Council

Thursday, 19th February 2026 9:30 am

Council Chamber | Council

Minutes of Meeting

Attendees

Members Attended

Maria Bond

Sharon Flood, Chair

Sabina Gheduzzi

Alun Griffiths

Dot Griffiths

Don McLaverty

Calum Mercer

Marcus Munafo

Benjamin Orford Thompson

Esther Reeves

Jo Rhoden

Paul Shepherd

Helen Slater

Anthony Smith

Phil Taylor (*left after Item 7887 Faculty Spotlight)*

In Attendance

Ghazwa Alwani-Starr, Chief Operating Officer

Manuel Barcia, PVC (Global Engagement)

Andrew Bidwell, Risk and Compliance Manager *(For Item 7885 Institutional Risk Report Quarterly Update)*

Richard Brooks, Director of HR

Emma Carmel, PVC (Research)

Julian Chaudhuri, PVC (Education) *(attended online)*

Tim Ibell, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering & Design *(For Item 7887 Faculty Spotlight – Engineering & Design)*

Richard Jackson, Director of Sustainability and Space Management *(For Item 7892 Energy & Carbon Targets – Presentation)*

Lydia Lee, Director of Advancement *(For Item 7891 Advancement Team Overview)*

Cassie Wilson, PVC (Student Experience & Sport)

Martin Williams, Director of Finance

Secretariat

Laura Andrews, Governance Partner,

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

Ben Goose, Governance Manager (Strategic & Academic Focus)

Clare Stevenson, Director of Legal, Governance & Compliance and Deputy University Secretary *(Clare stepped out of the meeting at 12:00)*

Apologies

Corinne Evans, Executive Director (External Relations) *(in attendance)*

7877.0 Welcome and Quorum

For Information

REPORTED

The Chair welcomed members and attendees and made a formal note of attendance to ensure that quorum was maintained throughout the meeting.

A particular welcome was made to Clare Stevenson, Director of Legal, Governance & Compliance and Deputy University Secretary, and Ben Goose, incoming Governance Manager, who were observing today's meeting. Richard Brooks was also welcomed as a new attendee at Council.

Apologies had been received from Corinne Evans (usually in attendance).

7878.0 Declarations of Interest

For Information

REPORTED

Members **noted** that some members of Council were active, deferred, or pensioner members of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). This was a sector-wide arrangement for higher education staff and did not, of itself, constitute a personal or pecuniary conflict of interest. Where a matter under consideration could reasonably be perceived to give rise to a specific or material conflict for a member or members, member(s) were expected to declare the interest at the relevant point in the meeting, in accordance with the University's policy on conflicts of interest.

Benji Orford Thompson, SU President, declared an interest in item 7886 regarding student accommodation. No other declarations of interest were made.

7879.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting - C25/26 - 37

For Approval

DECISION

Council **approved** the minutes of the previous meeting of Council held on 20 November 2025, subject to the following amends:

Item 7856 Institutional Update

To amend the wording of the section regarding an increase in student maintenance loans for the students from low income backgrounds, which would be funded by the international levy, to reflect that it was the reintroduction of student maintenance grants that would be funded by the levy.

Item 7858 ARAC

1st paragraph - 'The Chair of ARAC reported on institutional risk and risk management, giving credit to the Risk and Compliance Manager for establishing operational risk registers and starting the transition from Excel to the risk system.' As the operational risk registers had not yet been established and the transition to the system from excel had not yet happened, this sentence should be amended to suggest it was a recommended next step.

2nd paragraph - correction to Chris Young's job title which should be 'Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services'

4th paragraph - 'In reducing the size of Council, the Committee had agreed that it was satisfied with two lay members rather than three, given that there were also two co-opted members.' to be changed to 'Council had...' to reflect Council's approval of the arrangement, rather than the Committee's.

7880.0 Actions and Matters Arising - C25/26 - 38

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** the Council action log since its last meeting on 20 November 2025.

7857: An update was given on one outstanding action relating to the strategic oversight, assurance, and decision-making to support Bath Riverside Innovation District (including Lewis House and Bath Quays North). The Infrastructure Working Group (IWG) had engaged with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) regarding the potential for early oversight and work was underway to ensure the group was working effectively. Action closed.

7881.0 Safety Leadership - Verbal Update

For Discussion

REPORTED

The Vice-Chancellor (VC) opened the meeting by emphasising safety leadership.

