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UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

COUNCIL

22nd April 2021 at 3.00p.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Members present: Mr Mervyn Walker (Pro-Chancellor and Chair); Professor Helen Abbott; Ms Tobiloba Adeyemi (President of the Guild of Students); Ms Deborah Cadman OBE; Ms Rebecca Cutler (Guild Postgraduate Officer); Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal); Mr Tim Gardam; Professor David Hannah; Mr Malcolm Harbour CBE; Ms Rosie Harris; Mr Richard Haywood (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Mr Steve Hollis; Dame Lin Homer; Professor Tim Jones (Provost and Vice-Principal); Mr Harjinder Kang; Mr Mick Laverty; Mr Anthony Lilley; Professor Una Martin; Mrs Caragh Merrick OBE (Treasurer); Mr Richard Swann; Ms Jacqueline Taylor; Professor Nicola Wilkin.

Also present: Professor David Adams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Kathleen Armour (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Professor Richard Black (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms Erica Conway (Finance Director); Professor Andrzej Gasiorek (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Laura Green (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Stephen Jarvis (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms Rebecca Lambert, Director of Planning and Performance Insight - for Minute 21/31; Professor Robin Mason (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)); Mrs Colette McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Ms Gillian McGrattan, Director of Human Resources - for Minutes 21/28, 21/30(4), 21/30(5), 21/34 and 21/35; Mr Trevor Payne, Director of Estates - for Minute 21/30(2); Ms Carolyn Pike, Special Counsel for NCATI - for Minute 21/29, Professor Clive Roberts, Head of School of Engineering - for Minute 21/29; Ms Emma Robinson (Academic Registrar) - for Minutes 21/28 and 21/32; Mr Lee Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Professor Tim Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer)); Professor Mark Sterling, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Staffing) - for Minutes 21/30(4) and 21/30(5).

Apologies: Mr Alan Davey CBE.

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

21/21 Declarations of Interest

**Noted:** that there were no changes to the entries of members of Council in the University's Register of Interests or any interests declared in relation to any item on the agenda.

21/22 Minutes

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 27th January 2021 be approved (CO.21.04.01).

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### 21/23 Matters Arising from the minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

**Reported:** that there were no matters arising.

### 21/24 Pro-Chancellor's Items

**Reported:** that the aim was for Council to meet in person for a full day on 30th June 2021, Covid-19 restrictions permitting. Members of Council were requested to hold the date in their diaries, noting that the programme for the day would be confirmed in due course.

### 21/25 Vice-Chancellor's Items

**Considered:** the report of the Vice-Chancellor (CO.21.04.02).

#### (1) Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer)

**Reported:** that Council would be invited to approve the appointment of the next Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer) by correspondence as the interviews were scheduled for 27th April 2021, noting that the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council was a member of the Selection Panel.

#### (2) Research Funding

**Reported:** that the discussion on Paper CO.21.04.02 focussed on the research funding environment, particularly noting:

- (i) the implications of the establishment of the Advanced Research and Invention Agency;
- (ii) the impact of the Government's cuts to the Overseas Development Assistance budget on the University's funding from the Global Challenges Research Fund;
- (iii) the University's results in the first Knowledge Exchange Framework.

#### (3) Deborah Cadman OBE

**Reported:** that members of Council congratulated Deborah Cadman OBE on her appointment as interim Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council.

