

OPEN

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

COUNCIL

5th February 2025 at 9.00 a.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Members present: Mervyn Walker (Pro-Chancellor and Chair); Lucy Baldwin; Professor Matthew Broome; Deborah Cadman OBE; Professor Aleksandra Cavoški; Syed Sadath, President of the Guild of Students; Lisa Fretwell; Tim Gardam CBE; Rosie Harris; Mick Lavery; Professor Stephen Jarvis (Provost); Harjinder Kang*; Professor Catherine Mangan; Nick Owen CBE (Deputy Pro-Chancellor (Finance)); Ravi Rajashekar, Guild International Officer; Professor Elizabeth Sapey; Dame Cilla Snowball (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Richard Swann; Jacqueline Taylor; Professor Adam Tickell (Vice-Chancellor and Principal); Dr Thomas Waite OBE*.

**Joined via Zoom*

Also present: Professor Helen Abbott (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor William Bloss (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Simon Bray, Director of Campus Services - for Minute 25/04; Peter Cochrane, interim Director of Estates - for Minute 25/04; Erica Conway (Chief Financial Officer); Cathy Gilbert, Director of External Relations - for Minute 25/08; Professor Neil Hanley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Deborah Longworth (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Professor Robin Mason (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)); Colette McDonough (Head of Governance); Monique Myers, Director of EDI and Staff Wellbeing - for Minute 25/09; Andrew Page, Director of People and Culture - for Minute 25/09; Professor Rachel O'Reilly (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)); Lee Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Mark Senior (Chief of Staff); Professor Marika Taylor (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Colin Townsend, Principal of University of Birmingham School - for Minute 25/11; Professor Nick Vaughan-Williams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College).

Apologies: Dr Clive Hickman OBE; Anthony Lilley OBE.

Papers: The minute book contains copies of all written papers or reports to which reference is made below unless indicated otherwise.

25/01 Declarations of Interest

Noted: there were no interests declared in relation to any item on the agenda.

25/02 Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27th November 2024 be approved (CO.25.02.01).

25/03 Matters Arising from the minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

Noted: that there were no matters arising.

25/04 **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

25/05 Pro-Chancellor's Items

(1) Focus on Development and Alumni Relations

Reported that:

- (a) the presentation to Council held the evening before had been led by Gavin Maggs, Director of Development and Alumni Relations. It had covered:
 - (i) the vision and structure of the Development and Alumni Relations Office;
 - (ii) the Birmingham in Action Fund Raising Campaign;
 - (iii) the work of Alumni Relations;
 - (iv) examples of the key achievements and positive impact of Development and Alumni Relations;
- (b) the discussion of Council covered:
 - (i) how philanthropic income could be further diversified, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**;
 - (ii) how to engage and develop lasting links with alumni, including recent graduates;
 - (iii) the opportunity to re-imagine the Alumni Mentoring Programme;
 - (iv) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(2) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

25/06 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Considered: the report of the Vice-Chancellor (CO.25.02.03).

(1) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

25/07 Update on Government HE priorities and UEB priorities

Considered: the presentation of the Vice-Chancellor to update Council on Government HE priorities, the state of the higher education sector and progress made in relation to the UEB priorities for 2024/25.

Reported that the discussion of the Vice-Chancellor's presentation covered:

- (a) the Government Spending Review which was due report in the Spring, noting that science and innovation were regarded by Government as priorities for economic growth;
- (b) the Skills White Paper which was expected in Summer 2025;
- (c) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (d) the forthcoming review by the Office for Students of the way it regulated governance in higher education. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) the Government's five priorities for reform of the higher education system, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (f) the opportunity for higher education institutions to collaborate to drive efficiency, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (g) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (h) that a session at the April Council Strategy Day would focus on the issues raised in the presentation in greater detail, including the opportunity for Council

to reflect on scenarios and how these might impact on the University, facilitated by Professor Chris Millward, who had run a similar session for UEB at their Away Day in January 2025.

25/08 Recruitment and Admissions Update

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Considered: the Recruitment and Admissions Update (CO.25.02.04).

Reported:

(a)-(c) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

25/09 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-28

Considered: the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-28 (CO.25.02.05).

