

# Council

1 May 2025 / Council Chamber

## MEETING MINUTES



## Attendees

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### Members Attended

Jimena Alamo

Maria Bond

Teslim Bukoye

Pam Chesters, Chair

Kate Ehrig-Page

Tim Ford

Sabina Gheduzzi

Alun Griffiths

Dot Griffiths

Tim Hollingsworth

Don McLaverty

Calum Mercer,

David Moon

Marcus Munafo

Jo Rhoden

Paul Shepherd

Anthony Smith

Amber Snary

Phil Taylor, Vice-Chancellor

### In Attendance

Ghazwa Alwani-Starr, Chief Operating Officer

Manuel Barcia, PVC (Global Engagement) (*Until Item 7792.0 Annual Advancement Report*)

Andrew Bidwell, Risk and Compliance Manager (*For Item 7785.0 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee*)

Steve Brammer, Dean of the School of Management (*For Item 7781.0 Faculty Spotlight*)

Richard Brooks, Director of Human Resources (*For Items 7789.0 Annual Health & Safety Report and Item 7791.0 Workforce Report*)

Ian Blenkharn, University Secretary and Registrar – *Secretary to Council*

Julian Chaudhuri, PVC (Education)

Gavin Edwards, Chief Data & Technology Officer (*For Items 7783.b CLEAR Business Case for Council and Item 7793.0 Annual DDAT Report*)

Corinne Evans, Vice-President (External Relations)

Sarah Hainsworth, PVC (Research & Enterprise)

Momna Hejmadi, Associate PVC (Education Quality and Enhancement) (*For Item 7796.0 APP Update*)

Richard Jackson, Director of Sustainability (*For Item 7790.0 Sustainability Update*)

Lydia Lee, Director of Advancement (*For Item 7792.0 Annual Advancement Report*)

Sharon Street, Director of Planning, Performance & Strategic Change (*For Item 7783.a Planning Round Update*)

Martin Williams, Director of Finance

Cassie Wilson, PVC (Student Experience)

## **Observers**

Benjamin Orford Thompson, SU President Designate

Helen Slater, SU Education Officer Designate

## **Secretariat**

Katie Anderton

Laura Andrews

Helena Barrell

Lauren Howells

Ruth Robins

## **7776.0 Welcome and Quorum**

Purpose - For Information

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### **REPORTED**

The Chair welcomed members and attendees and made a formal note of attendance to ensure that quorum was maintained throughout the meeting. Council formally welcomed Professor Marcus Munafo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost as a new member of Council. Council also welcomed Professor Manuel Barcia, who had just taken up his appointment as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement). Council noted Benji Orford Thompson, incoming Students' Union President and Helen Slater, incoming Students' Union Education Officer were observing the meeting prior to taking up their new roles.

The Chair noted that a number of Council papers had fallen short, both in timeliness of distribution and compliance with the guidance on what constitutes an appropriate paper. Committee Chairs were keen to support the Governance Team to ensure that there was a substantial improvement for the July meeting and also asked that UEB supported the incoming University Secretary in reviewing the time lines for the call for papers.

## **7777.0 Declarations of Interest**

Purpose - For Information

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### **REPORTED**

The Chair would depart the room for the discussion around the new Chair of Council Recruitment under item 7788 'Nominations Committee'. No other declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

## **7778.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting - C24/25 - 42**

Purpose - For Approval

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### **DECISION**

The minutes were approved subject to the following amendments:

- 1) 7756.0 Institutional Update - bullet point 2 should read "..... acknowledgement of the recent achievements of Prof Turi King and Prof Sarah Hainsworth....."
- 2) 7756.0 Institutional Update - bullet point 4 - delete " Council noted that within the capital strategy "
- 3) 7763.0 (page 13) - 2030 not 20230
- 4) 7759.0 - amend after "for this financial year" by deleting to the end of that sentence and inserting "with the proviso of requiring changes to the GT team and an improvement in their processes and procedures, such that there were no late notification of issues arising"

## **7779.0 Actions and Matters Arising - C24/25 - 43**

Purpose - For Noting

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### **REPORTED**

Council noted the action log, and the results of the Council elections for 2025/26. Professor Paul Shepherd had been re-elected and Esther Reeves from Student Recruitment and Outreach would replace Kate Ehrig-Page as the Professional Services member on Council. Congratulations were offered to those elected.

Council noted that the action on Bath Riverside Innovation Quarter (BRIQ) would be considered at the meeting later in the day.

All other actions were marked as complete.

## **7780.0 Institutional Update - C24/25 - 44**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

Recruitment of the full UEB team had been completed.