The University was the legal employer, with Council as its governing body. Council delegated day-to-day Health & Safety responsibilities to the VC, who in turn, delegated to committees and operational leads. All staff also held individual responsibilities for H&S. A University-wide H&S Committee was supported by departmental committees and specialist committees for higher-risk areas. An annual H&S Report was submitted to Council and internal audits were undertaken regularly.

In 2025, the Executive launched a H&S change programme following several incidents. A peer-review audit identified no issues at the most serious level but highlighted areas for improvement, particularly in local management. Departments received inspection reports and were working through the required actions. A University Executive Board (UEB) Task & Finish Group had been established to drive the programme forward.

UEB had approved the recruitment of specialist roles in engineering safety and fire safety audit. Sector-specific H&S leadership training was also available for relevant colleagues. A full chemical inventory had been compiled, including storage locations, methods, and quantities. Remedial actions had already begun.

Some laboratory spaces had poor infrastructure and required improvements, including enhanced tidiness and cleanliness, to meet required standards. A joint inspection of laboratories and workshops had been undertaken. Spaces not operating safely could be closed immediately; one science laboratory had been closed temporarily.

The work had helped clarify expected standards and strong leadership had been demonstrated by the Deans. Departments continued to progress actions, monitored by the Task & Finish Group. The VC confirmed that future updates could be brought to Council.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of this item covered the following points:

- The fragmented nature of H&S responsibilities reinforcing the need for the UEB oversight group.
- Close liaison with the Deputy Director Safety & Wellbeing Services regarding any challenges in implementing actions.
- The intersection between H&S and staff wellbeing; the People & Culture Committee would receive a forthcoming paper on psychological and physical safety.
- Real-world scenarios and personal experiences were noted as effective for reinforcing the seriousness of H&S, which could otherwise be seen as administrative.

7882.0 Institutional update - C25/26 - 39

For Discussion

REPORTED

Council received an update following press coverage that University College London (UCL) had reached a confidential settlement in relation to the Student Group Claim. A further 36 universities were now facing potential legal action from current and former students who claimed they did not receive the full education they paid for during Covid. The University of Bath was one of the 36 universities that had received a letter before action. The matter was being managed by the Legal team, and the University was taking external legal advice. The Chair of Council would be kept updated.

Council **received** an update from the VC on recent developments across the institution.

The Global Voice & Reputation project was continuing and had proven to be an excellent piece of work, helping to shape the University's strategy which would be launched in October of this year.

On the topic of Pay and People Matters, it was reported that there had been changes to the Employment Rights Bill in December 2025 including the removal of the 50% participation threshold for industrial action to be possible. Now a simple majority for industrial action would suffice, irrespective of the rate of participation. Other changes included the amount of notice that had to be given on industrial action and the nature of industrial action, which would come into effect ahead of the 2026/27 academic year. There had been a surge in Trade Union (TU) activity and more activity was expected, to which the University would respond proactively.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of the institutional update covered the following points:

- Bath Pay and People Matters - it was not expected that the University would be affected by the pending lift of the tribunal cap, as settlements usually took place beneath the cap, meaning cases were rarely if ever taken forward to tribunal.

- Recruitment and Admissions – there was a focus on conversion in recruitment and admissions, particularly for overseas students, as well as looking at online provision of Postgraduate Taught (PGT) programmes and teaching overseas. The PGT market had changed with applications increasing in some countries (e.g. Vietnam, Turkey and Nigeria) and decreasing in others (e.g. China and India). There had been an increase in scholarship applications, despite a decrease in PGT applications, suggesting the improved scholarship offering was helping to attract interest from international students and there was more potential to convert those who had applied to Bath. Focusing on Undergraduate (UG) students at home and international would be an important tactic moving forwards, as UG applications had been at their highest recorded level.

- Students' Union (SU) - the first Freshers Week Impact Report showed how the first week of university was core for students to build a community. The SU had held more events in the city, to help students living off campus to feel more welcome. The redevelopment of 6WS was close to finishing and was due to open next month. This would provide a student hub with neurodivergent spaces.

- Sporting success - acknowledgment was made to colleagues in Sport as well as research academics at the University who had worked with successful athletes at the Winter Olympics to improve their performance.

- Global Talent Fund update - the funding for this had come from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). A bid was made on four areas related to the University's research strengths. There had been over 400 applications which would be shortlisted to 10 candidates to be invited to panel meetings and interviews.

