# COUNCIL

Thursday, 23rd February 2023 9:30 am

Council Chamber   |   Council

## Attendees

#### Present

#### Pamela Chesters, Chair

#### Maria Bond

#### Oyegoke Bukoye

#### Kathryn Ehrig-Page

#### Timothy Ford (remote)

#### Christine Gibbons

#### Dorothy Griffiths

#### Alan Hayes

#### Tim Hollingsworth

#### Julia Kildyushova

#### Donald McLaverty

#### Sujata McNab

#### Calum Mercer

#### Charlotte Moar

#### David Moon

#### Alexander Robinson

#### Andrew Ross

#### Paul Shepherd

#### Ian White

#### In attendance

#### Philip Allmendinger (remote)

Richard Brooks (item 7527 only)

#### Julian Chaudhuri

#### Randolf Cooper

#### Sarah Hainsworth

#### Rajani Naidoo (items 7527 – 7529 only)

#### Cassie Stokes

Sharon Street (item 7527 only)

#### Martin Williams

#### Tamsin Willis-Stovold (remote)

#### Deborah Wilson

Chris Youles (item 7525 only)

Chris Young (item 7530 only)

#### Secretariat

#### Emily Commander

Karen Gleave (Remote)

Greg Noakes

Caroline Pringle

#### Apologies

#### Catherine Mealing-Jones

## 7520.0 Welcome and Quorum

Purpose - For Information

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that a quorum was present. She extended a particular welcome to Professor Deborah Wilson, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, who was attending her first Council meeting.

It was noted that Tim Ford and Phil Allmendinger would be attending remotely, and that Dai Moon would step out of the meeting between 10:15 and 11:15 due to teaching commitments.

As recommended by the Council Effectiveness Review, the Chair began by reminding Council of its priorities for this meeting, which were:
- the strategic discussion on building the digital capability;
- the Faculty spotlight on Humanities and Social Sciences;
- approval of the plans for the Research and Community strategic pillars;
- approval of the business case for the fit-out of the fifth floor of 10E, on the recommendation of Finance Committee;
- approval of the institutional Statement of Equality Objectives and the annual report on health and safety, both of which were key elements of Council's compliance responsibilities;
- an update on plans to improve the visibility of degree apprenticeships within the institution.

## 7521.0 Declarations of Interest

Purpose - For Information

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Pam Chesters, Christine Gibbons, Don McLaverty, and Maria Bond declared an interest in aspects of item 7535 (Nominations Committee). It was agreed that they would leave the meeting while those matters were discussed.

Kate Ehrig-Page declared an interest in relation to item 7541 (Climate Action Framework), but it was agreed that this did not represent a conflict of interest and it would not be necessary for her to leave the meeting.

## 7522.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting - C22/23 - 36

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council approved the minutes of the meeting on 24 November 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

## 7523.0 Actions and Matters Arising

Purpose -

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council noted the action log. There were no outstanding actions.

## 7524.0 Institutional update - C22/23 - 37

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the institutional report and invited the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) to present highlights from the University's TEF submission data, noting the excellent performance in respect of student satisfaction and progression.

Members of Council asked questions about the TEF data submission and were answered as follows:
- Universities with lower assessment and feedback scores tended to be research-intensive institutions. There was no single factor contributing to Bath's lower score in this area, but a series of issues including large class sizes and staff sickness.
- As the data was anonymised it was difficult to ascertain if there was a correlation between entry tariff and feedback scores.
- Overall, the TEF data painted a positive picture of teaching and education at Bath; it would be important to implement Curriculum Transformation in a sensible and appropriate way next year to ensure that this was maintained.

The Vice-Chancellor presented the rest of the institutional update and provided detail of additional developments since the paper had been written, noting in particular the positive uplift in undergraduate and postgraduate applications compared with the previous year and also the positive outcome of the professorial pay round.

The Vice-Chancellor expressed his gratitude for the work done by the local union branches in relation to the recent industrial action. Upcoming strikes had been put on hold pending the outcome of further talks and a joint statement from the University and UCU branch had been published that morning in response to the interim joint statement from UUK and UCU in relation to the ongoing USS dispute.