The University was completing several pieces of work in parallel that would normally be done sequentially, including the planning round, implementation of the new Strategic Risk Register, setting KPIs and targets, and development of the strategic plan; all of which were being aligned to take the University forwards.

International student deposits were down 25%, which although challenging was not an outlier in the sector. UEB had been planning for scenarios that were worse than a 25% drop in international students.

The University continued to monitor EDI and the impact of global activities and their potential impact on our community.

### **DISCUSSED**

The University had released a statement that it was aware of the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of a woman and was considering the ruling. The University did not want to act prematurely as the EHCR guidance and statutory code of conduct would not be released until the summer. The University did have gender neutral facilities and had expanded these in recent years. The University was committed to continuing to work together to have an inclusive, compassionate, and supportive community.

Final figures were not yet available for the NSS response rate, but it was likely it would be slightly lower than the previous year. Despite this, the internal target of 70% had already been met; the national NSS threshold for responses is 50%.

The biggest change to international recruitment was an increase in interest from USA-based UG students, albeit from a relatively low base. The University was monitoring an increase in institutions, including within the Russell Group, who were dropping entry requirements and/or offering substantial fee discounts. This had been anticipated and more headroom had been

created to spend on scholarships and discounts if necessary.

## **7781.0 Faculty Spotlight - School of Management - C24/25 - 45**

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This item was taken after 7782.0 KPI and Strategy Update

### **REPORTED**

Steve Brammer, Dean of the School of Management, joined the meeting for this item.

Council received the report of the activity carried out by the School of Management and their strategy for the 2025/26 academic year, presented by the Dean of the School of Management. Overall, the school was performing well. Despite a tough financial climate, the School was growing with revenue and a contribution to the University that was higher than it had ever been although still below plan. Some key points made during the presentation were as follows:

- The context had been difficult with ambitious growth targets which were being met up until the current financial year. The expectation was that the School would undershoot contribution targets by £1m this year and next and then exceed targets the year after. A shift was needed from a focus on undergraduate (UG) provision to postgraduate (PG) growth.
- There was an appetite for innovation in the School, with trials of new programmes at UG and PG level and the expansion of online Masters' programmes in the latest planning round, as well as a potential January start for a couple of pilot PGT programmes
- The School was tracking well in research, with growing research, strong impact case studies, profile and media coverage.
- An improvement was required to PG rankings. Employability was important and whilst there was excellent support for UG students with internships and placements, more was required for PG students. A trial took place last year of 96 Masters' students undertaking internships. Improvements were being made, but more was needed and at a faster pace.

### **DISCUSSION**

Discussion following the presentation covered the following points:

- The plan for PG numbers growth. It was acknowledged that Bath was currently a market maker for UG and a market taker for PG. The School was working at extending and deepening relationships in international markets. There was already a broad portfolio at PG level, but there was the need to improve diversification and think less about the product and more about how the School leveraged and improved market opportunities to capture more market share.
- Some concern was expressed that the time being taken to acquire AACSB accreditation had been longer than had previously been advised.
- Planning for the next REF and the importance of REF inclusivity and the breadth of people contributing to quality outputs. There was good progress being made, with active mentoring support and resourcing.

- Benchmarking with other HE institutions. It was acknowledged that, whilst the University of Warwick was performing highly for external profile-building, including internationally, the school was 35% bigger than Bath and profile grew with scale.

## **7782.0 KPI and Strategy Update - C24/25 - 46**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

The Vice-Chancellor presented an update on the University strategy and associated institutional KPIs. The KPIs had been an iterative process and there remained further work to be done. The Vice-Chancellor extended his thanks to Council for their input in the development process. Work was starting on integrating the KPIs with the institutional risk register to create an internal monitoring tool. There was still a gap in the KPIs in relation to staff wellbeing, and input was welcomed on this.

### **DISCUSSION**

Council welcomed being involved with the development process of the KPIs rather than receiving a finalised set.

It was suggested it would be useful to look at the University's current comparator groups and check we were assessing against the correct institutions. The use of Leicester and Northampton Universities as examples for the increase of international students was queried. While these universities were not in our comparator group both had seen significant growth in their numbers of international students in recent years.

It was noted that the University was looking to reduce the non-residential space per FTE while also expecting to grow the FTE which would require investment in additional space. Council requested the reasoning behind these decisions be shared.

It was noted that the KPI of reaching the top 100 of the QS rankings had been updated from moderate to significant since the submission of the paper to Council.