### 21/26 Council Strategy Day Follow Up Birmingham 2030 Strategic Framework

**Considered:** progress with development of the Birmingham 2030 Strategic Framework (CO.21.04.03).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the Framework set the high-level ten year ambition for the University, delivered through six pillars, and measured through a small number of high level indicators. It was supported by financial, capital and digital plans and reflected the primacy of research and education;
- (b) the Framework was an enabling document with sufficient flexibility to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. The ambition would be quantified through a set of measures of success, which would form the monitoring framework for SPRC and Council to assess progress against the strategy;
- (c) a further round of staff engagement workshops was currently in progress with around 400 colleagues registered to attend. These would be completed by early May. Student engagement, including with the Officers of the Guild of Students, was also planned;

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- (d) the Birmingham 2026 plan for the long-term 'size and shape' of the University remained broadly the right aspiration. As part of the Strategic Framework development, the University was refining and extending this plan to 2030, including identifying opportunities at School and programme level **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**;
- (e) a statement of the University's core values: its 'enduring purpose' had been included in the Framework. This was particularly timely in a context where the role of universities was being challenged in the public discourse, and where the University believed it was important to confidently set out the purpose of a university. Complementing this narrative statement, the Strategic Framework also included a set of 'single word' values in the People and Culture pillar. These types of values could be interpreted and embedded within individual areas of the University, and could be useful if they were meaningful to colleagues, and talked about, modelled, and rewarded by leaders and managers at all levels of the organisation;
- (f) a comprehensive Council session on the Birmingham 2030 Strategic Framework had been held earlier in the day. This had considered a progress update presentation, the first draft of the Framework, the detail of each Framework pillar by break out groups and the methodology for monitoring and reporting progress towards Birmingham 2030;
- (g) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**.

### **Resolved** that:

- (i) Council expressed its support for the high-level ambition set out in the Birmingham 2030 Strategic Framework, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**, noting that further work was required to ensure that the aspiration for each Pillar was consistent with this high-level ambition;
- (ii) the detailed comments of Council would be taken account of when preparing the final draft of the Framework;
- (iii) the final draft of the Framework would be submitted to Council on 30th June 2021 for approval, following consideration by UEB, SPRC and Senate.

21/27 REF 2021 Update

### **COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

21/28 Covid-19 Update

**Considered:** the work being undertaken by the University in response to the Covid-19 emergency (CO.21.04.05).

- (1) Remainder of 2020/21 Academic Year

### **Reported** that:

- (a) the Government had just announced that, as before Easter, students on practical or practice-based courses, including creative subjects, who needed access to specialist facilities and equipment could resume in-person teaching and learning from 19th April 2021. However, the Government had advised that all remaining students would only be able to return to in-person teaching on 17th May 2021 at the earliest and that this return would be confirmed alongside implementation of Step 3 of the Government's Roadmap, when restrictions on social contact would be eased further and the majority of indoor settings could reopen. There was major disappointment in the sector at this decision and a belief that it did not meet

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- the best interests of students or reflect the hard work of colleagues in ensuring campus remained a safe environment;
- (b) for students who did return to Birmingham, the University was continuing its successful approach from earlier in the year to provide them with the best possible end to the academic year. A creative and exciting new programme of activity had been developed between Academic Services, Campus Services, and the Guild of Students, to provide enjoyable, Covid-safe and well-managed spaces where students could socialise with their household, and to provide students with activities that they had indicated they were missing and mattered to them, and create a 'buzz' around the campus. The 'Spring into Summer' programme had commenced on 19th April with much positive student feedback having been received and would run until 25th June with a main focus around University Square, with other activities taking place around campus including The Guild, the Vale and sports fields. Open air marquees and seating had been set up throughout University Square, with food and activity zones;
- (c) considerable work had also been put into creating the best possible graduation experience in July. Although it would not be possible to run the traditional Great Hall graduation ceremonies, the University would be able to make the maximum use of the University campus, using the extensive outdoor space to create a celebratory, Covid-safe environment. The celebrations would take place from 14th to 23rd July in the Green Heart and would include an outdoor address with senior members of the University.
- (2) Planning for 2021/22 Academic Year

