2025
COUN25-P76	Research and Innovation Committee – 11 February 2025 and 01 April 2025
COUN25-P77	Senate – 12 March 2025
COUN25-P78	Sport Committee – 07 March 2025
COUN25-P79	Strategic Portfolio and Resources Committee (Part B) – 10 March 2025, 07 April 2025, 28 April 2025 and 10 June 2025

25/56 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 16 October 2025, all-day, Away Day, Loughborough Campus

Future Meetings

Thursday 27 November 2025, 9:00-12:00, online

Thursday 26 March 2026, 9:00-12:00, Loughborough University London

Thursday 02 July 2026, 14:00-17:00, Loughborough Campus

2026/27 Dates

Thursday 15 October 2026, all-day, Away Day, Loughborough Campus

Wednesday 25 November 2026, 9:00-12:00, online

Tuesday 23 March 2027, 9:00-12:00, Loughborough University London

Thursday 24 June 2027, 14:00-17:00, Loughborough Campus

Author – Luke Vulpiani

Date – July 2025