Council requested that further information as to the tensions and connections between the different KPIs be provided. This work had started but was still in the very early stages and was not yet at a stage to be presented to Council.

EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) had been selected as the financial indicator KPI as it was an auditable measure. However, it was noted that it would need to be made clear what EBITDA was as not all members of the University would be familiar with the term.

The KPI in relation to the number of Free School Meals students at the University had been selected in part due to the ongoing targets in the Access and Participation Plan (APP). The APP had targets which had been agreed by the Office for Students (OfS) and as such the University had a statutory requirement to work towards these aims. Currently access was the main issue facing the University so while the entire student lifecycle was important to consider this was where the focus was required.

The KPI to maintain the University's rank in the Guardian league table had replaced a previous KPI based on NSS overall satisfaction scores. This had been changed as it was felt the Guardian ranking would combine both education and student experience. It was noted that

within the report the changes required were ranked as minimal however these would likely be moderate as the University could not remain complacent and work was required to maintain this ranking. While this was seen as a good measure for education and student experience it did not explicitly refer to wellbeing so this would need to be considered elsewhere. It was noted that while the QS rankings were the most important factor when it came to international applicants, home applicants looked at a variety of sources. The QS rankings were broadly influenced by research while UK-based rankings were more focused on student experience so having both as the University's targets was ambitious.

It was queried if there had been any consideration around influencing parents as well as students to choose Bath. The Vice-President (External Relations) was leading a project on Global Voice and Reputation which was looking at the perception of the University not only by prospective students but parents and other potential influencers such as teachers.

Clarification was sought around what tradeoffs the University would make to increase the number of international students. There was a difference between the targets and the reality of the markets. The decision would need to be made as to what extent the University chooses to fill any deficit of international students with home students. It was noted that discussions were taking place around this strategy as there would also be implications for staff and resources. There had been suggestion from some external experts that the University should focus on increasing their international undergraduate numbers but no decision on this had yet been made. Whichever strategy the University took, the focus would be on diversification of the countries targeted as this had protected the institution in the past.

Given the importance of having a clear baseline of measures against which to track progress, Council agreed to adopt the proposed KPIs, recognising that a KPI on staff wellbeing and further work as outlined above would be brought to Council in due course for approval.

## **ACTION**

**Assigned to** - Phil Taylor | **Due by** - 10 July 2025

The Vice-Chancellor to progress work looking at the tensions and synergies between the different institutional KPIs and the development of a staff wellbeing KPI and report back to Council

## **7783.0 Financial matters - C24/25 - 47**

Purpose - For Noting

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## **REPORTED**

Council received a summary report of the meeting of Finance Committee on 10th April 2025.

With regards to the Project CLEAR business case, it was noted that Finance Committee did not agree to recommend the approval of the requested additional contingency of 30%. The Committee did acknowledge the risk involved in large digital projects and that additional requests may come to the Committee if needed.

Finance Committee agreed to hold an extra meeting at the end of May 2025 to review the status of the draft budget and to consider some scenario analysis. This would help to ensure members had a good understanding of the work being done and questions raised could be addressed in good time, such that a firm budget recommendation could be agreed at the June meeting.

Discussions were still ongoing on how the assurance processes would be managed in relation to several large capital projects in the pipeline.

## **7783.a Planning Round Update - C24/25 - 47a**

Purpose - For Noting

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### **REPORTED**

Sharon Street, Director of Planning, Performance & Strategic Change, joined the meeting for this item.

Council received an update on the Planning Round 2024/25 for noting. The planning process was proceeding as intended and colleagues expected to submit a plan which, at a minimum, met the expected operating surplus described in last year's planning documentation.

### **DISCUSSION**

For the next three weeks the planning process would focus on identifying priorities based on impact and emerging priorities. Colleagues were mindful that the level of change needed to be balanced with leadership capacity, delivery capacity, and ongoing foundational digital work.

Council was assured that Faculty Deans were at the centre of the planning process and had been working collaboratively to develop plans which were then reviewed and scrutinised in line with strategic priorities. This represented a cultural shift compared to previous planning rounds, where the Deans were now empowered to make decisions and be more proactive in planning for future years. This year's process had also highlighted gaps in data required for more accurate planning, this was in turn informing the data and insights project and would benefit the process in future years.

Council acknowledged that planning for greater uncertainty in future years was challenging. It was noted that colleagues in Finance adopted a cautious approach and consequently were broadly confident that the plan figures could be delivered even against a range of scenarios. The capital plans were also being developed and subject to greater scrutiny. Finance Committee would be scrutinising the plan and then monitoring progress on delivery.