### Reported:

- (a) that the priority for the coming weeks was to develop plans for the 2021/22 academic year. These needed to be flexible to take into account any changing government restrictions. The University was planning a base case for a closer to normal year with a normal teaching timetable, and a fuller on-campus student experience and more in-person teaching, research, and other activities and operations. A group would be established to oversee detailed planning for the next academic year;
- (b) that there remained some uncertainty about the implications of Covid-19 for higher education for next academic year, noting that government guidance on the arrangements for 2021/22 was not expected until the end of June. Therefore, the University would also develop a fall-back plan for use in the event of government Covid-19 restrictions in 2021/22, including some social distancing. This plan would draw on the experience of the 2020/21 academic year and, where required, would make use of aspects of the Framework for Education Resilience, including hybrid and bi-modal teaching;
- (c) that it might be necessary to switch between the two plans for periods of time during next academic year depending on the circumstances with Covid and government guidance;
- (d) the opportunities for taking forward innovations in education and digital learning during the pandemic into the approach to next academic year;
- (e) amongst the successful features of the University's response to the pandemic in the last 18 months had been its resilience, adaptability and flexibility, all of which had required rapid decision making. To enable a similar approach, which adapted to changes in government guidance and considered teaching, research, finance, staffing, resilience, campus operations and other aspects of the University and its external environment in the round, it was recommended that UEB be given authority to make decisions on detailed changes to the University's plans for next academic year. This was on the basis that these would be reported to the next meeting of Council;

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- (f) the University's approach to staff working on/off campus in 2021/22 would support the planning noted above and recognise the importance of the University as a physical community. It was recommended that UEB agree the approach and report it to SPRC;
  - (g) the University's approach to the next academic year would continue to be informed by government guidance and an update would be provided to the June meeting of Council, by which time it was hoped that the implications for 2021/22 would be clearer.
- (3) OfS Review of Consumer Compliance

### Reported that:

- (a) Professor Kathy Armour, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), had chaired the University's review of its consumer compliance, supported by a panel which included the Academic Registrar, Chief of Staff, Director of External Relations, and Director of Legal Services;
  - (b) the review, which was required by the Office for Students (OfS), had collated evidence from institutional and School communications, and looked at themes in student complaints. Based on this evidence, the review had been able to conclude that each of the three OfS questions could be answered positively, and no potential compliance risks with ongoing condition C1 had been found;
  - (c) based on good practice identified in the review, the panel had agreed a number of recommendations that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Academic Registrar would incorporate into future communications to students. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**.
  - (d) as no issues with compliance had been identified, no further reporting to the OfS was required.
- (4) Discussion

### Reported that consideration of this Covid-19 Update by members of Council covered:

- (a) their support for the University's approach to planning for the 2021/22 Academic Year and continued appreciation of the work the University was undertaking in response to Covid-19;
- (b) the importance of continuing to support testing for student and staff and collecting data on Covid-19 positive cases, noting that staff and student cases currently continued to remain low;
- (c) the impact of Covid-19 on the international student market for 2021/22, noting that the position remained uncertain;
- (d) the measures being taken by the University to encourage student take-up of vaccination when it was offered;
- (e) the plans of the University to tailor academic support for the specific requirements of the new student intake in September, recognising that their study prior to joining the University had been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

### Resolved that:

- (i) Council approved the following approach to planning for the 2021/22 Academic Year:
  - (a) noting the progress with the vaccine and the causes for optimism for next academic year and the need for the University to offer the best possible student experience in a very competitive higher education environment, as a base case, the University plan for closer to a normal year with a normal teaching timetable, and a fuller on-campus student experience and more in person teaching, research, and other activities and operations;