- Research strategy - the need to focus on clear areas where the University could excel and make impact was discussed. Dual use research (e.g. research that combined energy and defense) would be important to help secure funding.

7883.0 Secretary's Report to Council - C25/26 - 40

For Approval

REPORTED

Council **noted** the Secretary's Report to Council which was a new consolidated report which brought together governance, constitutional and compliance matters for Council's oversight and approval. The University Secretary welcomed feedback from Council members on the format and effectiveness of the report.

The report contained several items requiring Council approval, as well as items for noting. The Chair thanked Council members for the support and advice they had provided to date.

The University Secretary highlighted a number of ongoing developments in the governance space:

- A new Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Code of Governance was expected in May 2026. The University planned to align its next external governance review with the publication of the new Code; thanks were extended to Maria Bond for supporting the process of selecting the external partner who would run the external review.

- Work was underway on internal governance enhancements, including a Governance Sprint exercise.

- Proposed Executive Governance structure changes had been presented to UEB and would shortly be taken to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) and Council for consultation . These changes would necessitate updates to the Scheme of Delegation, which would require Council approval.

Council **noted** the following:

- Proposed governance update
- Decisions taken between meetings
- Documents signed under seal
- Governance Effectiveness Review and Governance Sprint work
- Reportable Event
- Governance Team changes
- Training and useful resources

DISCUSSED

Items raised during discussion were as follows:

- Council was reminded that the University operated an ‘explain, not comply’ basis with respect to ARAC membership requirements. Members queried whether this approach was appropriate for a university of Bath's standing.

- Council membership - it was confirmed there was no intention to reduce Council representation on ARAC. Members noted that the current reduced size of Council (15 members) may create limitations for sub-committee membership. The Chair emphasised the importance of giving the new structure time to embed before further changes were considered. Nominations Committee would bring forward proposals regarding future Council member recruitment.

- Statement of Equality Objectives - the need to include detail within the action plans; examples such as the Sanctuary Award and the NNECL Quality Award Mark were suggested as additions. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) clarified that Council was approving the objectives for publication, not the underlying activities. These actions could be refined and expanded as suggested.

DECISION

Council **approved** the following:

- Amendment to Ordinance 16.1

- Amendment to Ordinance 18

- Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy

- Deletion of the Redundancy Committee

- Refreshed Statement of Equality Objectives

- Membership and Terms of Reference for Nominations Committee

- Upcoming changes to Council Membership

7884.0 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee - C25/26 - 41

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** the summary report of the last ARAC meeting on 5 February 2026.

The Chair of ARAC introduced the report and emphasised the robustness of ARAC's processes. The University's digital maturity had been evaluated through two external frameworks and sector benchmarking.

ARAC remained concerned that the University was operating at a low level of digital maturity, with low levels of investment compared with the sector. ARAC recommended that Council should hold a deepdive discussion on Digital at the next available opportunity, and suggested that this should also consider the University’s workforce transformation activity given the close interdependencies.

ARAC noted that while the Committee could not give assurance that all strategic projects would complete on time and to budget, it could assure Council that the processes and escalation culture supporting project oversight had strengthened significantly. The Committee discussed the Institutional Risk Register and welcomed the progress made over the past year. It was noted that the next stage would be to operationalise risk management and ensure that the forthcoming risk system would support consistent understanding and flow of risks across the institution.

ARAC noted positive progress in reducing the number of open internal audit points and commended the sustained effort made across the University. The Committee also noted the successful management of a recent cyber security incident, supported by strong processes and protocols, while reiterating concerns about the University's relatively low investment in information security.

ACTION

Deep dive discussion on Digital

Action Description - ARAC recommended that Council should hold a deep dive discussion on Digital at the next available opportunity, and suggested that this should also consider the University's workforce transformation activity given the close interdependencies.

Action Status – Not started | Due by – 9 July 2026 | Assigned to – Sharon Flood / Jo Rhoden

7885.0 Institutional Risk Report Quarterly Update - C25/26 - 42

For Discussion

REPORTED

The VC and Risk and Compliance Manager introduced the Institutional Risk Register.

Work was underway to align the Institutional Risk Register with the emerging strategic goal delivery plans to provide greater rigour and coherence. Consideration was being given to moving away from a traditional heatmap style, towards an approach that better illustrated interdependencies between risks and recognised that mitigations in one area could directly affect others.