Reported that:

- (a) the draft EDI Strategy was a statement of the University's commitment to equality and fair treatment. It encompassed the University's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty to take action to promote equality and prevent discrimination across the protected characteristics, and to publish equality objectives in support of this Duty every 4 years;
- (b) the proposed five priority EDI areas for 2025-2028 were:
 - (i) reducing the success and progression gaps amongst the student population;
 - (ii) reducing the staff gender and ethnicity pay gaps;
 - (iii) increasing the diversity of staff who hold senior leadership positions;
 - (iv) recruiting, retaining and promoting a more diverse range of staff;
 - (v) enhancing the consistency of student and staff experiences;
- (c) to address and make progress across these priority areas, the Strategy was structured around inter-linked themes and associated strands of activity: Challenging barriers to equality; Creating inclusive learning and working cultures; Embedding accessibility across our campuses; Incorporating EDI into our organisational structures;
- (d) the Implementation Plan which was being developed to ensure effective delivery of the Strategy would be shared with Council when it was available;
- (e) members of Council commended the progress which had been made over the past year on EDI strategy development and the proposed key priority areas, themes and strands of activity. Their discussion covered:
 - (i) the importance of increasing the diversity of staff who held senior leadership positions in the University, noting the work being done to strengthen the recruitment pipeline for these roles and the diversity of the Birmingham Anniversary Chairs and Fellows appointed to date;
 - (ii) that the Dubai campus would develop their own implementation plan to set out their contribution to meeting the EDI Strategy targets;
 - (iii) the need to continue to convey why EDI was important for the University, especially given the recent position on DEI taken by the new administration in the US.

Resolved: that the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2025-2028, and the equality priorities and success measures set out within it, be approved as set out in Appendix 1 to Paper CO.25.02.05.

25/10 Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee

Considered: the report from the meeting of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 23rd January 2025 (CO.25.02.06).

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

(1) Q1 Financial Performance for year ending 31st July 2025

Considered: the Quarter One (Q1) Financial Performance for the year ending 31st July 2025 (CO.25.02.07).

Reported that:

(a)-(i) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

25/11 Annual Report of the University of Birmingham School

Considered: the Annual Report of the University of Birmingham School (CO.25.02.08).

Reported that:

- (a) the School had now completed its ninth full year of operation, with outcomes at both GCSE and A level broadly in line with national average benchmarks overall, with some metrics slightly above average. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (b) the School had been recognised regionally (West Midlands) in July 2024 as Secondary School of the Year by the Education Awards;
- (c)-(e) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (f) members of Council commended the progress of the School. Their discussion covered:
 - (i) the forthcoming tenth anniversary of the School;
 - (ii)-(iii) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

Resolved: that the Annual Report of the University of Birmingham School be approved as set out in Paper CO.25.02.09.

25/12 Annual Assurance Report on Managing Security-Related Risks in Internationalisation

Considered: the Annual Assurance Report on Managing Security-Related Risks in Internationalisation (CO.25.02.09).

Resolved that Council approved:

- (i) the annual assurance report on the University's approach to the management of security-related risks in internationalisation as set out in Paper CO.25.02.09, noting:
 - (a)-(b) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (ii) the proposed priorities for the next 12 months as set out in Paper CO.25.02.09.

25/13 Report to Council on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2024

Noted: the report to Council on the work of Council-approved Panels during 2024 (CO.25.02.10).

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25/14 Capital Projects over £1m

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Noted: the progress update on Capital Projects over £1m (CO.25.02.11).

25/15 Affixing of the University Seal

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Received: a report noting the transactions which had required use of the University Seal since the last meeting of Council (CO.25.02.12).

24/16 Any Other Business

Reported: that there were no items of any other business.

24/17 Programme of Meetings

Noted: the programme of meetings of Council:

2024/25

Wednesday 9th April 2025, 6.30pm for 7.00pm, Council Dinner

Thursday 10th April 2025, 9.00am to 6.00pm, Council Strategy Day

Tuesday 24th June 2025, 5.00pm to 9.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner

Wednesday 25th June 2025, 9.00am to 12 noon, Council Meeting

2025/26

Wednesday 15th October 2025, 6.30pm for 7.00pm, Council Dinner

Thursday 16th October 2025, 9.00am to 6.00pm, Council Strategy Day

Wednesday 26th November 2025, 5.00pm to 9.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner

Thursday 27th November 2025, 9.00am to 12 noon, Council Meeting

Tuesday 3rd February 2026, 6.30pm for 7.00pm, Council Dinner

Wednesday 4th February 2026, 9.00am to 6.00pm, Council Strategy Day

Wednesday 22nd April 2026, 5.00pm to 9.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner

Thursday 23rd April 2026, 9.00am to 12 noon, Council Meeting

Tuesday 23rd June 2026, 6.30pm for 7.00pm, Council Dinner

Wednesday 24th June 2026, 9.00am to 6.00pm, Council Strategy Day