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- (b) noting the current uncertainty over the position with Covid-19 next year, as a fall back, the University plan for government Covid-19 restrictions in 2021/22 including some social distancing, drawing on the experience in 2020/21 and, where required, making use of aspects of the Framework for Education Resilience, including hybrid and bi-modal teaching;
- (c) the University's approach continue to be flexible to take account of any changing government guidance and that it may be necessary to switch between the two plans for periods of time during next academic year depending on the circumstances with Covid-19 and government guidance;
- (d) amongst the successful features of the University's response to the pandemic in the last 18 months had been its resilience, adaptability and flexibility, all of which had required rapid decision making. To enable a similar approach, which adapted to changes in government guidance and considered teaching, research, finance, staffing, resilience, campus operations and other aspects of the University and its external environment in the round, UEB be given authority to make decisions on detailed changes to the University's plans for next academic year. This was on the basis that these would be reported to the next meeting of Council;
- (e) the opportunities for taking forward innovations in education and digital learning from this year's experience into next academic year be noted;
- (f) the University's approach to staff working on/off campus in 2021/22 would support the planning noted above and UEB would agree the approach and report this to SPRC;
- (g) the University's approach to the next academic year would continue to be informed by government guidance;
- (h) that an update be provided to the June meeting of Council, noting that it was anticipated that the implications for higher education in 2021/22 would be clearer by then in line with the Government's roadmap out of Covid-19 restrictions;
- (ii) the positive outcomes of the review of compliance with the University's consumer protection obligations during the Covid-19 emergency be noted;
- (iii) that the arrangements for the operation of Council and its Sub-Committees, emergency powers and delegations during the Coronavirus Emergency approved by Council on 2nd April 2020 (and currently extended until 22nd April 2021) continue to operate until 30th June 2021 (the date of the next ordinary meeting of Council).

21/29 ***[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]***

21/30 Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee

**Considered:** the report from the meeting of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 3rd March 2021 (CO.21.04.07).

(1) Q2 Projected Financial Outturn for year ending 31st July 2021

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**Considered:** the Q2 Projected Financial Outturn for year ending 31st July 2021 (CO.21.04.08).

***[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]***

(2) Molecular Sciences Phase 1

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the release of funding for Molecular Sciences Phase 1 (CO.21.04.09).

**[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Resolved:** that the Molecular Sciences Phase 1 project budget **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]** be released to enable the project to proceed, the main construction contract to be signed and for site works to commence as soon as possible, noting the financial profiling of expenditure over the construction period as set out above.

**[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(4) Birmingham Academic Career Framework

**Considered:** the second stage of the Birmingham Academic Career Framework (BACF), the proposed new academic promotions criteria and associated points required for promotion (CO.21.04.11).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the second stage of the BACF had been to consult on proposed new academic promotions criteria and associated points required for promotion. This work had been carried out during the Autumn and the outcome of the consultation with academic staff and the University of Birmingham branch of UCU (BUCU), together with the recommendations of BACF Workstream 2 members for the proposed new promotions criteria and points requirements, had been considered by UEB on 15th February 2021 and SPRC on 3rd March 2021;
- (b) UEB on 15th February 2021 had considered the recommendation of Workstream 2 members and was content to proceed with the exception of the lowering of the citizenship threshold for promotion to Associate Professor to 1 point. Concern had been expressed by UEB that lowering of the threshold would mean that a member of academic staff could be promoted to Associate Professor having only achieved the lowest grading for citizenship and that this was contrary to the University's aim of signalling and recognising the importance of the contribution of its academic staff to citizenship in the new BACF. It was therefore recommended to SPRC by UEB that the following points system should be adopted:
  - (i) Promotion to Professor: Overall threshold of 24 points, Education, Research or Enterprise, Engagement and Impact threshold (depending on the relevant pathway) of 8 points, Citizenship threshold of 3 points;
  - (ii) Promotion to Associate Professor: Overall threshold of 18 points, Education, Research or Enterprise, Engagement and Impact threshold (depending on the relevant pathway) of 6 points, Citizenship threshold of 2 points.
- (c) SPRC had supported the recommendation of UEB; the detailed promotion criteria recommended for approval by Council was set out in Appendix 1 to Paper CO.21.04.11;
- (d) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) members of Council emphasised the importance of the contribution of academic staff to citizenship in the new BACF.

**Resolved:** that the proposed new Birmingham Academic Career Framework promotions criteria, and the associated points system for promotion, be approved as set out in Paper CO.21.04.11 and above for implementation from the 2021/22 academic year.