DISCUSSED

The points raised during discussion of this update were as follows:

- Mitigating Actions and Controls - members emphasised the importance of identifying the key controls and mitigating actions that shifted a risk to the desired position. Only material mitigating actions should be included. ARAC recently discussed the need to focus on mitigations with tangible impact. Operational risk registers, once introduced, would cascade upwards.

- Forward-Looking Approach - the Chair expressed concern that current risk management practices could feel reactive rather than proactive. Examples included the UCL case and issues relating to digital risks. Members suggested that the Risk Register should adopt a more forward-looking, anticipatory perspective.

- Strategic Planning and Scenario Forecasting - following recent training, members asked whether potential risks should be more explicitly derived from the strategic planning process. Scenario forecasting was proposed as a valuable tool - for example, modelling how international conflict or geopolitical developments might impact the University's strategic ambitions, including internationalisation.

7886.0 Finance Committee - C25/26 - 43

For Noting

REPORTED

The Chair of the Finance Committee (FC) introduced this item and summarised the Committee's recent work since the last Council meeting.

The financial forecast for the year remained positive; however, there were ongoing concerns regarding the long-term financial outlook, driven by challenges in international student recruitment and research funding.

The FC approved the student rent levels. Appreciation was expressed for the SU engaging in early consultation. Members noted that rent increases were difficult but necessary to support continued investment in the estate.

The University was increasing bursary levels to meet requirements linked to maintaining a proportion of affordable accommodation. It was noted that there were some differences in interpretation between the University and the SU regarding the definition of affordability. Benchmarking remained challenging due to variations in weekly rates across the sector.

An update on the future direction of IAAPS was received at the Finance Committee but no new approvals were made at the meeting. In September, FC asked the Executive to provide a clear direction of travel for IAAPS within one year. This would be presented to the Committee in September. Two external members had recently joined the IAAPS Board, which FC welcomed.

The University's Cloud Enabling and Agresso Re-platforming (CLEAR) project was a major project with significant risks. This would return to FC for further consideration at the next meeting.

7886.a R7 Student Accommodation - C25/26 - 43A

For Approval

REPORTED

This item was introduced with reference to prior review by the Infrastructure Working Group

(IWG).

The IWG reviewed the proposal ahead of FC. Some risks remained, particularly in relation to the ongoing Secretary of State review (required because of the Sport England objection). FC recommended approval, while noting that this did not remove all associated risks.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of this item covered the following points:

- Funding release - a total of £5,508k would be released in two tranches. The first tranche would cover contractor pre-construction services fees, Bath and North-East Somerset Council (B&NES) contributions and planning fees and Stage 4 survey allowance and consultancy fees at a total of £2,208k. The second tranche, totalling £3,300k for the John Graham Construction Limited enabling works, would be released following further consultation with IWG/FC once planning approval was secured.

- Key risks - time and money. Planning permission timelines were uncertain and not within the University's control. Delays would risk pushing the project back further, potentially leading to missing another intake of students, increased inflationary pressures and additional cost escalation. Dividing the £5,508k into tranches was intended to de-risk the process. Enabling works would not commence until planning approval was granted; however, some funds were needed now to maintain momentum and progress preparatory work.

- Value engineering and scope adjustments - ongoing value engineering had led to some design changes to support planning approval, including a reduction in the number of bedrooms. IWG would continue to monitor these changes closely.

- Cost certainty and contingency planning - members discussed the need to recognise uncertainty in the period between now and the project start. Key considerations included: potential income loss scenarios and their consequences, impact on the student experience if only one block was delivered initially and understanding critical drivers early to avoid lastminute concerns. IWG would run scenario-based stress tests. Decisions on risk tolerance must be taken quickly, requiring forward planning. ARAC members may also be involved in this work.

- Programme and governance - cost risk and programme risk were identified as important areas requiring active mitigation, including planning for potential partial completion and its impact on students. IWG clarified its role as an assurance committee. It verified, rather than carried out, the Executive's stage-gating processes. Internal governance structures for the project would be shared with IWG. It was noted that the University had not undertaken a major capital project for nearly a decade; as IWG confidence in executive governance grew, so may its risk tolerance.

- Strategic Alignment - the delivery of R7 was fundamental to the Strategy and the University must establish a shared understanding of what 'delivered well' meant in this context.