### **DECISION**

Council endorsed the planning update and remarked that the excellent work in this area. It welcomed the increased transparency on the strategic direction and priorities and the thought that was going into balancing ambition and capacity.

## **7783.b CLEAR Business Case for Council - C24/25 - 47b**

Purpose - For Decision

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### **REPORTED**

Gavin Edwards, Chief Data & Technology Officer, joined the meeting for this item.

Council received the full business case for Project CLEAR, which requested that Council approved a budget of £7,749k to deliver the project. The project aimed to introduce an improved cloud-based finance system in time for December 2026 when the Agresso supplier would be withdrawing support for systems hosted 'on-premise' rather than in the Unit4 cloud. It was noted that the change management involved in encouraging staff to use the new system would form a significant part of the project.



## DISCUSSION

Assurance was given that the University was in contact with other universities going through similar processes and learnings were being shared. This had helped inform the decision to continue working with the existing supplier rather than to procure a new system.

Council agreed that the change management would need to be handled carefully. Standardising the system/processes and not adding new variations could help encourage its acceptance. It would be important to take into account of all the voices of those who would use the system.

Further consideration would be required on how Council received information on major projects. This oversight was needed not just from a financial perspective, but also to help Council assess whether the desired outcomes were being achieved.

## DECISION

Council approved a budget of £7,749k to deliver Project CLEAR.

## 7784.0 SU Top 10 24/25 - 48

Purpose - For Discussion

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## REPORTED

Council received a paper summarising the progress made in the delivery of the Student Union's (SU) Top Ten for 2024/25.

Good progress had been made on the mechanisms that would enable achievement.

The biggest piece of work still to be done was to address the housing crisis. The Students' Union was satisfied with the direction of travel in this area but would appreciate more support from the University as it was difficult for the SU to exert pressure on the local council by itself.

The decision not to invest in the Sulis Club was disappointing for the SU, as it would impact the ability to host BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) matches and therefore the competitive offer. The SU was assessing the impact this would have on the upcoming academic year.

The SU manifesto (Together We Shape Tomorrow) and the Top 10 would inform each other, with a mapping exercise underway to identify any gaps.

The SU President encouraged Council to continue championing the Top 10 as it provided a unique forum for student engagement seen nowhere else in the country.

## DISCUSSED

Council asked if there were any remedial opportunities that could address the shortfall in sports facilities left by the decision not to invest in the Sulis Club. Talks were ongoing to consider what the University could do, including transport, pitch hire, and the provision of toilets with running water. It would still not be possible to hold BUCS matches without changing facilities but would increase the capacity for recreational sport. The University acknowledged that the decision not to invest had been a difficult one, but costs were significantly higher than when first quoted.

Investment in the 4G artificial pitch, which was the first in the country to use a wholly sustainable pitch surface, would significantly increase capacity, as traditional grass pitches could only be

used once a week. Members of Council would be invited to the opening event.

## **7785.0 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee - C24/25 - 49**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

Andrew Bidwell, Risk and Compliance Manager, joined the meeting for this item.

The internal audit on the Human Tissue Act had returned a view of limited assurance. There were approximately 20 instances of human tissue usage per year for research purposes. Due to the low volume, the University did not need a license but did still need to follow the processes laid out in the legislation. The Research Governance and Compliance Team was building capacity to address the issues raised in the audit through the Ethics@Bath system and a working group had also been set up.

ARAC had been having an ongoing conversation about the structure and framework of the Institutional Risk Register. This draft built on work done at the Council awayday but had not yet been seen by ARAC.

### **DISCUSSED**

The framework would provide clarity around the risk environment. It was agreed that the monitoring of specific risks might fall within the scope of individual committees such as Finance while ARAC held an oversight role and advisory function to Council which was ultimately responsible.

Council acknowledged that although not ideal for the draft to be seen here before ARAC, it was good to have a baseline to continue to build upon. There would be a quarterly review of the risks with the risk owners, UEB, ARAC, and Council to ensure the register remained dynamic. Next steps would see delegated authority pushed down to individual departments to begin using the Tier 2 architecture which would ensure the right registers were going to the right groups. Discussions were also ongoing with the Planning, Performance & Strategic Change Team to ensure alignment.

It was noted that mitigating actions /controls relating to cybersecurity which were currently in place had been omitted from the document and the Executive were asked to ensure that the document was appropriately populated as a matter of urgency to avoid an erroneous impression being given.

Council suggested that some of the definitions of impact (e.g. 'catastrophic') could cause emotive discussions rather than process-driven discussions.