Members of Council asked questions and raised the following points in discussion:
- With regards to pensions, the situation remained volatile, but it was hoped that rules could be agreed for the future management of the fund depending on performance. There was also a need to focus on the affordability of the scheme;
- One of the primary goals of the new Sustainability Director would be the integration of the Climate Action Framework. The role was a senior leadership position, rather than an operational one, to ensure that the individual could exert influence at the right levels of the organisation;
- The results of the Cubane benchmarking of professional services would be discussed in greater detail at Council's development day in March;
- Council members highlighted the recent achievements of Bath-based skeleton and bobsleigh athletes;
- Council members commended the format of the institutional update.

Council noted the institutional update.

## 7525.0 Strategic discussion - Building the Digital Capability: an update - C22/23 - 38

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Chief Information and Digital Officer presented paper C22/23 - 38 which provided an overview and update on the Digital Transformation Programme.

Member of Council asked questions and were answered as follows:
- Recruiting and retaining staff with the right skills was both challenging and expensive;
- Part of the development work in the Department had been to encourage staff to look at DDaT from an external perspective and assess what impact DDaT was having on other parts of the University, in order to prioritise the most important projects for the University as a whole;
- ARAC had been assured that the work on data governance was progressing but there was still some way to go. ARAC would continue to monitor this closely;
- Much of the foundation work was initiating digital proof of concepts which were business driven. Small scale proof of concepts were being carried out to determine if they were effective. These would have a series of KPIs and, if effective, could then be rapidly scaled up.
- DDaT already had a team that worked in accessibility but there would always be more that the University could do to help students access their studies.

Council noted the Digital Transformation Programme update.

## 7526.0 Faculty spotlight: Humanities and Social Sciences – C22/22 – 39

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences presented the Faculty Spotlight. She noted that there had been a number of recent changes within the faculty’s senior leadership and the new team was coming together well. The Dean highlighted the Faculty’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to each pillar of the University strategy and outlined the vision for the Faculty over the next five years.

Members of Council asked questions and were answered as follows:

- The Faculty was diverse rather than disparate and the challenge for the Dean was how to add value to the Departments so that they could flourish and provide a strong base for cross-disciplinary working.

Council noted the Faculty spotlight.

## 7527.0 Strategy and performance - C22/23 - 40

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Vice-President (Community and Inclusion), Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Director of HR presented the leadership update on the community pillar of the University strategy (paper C22/23 - 40A). Paper C22/23 - 40A outlined a number of risks, which included common challenges facing the sector as a whole, and the mitigations that had been put in place.

Members of Council asked questions and were answered as follows:
- The Statement of Equality Objectives 2023 - 2028 had a corresponding set of internally-facing stretch objectives which were linked to the Access and Participation Plan.
- The biggest barriers to achieving the future state set out in the update would be integrating EDI into the all aspects of the University's work, recruiting and retaining people with the right perspective and vision for what the culture of a university could be, and successfully creating a sense of belonging for all students to allow them to achieve their full potential.

In relation to paper C22/23 - 40B (Research plan), members of Council asked questions and were answered as follows:
- A lot of work was being done with the Library staff around citation data to ensure that the diversity of research outputs was captured in the research strategy. It was noted that citation data was a nuanced area with considerable variation across disciplines. The University needed to ensure that when its academics published this was publicized to generate impact.

In relation to paper C22/23 - 40C (Key Performance Indicators), Council queried whether replacing the average entry tariff KPI with assessment feedback was the right approach, or if it would be more appropriate to replace it with a KPI in relation to reducing the attainment gap. Council agreed to approve the KPIs as presented in paper C22/23 - 40C but to consider this issue when reviewing the KPIs in 12 months’ time.

Council noted and approved the paper on the community pillar of the University strategy (paper C22/23 - 40A). Council approved the research plan (C22/23 - 40B). Council approved the KPIs for 2023/24 (C22/23 - 40C).

## 7528.0 Admissions, access and participation - C22/23 - 41

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Head of Access and Widening Participation presented paper C22/23 - 41 which provided an update on the progress towards current Access and Participation Plan (APP) targets and an update on the draft guidance from OfS about the new APP structure and how the University was preparing for writing the new APP.

Council thanked those who had provided the teach-in on this topic the previous evening and noted the update.

## 7529.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - C22/23 - 42

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Vice-President (Community and Inclusion) presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee report and the Statement of Equality Objectives 2023 - 2028.