DECISION

Council **approved** the release of £5,508k (inc. VAT and 10% Contingency) of the approved R7 Student Accommodation budget. This would take place in two tranches; the first tranche totalling £2,208k and the second tranche totalling £3,300k. The release of the second tranche funds associated with the Infrastructure Enabling Works would require final sign off from the Chairs of IWG and FC by correspondence once Planning Permission was confirmed.

7886.b John Wood Court - C25/26 - 43B

For Approval

REPORTED

This item was introduced as a fast-moving situation, with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) welcoming questions from Council.

The Treasurer noted that an additional paper had been provided regarding the rate of return, containing supplementary information that FC wished Council to be aware of.

The works required at John Wood Court had resulted in significant costs to the University. There was a need to reflect on how similar risks could be mitigated in future projects. There was an immediate operational need to complete the necessary works so that the accommodation was available for the next academic year. Ongoing discussions were taking place with Aviva, the University's partner in this facility.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of this item covered the following points:

- Compliance and building safety - a question was raised about why the accommodation was deemed unsafe. It was confirmed that the building met the regulatory requirements in place at the time of construction, and the University was fully compliant. This incident raised the question of whether ARAC should review how buildings were assessed, even when they met legal standards, to determine whether additional executive assurance was needed.

- Strong support was expressed for progressing the works without delay and continuing constructive engagement with Aviva.

- Members highlighted the importance of contextual information when presenting papers like this to Council. They noted that while the Executive Leadership Team may hold some information, others across the institution may be aware of more and it was important that as much historical context for the current situation as possible was provided.

DECISION

Council **approved** University funding of £6,505k to complete the works on John Wood Court.

7887.0 Faculty Spotlight - Engineering & Design - C25/26 - 44

For Discussion

REPORTED

The Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Design introduced the paper. He emphasised that the future of the Faculty revolved around cultural transformation and that there had been signs of success.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of the paper covered the following points:

- Faculty priorities - the conversion of students, particularly PGT students. In previous years, there had been a focus on recruitment; however, conversion was now the priority. There had been a significant reduction in PGT students over the past seven years. Two PGT programmes had recently been suspended as they were not viable to run, so this had become a top priority.

- Cultural change - there had been progress with the professorial culture within the Faculty following a disconnect for many years. Plans were in place to continue this positive cultural change.

- Research quality and the aim for 70% research recovery - support was available to probationers and early-stage academics to help build their research. There was a longer-term aim for research centres to be global, interdisciplinary and well-funded and to attract international students.

- The helpful introduction of the Education Portfolio Review and how the model could be used to grow healthy programmes.

- The future of IAAPS and its potential to support work in future flight and hydrogen.

7888.0 International Foundation Year - Verbal update

For Discussion

REPORTED

The University Secretary and Registrar provided an update on the International Foundation Year.

The University had expected to report that the contract for the International Foundation Year partnership had been signed. The contract with Study Group was very close to finalisation, with the remaining details currently being resolved. The team was progressing the negotiations as quickly as possible and had sought reassurance that the pace was appropriate and not unduly protracted. This was an important partnership for the University's future international pathway provision, and trust would be a critical element of the ongoing relationship.

7889.0 Academic Assembly Resolution - C25/26 - 45

For Discussion

REPORTED

The Chair of Academic Assembly introduced the resolution which had been put forward by Academic Assembly (AA) and was endorsed by Senate. AA had called an extraordinary meeting associated with the closure of research facilities and changes to TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing). Members had concerns about the closure of facilities and wanted a better understanding about how TRAC costings had been calculated and recognition of how these decisions impacted colleagues and their careers. Thanks were made to the Executive for attending the meeting and taking the time to hear the views of members. AA members voted on the motion which passed with 63 votes for, 2 against, and no abstentions. Senate discussed the motion and voted to endorse this for referral to Council.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) summarised the Executive's response to the concerns raised by AA. The first was regarding the University's stance on key priority research areas. It was confirmed that decisions were not made to disinvest in any areas of research, but the University would be looking at areas of strength which aligned with the Global Talent Fund.

The steep increase in TRAC costs was a result of new rules which the University had complied with at an earlier stage to some other universities. Now that other universities were on board with the changes, this would give an opportunity to re-look at costings.

The decision to close research facilities was made based on the financial sustainability of those facilities. The University had looked at how it could offer alternative facilities at a much reduced cost and a holding room was now available to replace the Biosciences Unit (BSU). Only two researchers were no longer able to undertake their work on campus, so arrangements had been made for them to use the facilities at Bristol.