Council was pleased to see solid progress but was aware that the University had much to do before it could be confident there was a fully embedded approach to risk management.

With regard to areas for internal audit, while it was concerning to have received an audit with limited assurance, Council noted that the purpose of many of these audits was to bring insight and address weaknesses in areas which the University had concerns about.

### **DECISION**

Council agreed to formally adopt the risk register while recognising it was a dynamic process and would be subject to revision and improvement.

It was noted that a lot of the risks were outside of appetite, and it was difficult to see this at-a-glance. It was suggested that a RAG rating in colour could improve usability.

Council delegated the decision to include a RAG rating to ARAC to be considered as part of the next steps at its meeting in June. Council members were asked to send any minor alterations to Andrew Bidwell, cc'ing the Vice-Chancellor and Tim Ford as Chair of ARAC.

## **ACTION**

**Assigned to** - Andrew Bidwell | **Due by** - 12 June 2025

Add information about ongoing mitigating actions in relation to cybersecurity into the framework and recirculate.

# **7786.0 Governance - Statutes and Ordinances - C24/25 - 50**

Purpose - For Decision

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## **REPORTED**

Council received the updated Statutes and Ordinances. If approved, the updated Statutes would be sent to the Privy Council for final approval and would be expected to come into force, together with the Ordinances, from the beginning of the 2025/26 academic year.

It was noted that several numbering and grammatical inconsistencies were in need of correction in the Statutes and some more substantive edits were needed in the Ordinances. It was recommended that these corrections could be made after approval had been received from Council and prior to the Statutes being submitted to the Privy Council.

## **DISCUSSION**

Council considered that a previous statute, which stated that an extraordinary meeting of Academic Assembly could be called upon the requisition in writing of not less than 20 members, had been moved into the Ordinances under 12.2. It was agreed that moving this text to the Ordinances was appropriate as the entitlement was retained while enabling easier amendments should this be needed in the future.

Members discussed the changes to the previous Statute 25 relating to employment provisions for academic staff, which had been replaced with a set of principles for all staff in the new Statute 17. The employment provisions and associated Ordinances would be moved into policy. Assurance was provided that until the new disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures for academics were agreed on, the current procedures would continue to apply. Concern was expressed about whether consultation on the changes would just take place with UCU, which did not cover all staff, and it was recognised that consultations should be had with all other relevant unions as well.

It was noted that while Ordinance 9 included the Student Union officers in the membership list for the Board of Studies (BoS), the officers had not attended or been invited to attend any BoS meetings for several years. It was suggested that the current text should be retained, as this would enable the Officers to attend future BoS meetings if needed.

A number of minor amendments to Ordinances were approved:

Ordinance 3.1 It was agreed that the additional three members of Court from Council do not have to be lay members.

Ordinance 5:1.4 add “Chancellor” immediately before “Vice -Chancellor

Ordinance 15 new point 4 add “the Vice Chancellor may resign in writing addressed to Council”

Ordinance 16 point 2 deleted as covered elsewhere,

Ordinance 24 point 6 was amended to “A student to whom a Sabbatical Year is granted will undertake not to accept any other employment, whether paid or unpaid, during the period of office without the permission of the Vice-Chancellor.”

## **DECISION**

Council approved the new Statutes and revised Ordinances of the University, subject to some further edits of a typographical and cross referencing nature being made prior to the submission of the Statutes to Privy Council.

## **ACTION**

**Assigned to** - Pamela Chesters | **Due by** - 10 July 2025

David Moon and Richard Brooks to discuss whether further, more detailed points of the application of the policy had been fully appreciated and advise the Chair as necessary.

## **7787.0 Governance - Elections and Nominations Framework - C2425 - 51**

Purpose - For Decision

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## **DECISION**

Council agreed to align voting methodologies and agreed the Single Transferable Vote process would be preferable when electing members of Senate and Professional Services to Council.

The Framework for Elections and Appointments had been reviewed by Council on 20th February 2025 and would be re-circulated to Council members for approval.

## **ACTION**

Circulate the Framework to Council for approval.

**Assigned to** – Lauren Howells | **Due by** – 10 July 2025

## **7788.0 Nominations Committee - C24/25 - 52**

Purpose - For Decision

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## **REPORTED**

The Chair of Council presented the summary report from the meeting of Nominations Committee from 11 March 2025 in which the Committee recommended to Council for approval the job description and recruitment process for Pro-Chancellors to the University; as well as the appointment of Ajaz Khowaj Quoruam Ahmed MBE as Pro-Chancellor (subject to a mutually satisfactory interview).