Members of Council discussed the report and Statement of Equality Objectives and the following points were raised in discussion:
- Council welcomed the action plan but noted that there was a need for the Executive to identify priorities so that the plan was focused and achievable;
- There was a need to move from a compliance-based approach to equality, diversity and inclusion to a position where the University embraced it as part of its “business as usual” culture;
- EDI training at a senior level was valuable as often institutions were led by people who had not themselves experienced the barriers faced by others;
- The Statement of Equality Objectives should be published online in the context of the University's vision and aims.

Council noted the report from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and approved the Statement of Equality Objectives 2023 - 2028.

## 7530.0 Health and Safety - C22/23 - 43

Purpose – For Discussion

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Deputy Director (Safety and Employee Wellbeing Services) presented the Health and Safety annual report. He advised that the new fire safety regulations would lead to increased cost to ensure compliance.

Members of Council asked questions and were answered as follows:
- A review of asbestos on campus had been completed and the University had purchased a solution which allowed it to better track areas which had been inspected, and flag high risk areas so that they could be managed and removed. An internal audit had been completed two years ago and ARAC was continuing to monitor progress.
- There had been some difficulties in recruiting and training new counsellors, but the service had capacity; the waiting time for an appointment was approximately six days but, as cases were triaged, those in greatest need of support were prioritized. Cases were becoming more complex but the University's partnership with the RUH allowed cases to be referred on to other appropriate services.

## 7531.0 Financial matters - C22/23 - 44

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Chair of Finance Committee introduced paper C22/23 - 44B which sought Council approval of the business case for the fit out of the fifth floor of the 10 East building, on the recommendation of Finance Committee. Finance Committee had discussed the business case at its meeting on 2 February, including the quality of the fit out, the value it could bring to the University and the proposed funding arrangements.

The following points were raised through questions and discussion:

- The proposed fit out would be paid for by a loan from the University to the School of Management. Payback of the loan would be funded by additional student targets. The forecasted increase in student numbers had been accounted for in the University's analysis of accommodation needs.

- Members of Council queried the paper which said that there would be no EDI impact and sought assurance that access and inclusion would be embedded into the design.

- Members of Council queried the cost of the space. It was cautioned against making assumptions as to whether cellular offices or open plan space would be the cheaper option.

Council approved the business case for the fit out of the fifth floor of the School of Management.

The Chair of Finance Committee introduced papers C22/23 - 44C and 44D which set out revised versions of the Endowment Acceptance and Financial Management Policy and the Investment Policy for Council's approval, on the recommendation of Finance Committee. There were no comments or questions from Council in relation to these items.

Council approved the Endowment Acceptance and Financial Management Policy and the Investment Policy.

The Chair of Finance Committee and Director of Finance presented paper C22/23 - 44A which provided a summary of the other matters discussed at the meeting of Finance Committee on 2 February 2023. Work was continuing with KPMG to produce a financial model and a Task and Finish Group had been established to explore a commercial opportunity in the city centre. The Committee had considered a paper analysing the University's accommodation capacity and needs, which had shown a deficit of rooms within two years. The Director of Finance informed Council that the University was exploring the possibility of acquiring additional beds in developments in the city centre and that approvals may be brought to Finance Committee in relation to these over the coming months. Finance Committee had also approved the student accommodation rents for 2023/24.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- The need for a strategic financial plan was reiterated, to provide Council with a framework and context for making financial decisions. There would be a briefing session with KPMG in relation to this taking place the following week.

- There was a need for greater granularity in the Finance Committee reporting on progress being made towards a strategic financial plan, although it was recognised that there was a balance to be struck between Council receiving appropriate assurance and becoming a quasi-Finance Committee.

- Members of Council noted the letter from the SU, provided in response to the accommodation rent increases, and recognised that this would put greater strain on student finances. The University had doubled the hardship fund and increased the bursary provision to support students.

Council noted the Finance Committee report.

## 7532.0 Audit and Risk Assurance - C22/23 - 45

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee presented paper C22/23 - 45. There were no comments or questions on this item.

Council noted the report.

## 7533.0 Student casework - C22/23 - 46

Purpose – For Discussion

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) presented papers C22/23 - 46A-C. There were no comments or questions on this item.