There were lessons to be learnt about how communication could have been more effective, as well as getting the community on board with the changes. There was now a TRAC user group in place.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of the motion covered the following points:

- Council's role - it was confirmed that these were executive decisions and Council were not being asked to overturn the decisions, but to exercise oversight and assurance. The aim was to understand the work that had been done and to provide appropriate oversight going forwards.

- Engaging the community - it was felt that a discussion at the People and Culture Committee about how to engage people with organisational change and gain their trust would be a useful step forward.

- Effective communication - the decision to close the BSU was a robust decision as the result of an external review. Users were part of the external investigation and a report was shared with the users. It was recognised that there would always be some opposition when making difficult decisions. The process of identifying research strengths would be shared, offering people the chance to engage.

- Sharing financial data - The University invested £70m in research to make up for the shortfall in research funding. Colleagues needed to be made aware of this investment. It was suggested that Finance Committee could look at the investment and how this was divided up across the different research areas. It was also suggested that Finance Committee looked at the TRAC costing changes, lessons learned and the financial case for how this sort of decision was made in future, to ensure robustness. Also, to consider the data that could be made available to AA members as part of their request for transparency.

DECISION

Council **agreed** a way forward with the Academic Assembly resolution, with discussions to be referred to the People and Culture Committee and Finance Committee and a response to AA to be drafted and brought back to Council by correspondence.

ACTION

Academic Assembly response to resolution

Action Description - To draft an institutional response to Academic Assembly and bring this back to Council for approval by circulation.

Action Status - Done | Action Completed Date - 2 Mar 2026 | Assigned to - Ian Blenkharn

ACTION

Discussions to be referred to the People and Culture Committee and Finance Committee

Action Description - People and Culture Committee to discuss lessons learned and how to engage people with organisational change and gain their trust going forwards.

Finance Committee to discuss the TRAC costing changes, lessons learned and the financial case for how this sort of decision is made in future, to ensure robustness. Also, to consider the TRAC data that could be made available to AA members as part of their request for transparency and how to communicate the University's investment in research more widely to its community.

Action Status - Not Started | Due by - 30 Apr 2026 | Assigned to - Elisabeth Day

7890.0 Education Portfolio Review - C25/26 - 46

For Discussion

REPORTED

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) provided an overview of the Education Portfolio work.

The Education Portfolio Review comprised work that would ultimately be embedded into business-as-usual processes. The programme consisted of six strands, each of which was summarised for Council. In time, this work would be incorporated into the Annual Planning cycle.

The approach established a consistent institutional framework, moving the University from a reactive to a proactive stance in managing and stewarding the education portfolio. The work would strengthen alignment between UEB's strategic decisions and the University's broader financial sustainability.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of this item covered the following points:

- The approach was welcomed, commended, and endorsed by Council members.

- It was noted that this type of activity was a normal and healthy feature of a successful educational organisation and was not about identifying failure.

- Embedding this process within Faculties was seen as essential, as Faculties held deep expertise regarding their courses, employers, and subject area trends. This must be balanced with a strong link to central strategy to ensure coherence at the institutional level. Faculties increasingly viewed this work as part of their own responsibility, rather than something driven solely by the centre, which was an important and positive cultural shift.

7891.0 Advancement Team Overview - C25/26 - 47

For Discussion

REPORTED

The Director of Advancement presented an overview on the work of the Advancement Office over the past 12 months.

The presentation focused on a potential new international scholarship programme funded by Sunil Bharti Mittal. Sunil had received an Honorary Doctorate of Business Administration from the University of Bath in 2025 and several members of his family had studied at the University, cultivating a deep connection with the University. At his honorary degree ceremony, Sunil announced a donation offer for two scholarships, in India and Africa, for the most deserving bright minds who didn't have the means to fund a university education.

The University was currently working with Sunil's foundation teams to agree the exact criteria and process for recruitment and selection. Depending on the scale and value of the scholarship programme, this may be brought to a future meeting of Council for approval.

The Advancement Team had been working closely with a small project team as well as many others across the faculties, central comms team, student support team, and senior team.

Sunil's honorary degree announcement received over 168m views in India, aiding Bath's global reputation, brand and recruitment strategy in India and globally.

DISCUSSED

It was acknowledged that the initial scholars may be difficult to reach, but that this was a positive step in starting the journey of building a cohort of international scholars.