## DECISION

Council approved the job description and recruitment process for Pro-Chancellors to the University. They approved the appointment of Ajaz Khowaj Quoram Ahmed MBE as Pro-Chancellor to University subject to a satisfactory conclusion of a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Council and the candidate.

*The Chair of Council left the meeting at this point for this part of the item only, which was taken after 7805.0 Any Other Business.*

## REPORTED

The Senior Independent Director provided Council an update on the recruitment of the new Chair of Council. They were still in the process of interviewing candidates. A longlist of 10 candidates had been shortlisted to four interview candidates but one candidate had dropped out of the interview process. It was noted that it was important that the candidate was the right fit for the institution but also the institution the correct one for the successful candidate. The interview process had been well organised and included not only the formal interview but some informal sessions to allow input from colleagues on the University Executive Board and Students' Union.

## 7789.0 Annual Health & Safety Report - C2425 - 53

Purpose - For Discussion

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## REPORTED

Richard Brooks, Director of HR, joined the meeting for this item.

Council received the Annual Health & Safety report, which provided an update on key health, safety and employee wellbeing activities and performance at the University in 2024. The Building Safety and Fire Safety Acts were now operational and the report described the actions being taken by the University as a result.

## DISCUSSION

It was suggested that the report should feature earlier in the Council agenda in future to show that the appropriate level of prioritisation was being given to health & safety matters. Future reports could also include data on the completion rates for mandatory health & safety training, including around fire safety.

Council discussed the increases to planning times and project costs caused by the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) charging scheme and queried the level of risk this posed for the University's capital programmes. A detailed report showing the extent of the planning delays would be submitted to the Finance Committee meeting in June 2025.

Concern was expressed that the Fire Safety Advisor position was still vacant and clarification was sought on the actions that the University was taking to address this. The national shortage in hiring candidates with the necessary qualifications was presenting challenges, but the University had increased the salary on offer. The role was currently being covered by health & safety staff with relevant fire safety experience.

Members questioned the rise in the Reportable Incident Rate in 2024 to 2.07 reportable incidents per 1000 FTE employees, which was double the sector rate. It was noted that it was usual for this data to vary each year. However, if the rate continued to be high, further

investigations would be carried out to identify the reasons behind this.

It was questioned whether the data included in the report accounted for all contractors working on site, as this was generally agreed to be best practice. Council noted that it was important for the University to consider health & safety not just from an operational perspective, but also in relation to strategic risks.

It was confirmed that the University was responsible for health and safety issues in relation to the work spaces of employees who work from home.

## **ACTION**

**Assigned to** - Richard Brooks | **Due by** – 10 July 2025

Send information to Alun Griffiths on how health & safety data in relation to contractors is reported.

## **7790.0 Sustainability Update CAF - C24/5 - 54**

Purpose - For Discussion

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This item was taken after 7791.0 Workforce Report.

## **REPORTED**

Richard Jackson, Director of Sustainability, joined the meeting for this item.

The University's Scope 1 and 2 targets looked exceedingly challenging. Work was being done with Estates to develop an energy strategy, which would be taken to UEB and Council when ready.

Opportunities to decarbonise the STV were also being explored.

The University Travel Plan was being revised in relation to the R7 project which would lead to a reduction in car parking spaces.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was clarified that UEB had not formally moved away from the current net zero targets as work was still ongoing to analyse data, consider actions, and identify explanations. Council stressed that there should be minimal delay between any conclusion reached by UEB and formal consideration by Council.

## **7791.0 Workforce Report - C24/25 - 55**

Purpose - For Discussion

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## **REPORTED**

Richard Brooks, Director of HR, joined the meeting for this item.

Council received a paper providing data and insights on the use of market supplements as a means of responding to market pressures on staff recruitment and retention. It drew Council's

attention to some of the issues and risks to prompt discussions as part of the Foundations for the Future strategic priority.

## **DISCUSSION**

Council queried what action was being taken to address gender inequality relating to salaries. It was confirmed that all salary offers were the same at recruitment stage regardless of gender, but there were wider societal issues that limited progress in this area. The Gender Pay Gap Working Group had been active for the previous three years, and were looking at activities to help reduce inequalities.

Council noted that where finances were a constraint, additional benefits such as flexible hours and remote working could help.

## **7792.0 Annual Advancement Report - C24/25 - 56**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

Lydia Lee, Director of Advancement, joined the meeting for this item.

The Director of Advancement presented the annual report. It was noted that the Director was still relatively new in post so had tried to highlight the direction of travel of the team. There had been a high level of turnover within the department in recent years and there continued to be a number of vacancies. Recruitment and retention of staff was a key focus moving forward, ensuring the department had the correct skills within the team to drive innovation in the changing advancement space.