Council noted the annual report on student safeguarding and policy and noted the annual report on student appeals. Council noted the annual statement from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

## 7534.0 Degree apprenticeships - C22/23 - 47

Purpose – For Discussion

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) presented paper C22/23 - 47 which provided assurance from Senate in relation to degree apprenticeships. There were no comments or questions.

Council noted the report.

## 7535.0 Nominations Committee - C22/23 - 48

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

After the break between items 7527 and 7528 the meeting resumed in the absence of Pamela Chesters, Don McLaverty, Christine Gibbons, and Maria Bond, all of whom had an interest in aspects of item 7535. Dot Griffiths took the Chair and Council considered the following parts of item 7535:
- Council noted Christine Gibbons would reach the end of her final term on 31July 2023 and would step down from Council;
- Council noted that Su McNab would step down from Council at the end of her first term on 31 July 2023 but would continue to hear student appeals as an external member of the Appeals Panel;
- Council noted that Catherine Mealing-Jones had indicated her willingness to serve a further year on Council (which was not inconsistent with the terms outlined in her extension letter agreed by Council last year);
- Council approved the re-appointment of Don McLaverty for a second term on Council, effective from 31 July 2023;
- Council approved the appointment of Christine Gibbons to Redundancy Committee and Senior Academic Appointments Committee until the end of the 2022/23 academic year;
- Council approved the appointment of Pam Chesters as a voting member of Finance Committee until the end of the 2022/23 academic year;
- Council approved the appointment of Maria Bond to Court until 30 November 2023;
- Council agreed to offer Ruth Foreman and Jason Gardener a second term as Pro-Chancellors until 31 July 2026.

Council received assurance that there was a process in place for exit interviews of Council members.

Pam Chesters, Don McLaverty, Christine Gibbons, and Maria Bond rejoined the meeting and Pam Chesters resumed chairing. Council noted the skills matrix and recruitment update. It approved a delegation of authority to the Nominations Committee to approve external appointments to sub-committees of Council.

## 7536.0 Charter - C22/23 - 49

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

The Head of Governance introduced paper C22/23 - 49 which set out the proposed amendments to Charter, previously considered informally by Council at its meeting in November 2022.

Council formally consideration the proposed amendments to the University Charter, taking into account the views of Privy Council and the University Senate, and agreed to recommend the amendments to Court for approval.

## 7537.0 Posthumous award of academic titles - C22/23 - 50

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

On the recommendation of the Senate, Council approved amendments to the Ordinances, which had been circulated 14 days in advance in accordance with the notice period set out in Charter, in relation to the posthumous award of academic titles.

## 7538.0 Calendar of meetings - C22/23 - 51

Purpose - For Approval

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council approved the calendar of meetings for 2023/24 and noted the provisional calendar for 2024/25.
Council approved the need for the Redundancy Committee to meet twice in AY 2023/24, noting that the continuing need for a Redundancy Committee would be considered by the Governance Framework Review Project Board.

## 7539.0 Governance matters - C22/23 – 52

Purpose - For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council noted an update on progress made against the Council Effectiveness Review action plan.

## 7540.0 Remuneration Committee - C22/23 - 53

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council noted the report from the Remuneration Committee.

## 7541.0 CAF Project update - C22/23 - 57

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Kate Ehrig-Page declared an interest in relation to this item as her husband was employed by Arup. However, as he joined the company after the report compiled by Arup for the University had been completed, it was agreed that there was no conflict of interest.

Council noted the project update on the Climate Action Framework.

## 7542.0 Urgent business and delegated powers - C22/23 – 54

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council noted a summary of the use of urgent business powers and delegated authority since its last meeting on 24 November 2022.

## 7543.0 Senate update - C22/23 - 55

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council noted the update from Senate.

## 7544.0 Programme of Meetings for 2022/23 - C22/23 - 56

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

Council noted the programme of meetings for 2022/23 and noted the provisional business for the next meeting.

## 7545.0 Any Other Business

Purpose – For Noting

#### Minute by Caroline Pringle

There was no other business.

Two items of business have been redacted in line with the [framework for the publication of Council minutes](https://www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/council-minutes-publication-framework/), either because they pertain to individuals or because they contain matters which are commercially sensitive.