7892.0 Energy & Carbon Targets - Presentation

For Discussion

REPORTED

The Director of Sustainability and Space Management gave a presentation on the Energy Strategy and Decarbonisation Plan.

The University's Energy Strategy was underway to look at ways to decarbonise campus and the estate. The Estate Strategy would have an influence over the energy to deliver and how to decarbonise buildings. The aim was to switch from gas to electrical energy, which would come at a cost. There was a need to understand the condition of heating networks, how to drive more efficiency into these networks and how to design an energy system which was fit for the future. There was an opportunity to generate more electricity on campus. The University was looking for a resilient system - either clustered networks or a more centralised system, with a plan to take forward over the next 5 years. The next step was to finalise the approach and agree immediate priorities and how to finance the project. Options would be brought back to Council for discussion.

7893.0 Strategy Development - C25/26 - 48

For Discussion

REPORTED

The DVC introduced this item, noting that a more detailed discussion would take place at the Council & UEB Development Day.

The University's new strategy was currently approximately 80% complete. The paper outlined the next steps required to reach full completion. Engagement was now being broadened, with the strategy and the Global Voice project being shared with internal and external stakeholders to gather feedback and refine the final version. Early testing had begun to assess how well the emerging strategy supported decision-making processes, as this would be a critical measure of its effectiveness. Initial testing suggested that the strategy was operating effectively so far. Examples referenced from the identified 'Sprints' included governance, key individuals connected to research focus areas and investment in internationalisation. Further engagement activities were detailed in Appendix 2 of the paper.

DISCUSSED

Discussion of this item covered the following points:

- Understanding and communication of the strategy - it was noted that work on management systems involved 'unpicking' existing arrangements and starting from a blank page. There was a need to help colleagues understand what the strategy would mean in practice; the current timeline may challenge this. With a major launch planned for the autumn, there was a risk that colleagues may form their own interpretations in the interim. The recent AA discussion was referenced as an illustration of this risk.

- Stakeholder engagement - the DVC emphasised that this was why the strategy was currently being tested and shared in draft form. The Chair noted that 'strategy is communication': while it was positive for colleagues to articulate their own version of the strategy, insufficient detail at this stage may result in inaccurate interpretations. The DVC confirmed that more detail was being developed and would be shared at the upcoming Development Day.

- Future indicators of success - forums across the University, such as AA, may provide valuable early indicators of how well the strategy was understood and adopted.

7894.0 Annual Student Casework Report - C25/26 - 49

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** the Annual Student Casework Report.

7895.0 Council Forward Plan - C25/26 - 50

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** the proposed forward plan of business for Council in 2025/26.

7896.0 Draft Calendar of Meetings - C25/26 - 51

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** the draft calendar of meetings for the forthcoming academic year, which had been developed to align with the annual cycle of business and key decision points. The calendar would be kept under review by the University Secretary & Registrar in consultation with the Chair of Council.

7897.0 Nominations Committee - C25/26 - 52

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** a summary report from the Nominations Committee after its meeting on 22 January 2026.

DISCUSSED

A further discussion took place relating to the Council membership changes which were approved under item 7883.

There were two vacancies on Council with three sets of skills to address: Digital, Property and Enterprise. The proposal to focus on Digital and Enterprise skills was made in light of changes to the Executive Team and the opportunity to bring property expertise into the executive space.

Recruitment for two lay members was underway and the aim was to recruit an executive search firm to assist with the recruitment.

7898.0 People & Culture Committee - C25/25 - 53

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** a summary report from the People & Culture Committee after its meeting on 18 December 2025.

7899.0 Remuneration Committee - C25/26 - 54

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** a summary report from the Remuneration Committee after its meeting on 18 December 2025.

7900.0 Report from Senate - C25/26 - 55

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** a summary report from Senate after its meeting on 28 January 2026.

7901.0 Programme of Meetings for 2025/26 - C25/26 - 56

For Noting

REPORTED

Council **noted** the programme of meetings of Council:

- Wednesday, 11 March 2026 - 9am-4.30pm Council & UEB Development Day
- Thursday, 30 April 2026 - 9.30am (Council Chamber)

- Thursday, 09 July 2026 - 9.30am (Council Chamber)

Note: Most meetings would be preceded by a working dinner and development session the evening beforehand.

7902.0 Any Other Business

For Discussion

REPORTED

No other items of business were discussed.