### **DISCUSSION**

It was noted that Advancement needed to be more visible within the University but given the vacancy levels, they were not currently in a place to do so. The team needed to be robust enough to go out externally and be scalable and this had been identified as a priority.

It was queried how important other local institutions were to Advancement's strategy. They were important however it was noted that for many local donors the University would not be their top priority for philanthropy as they would have a number of other requests. It was therefore important for the team to assess how they prioritised partnerships, ensuring that local relationships were nurtured but placing the most focus on where they would see the most returns.

## **7793.0 Annual DDAT Report - C24/25 - 57**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

Gavin Edwards, Chief Data & Technology Officer, re-joined the meeting for this item.

Council received a paper on progress relating to digital and technology work across the University since the previous presentation to Council in July 2024.

The previous year had seen DDAT transition into new structure with all the challenges of forming a new model of service delivery within a context of rising costs and difficulty in recruitment. However, significant progress had been made in relation to cyber security, enabling work for migration to the cloud and setting shared objectives and priorities with senior leadership.

## **DISCUSSION**

Council noted the challenges around introducing and embedding new systems rapidly, and the importance of effective communication in this area. There had been progress in this area, with DDAT communications improving. 'Adopt not adapt' was a key message to users, as DDAT aimed to encourage use of existing centralized systems with existing support rather than creating local customized solutions which lacked clear ownership.

## **7794.0 Report from Senate - C24/25 - 58**

Purpose - For Noting

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### **REPORTED**

Council received a summary report of the last meeting of Senate which took place on 29 January 2025. Council were asked to note the report.

### **ACTION**

**Assigned to** - Ian Blenkarn | **Due by** - 10 July 2025

Council requested more detail in the report in future so they had greater knowledge of how Senate had assured itself on the subject matter on question and consequently what Senate was providing assurance on.

## **7795.0 Quality Assurance in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Assessments - C24/25 - 59**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

Council received a paper which aimed to provide assurance on the quality and standards of exams and assessments at the University.

### **DISCUSSION**

Council noted the recommendations within the report and agreed there were no significant issues in relation to Quality Assurance of exams and assessment. They asked for future reports to be more tailored specifically for Council.

## **7796.0 APP Update - C24/25 - 60**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**



Momna Hejmadi, Associate PVC (Education Quality and Enhancement), joined the meeting for this item.

The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education Quality and Enhancement) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) presented the report on Widening Access activity at the University. The aim of the report had been to showcase all Widening Access activities across the University including that which was not encompassed in the Access and Participation Plan (APP). They were looking to report in a more joined up way, to implement a strategy to support students throughout the student life cycle, reporting biannually to provide assurance to the University Executive.

## **DISCUSSION**

It was noted that this format of reporting was still relatively new and that future reports would include not only the activities but evaluations of the impact they have.

There was still a period of development where the University would need to evaluate which activities were having a positive and significant impact and what could be done moving forward to improve these impacts. The number of applications to the University from groups identified in the APP had increased but there was still an issue when it came to converting offers to accepted students. For the 25/26 Academic Year the University had made contextual offers with a two grade reduction which they hoped would see some impact. However, it would be necessary, particularly around Clearing, to track these numbers as last year there were WP students with contextual offers whom we would ultimately have been happy to accept but found that there were by then no available course places.

It was noted that while access was very important there needed to be structures in place to ensure that students were supported through their entire University career. It had been shown that even with lower contextual offers the continuation and retention rates for students was good and it was felt the necessary support mechanisms were in place.

It was queried whether the University monitored the potential applicants who attended open days but decided not to apply. The University had surveys for applicants who accepted and declined offers as well as an open day visitor's survey. This survey included questions about their experience so there was both quantitative and qualitative data around why potential applicants felt they would not fit in at Bath which was fed back to the Admissions team. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to do some more work in this area, particularly where students attended an open day but then did not apply to Bath.

## **7797.0 Subject and Course Review Criteria - C24/25 - 61**

Purpose - For Discussion

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### **REPORTED**

Council received a report from the PVC E on the subject and course review criteria to be used to improve the financial sustainability of education. Four criteria were proposed related to Subject marker and student recruitment; Education and student satisfaction; Resourcing and sustainability; and Impact and relevance. It was reported that these criteria would be used not just to identify courses or modules for closure, but also those that could be expanded or supported to do better.

More details were given about the first criteria that was currently being developed in detail, and the intention was to use this as the triage issue, following which other three criteria would be used in a deep dive of courses at risk.

It was noted that there were complexities in applying the criteria where additional data at a subject, course or course group level, such as financial performance or student recruitment, did not cleanly correlate or overlap. Nevertheless the analysis showed that based on student enrolment data, at UG level 40 CAH3 subject areas were represented at Bath and of these 4 had fewer than 10 students enrolled. At the PGT level, there were 32 CAH3 subjects, and of those 5 had fewer than 10 students. If the analysis was based on financial grounds using a minimum of 40% contribution level, then slightly more subject groups would fall below this threshold; 10 of 73 finance based UG subject groups and 20 of 59 PGT groups. It was recognised however that this broad analysis was based on imperfect data which the team was working to improve.

Work in this area had begun in 2022/23 and as a result faculties had already started making decisions on which courses could be closed or needed to be supported further. The detailed methodology underpinning this would be presented to UEB on 13 May and it was expected that a more institutionally consistent, formalised approach would be used across the faculties and embedded into the annual planning process. DDaT was leading a project to improve the data used for this exercise.

## **DISCUSSION**

Council queried how the success of the project would be assessed. It was intended that once the methodology for the review of courses had been agreed and tested, it would form part of the business plan for new courses as well as the regular review of Bath's courses/portfolio.

Given the complexity of the task, it was suggested that the key basis for decisions should be financial sustainability although subsequent criteria would then need to be applied. This could also be referred to, alongside the financial pressures for the sector, when explaining the reasoning behind the review of courses to academic staff. It would be important to share the framework used when reviewing courses with staff.

Members were pleased to learn that the initial analysis had been completed. They accepted that this would always be an imprecise exercise but at a very high level still felt that it ought to be possible to have an understanding of the scale of the issue and opportunity cost within this area. It considered that it would be appropriate for Finance committee to be briefed accordingly following the presentation of material to UEB.

It was noted that the review would be centrally discussed within UEB and Deans would be empowered to lead the reviews within the faculties. When good practice within a particular faculty was identified, the respective Dean should be invited to present this work at UEB so that others could learn from it.

Members questioned how MRes courses would be reviewed, as these tended to be specialised but important. It was noted that Phase 3 of the PGT review was currently ongoing, and the characteristics that would be applied to three types of PGT courses: conversion courses, practice-based, and advanced/specialist courses, would be decided as part of this review.

## **7798.0 Redundancy Committee - C24/25 - 62**

Purpose - For Approval

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## **REPORTED**

Council received a summary report from the Redundancy Committee meeting on 27 March 2025 which had considered a number of cases of redundancy.

## **DECISION**

Council members agreed the paper should be removed from circulation as it contained identifiable information and did not accurately reflect the outcome of the meeting. A more succinct version would be developed and dealt with via correspondence promptly.

### **7799.0 Remuneration Committee - C24/25 - 63**

Purpose - For Noting

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## **REPORTED**

Council noted the summary report of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee on 11 March 2025.

### **7800.0 Honorary Degrees Committee Report - C24/25 - 64**

Purpose - For Decision

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## **REPORTED**

Council received a summary report from the Honorary Degrees Committee held on 13 March 2025.

## **DECISION**

Council approved the President's Award nominations.

### **7801.0 EDIC Committee Report - C24/25 - 65**

Purpose - For Noting

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## **REPORTED**

Council noted the summary report of the meeting of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee held on 10 April 2025.

### **7802.0 SU Elections Results 2025 - C24/25 - 66**

Purpose - For Noting

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## **REPORTED**

Council received a report detailing the elected Students' Union Officers for 2025/26.

## **DISCUSSION**

Members congratulated the elected SU Officers and noted that they were looking forward to working together over the 2025/26 academic year.

## **7803.0 Programme of Meetings for 2025/26 - C24/25 – 67**

Purpose - For Noting

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Council noted the programme of meetings.

## **7804.0 Calendar of Meetings - 2025/26 - C24/25 - 68**

Purpose - For Noting

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Council noted the draft calendar of meetings.

Committee chairs were asked to speak the Governance team if they felt there were any issues arising from the proposed timetable.

## **7805.0 Any Other Business**

Purpose - For Noting

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It was the last meeting for Jimena Alamo (SU President) and Amber Snary (SU Education Officer) after two years of service and they were thanked for their significant contributions. The Chair of Council noted that Council was particularly proud of the way they had represented the University with external organisations.

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*One item of business has been redacted in line with the framework for the publication of Council minutes, either because they pertain to individuals or because they contain matters which are commercially sensitive.*

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