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(5) Gender Pay Gap Report

**Noted:** the University's 2020 Gender Pay Gap data and its Gender Pay Gap 2020 Report which had been published on the University's website (CO.21.04.12).

21/31 Key Performance Indicators 2020/21

**Considered:** the Key Performance Indicators 2020/21 (CO.21.04.13).

**Reported** that:

- (a) a small set of institutional KPIs had been agreed in September 2020 as an interim measure whilst the new Strategic Framework was developed. These measures replaced the '4x4' KPIs which underpinned the 2015-2020 Strategic Framework;
- (b) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (c) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (d) the University Change Portfolio provided a RAG-rated overview of major strategic projects. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (f) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Resolved:** that the interim 2020/21 update of institutional KPIs be approved.

21/32 Senate

**Considered:** the report from the meeting of Senate held on 17th March 2021 (CO.21.04.14).

- (1) Updating Birmingham's Programme Architecture: Building a Sustainable 'Programme Framework for the Future' (ProFF)

**Considered:** the 'Programme Framework for the Future' (ProFF) (CO.21.04.15).

**[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Endorsed:** the Programme for the Future (ProFF), noting that Senate had approved the ProFF on the basis set out at Section 3 of Paper CO.21.04.15, including the programme archetypes.

- (2) Degree Outcomes Statement

**Considered:** the draft Degree Outcomes Statement (CO.21.04.16).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA) had published a 'Statement of Intent' in May 2019 that proposed providers publish a 'Degree Outcomes Statement' analysing an institution's degree classification profile and articulating the results of an internal institutional review. The Degree Outcomes Statement would help meet expectations in both the Quality Code for Higher Education that related to protecting the value of qualifications, and the Office for Students' ongoing conditions of registration on academic standards;
- (b) following consideration by Senate in March 2021, the statement was recommended for approval by Council. The statement would be published as soon as possible on the University website following approval from Council.



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**Resolved:** that the Degree Outcomes Statement be approved as set out in Paper CO.21.04.16.

21/33 Audit Committee

**Considered:** the report of the meeting of Audit Committee held on 9th March 2021 (CO.21.04.17).

**Reported:** that the lessons learned review of Core Systems would be considered by Audit Committee in June 2021.

21/34 USS 2020 Valuation Update

**Noted:** the USS 2020 Valuation Update (CO.21.04.18), including that the Vice-Chancellor had joined the membership of the Council USS Sub-Group now that he had completed his term of office as Chair of USS.

21/35 **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

21/36 Access and Participation Plan 2019/10 Monitoring Return

**Noted:** the submission of the Access and Participation Plan 2019/10 Monitoring Return to the Office for Students (CO.21.04.19).

21/37 Membership Committee

**Considered:** the report of the Membership Committee (CO.21.04.20).

**Resolved** that:

- (i) the appointment of Rachel Kentleton as a Lay Member of Council with effect from 1st June 2021 be approved. This would enable her to familiarise herself with Council and the issues in the University prior to commencing her first term as Treasurer;
- (ii) the appointment of the next Treasurer be made by a closed election from amongst the Council's Lay Members in accordance with the process set out in the University Ordinances. This closed election would culminate in the appointment of Rachel Kentleton as Treasurer being made at the next meeting of Council on 30th June 2021.

21/38 Dubai Development Authority

**Resolved:** that the registration of the Vice-Chancellor as Manager-in-Charge with the Dubai Development Authority, be approved to meet the requirements of the Real Beneficiaries Law in Dubai (CO.21.04.21).

**Noted:** that the Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, acting on behalf of Council, had approved on 25th March 2021 the change of the General Manager for University of Birmingham Dubai from Professor Glyn Watson to Professor David Sadler to also meet the requirements of the Dubai Development Authority.

21/39 University of Birmingham Enterprise Ltd.

**Noted:** that the following re-appointments to the University of Birmingham Enterprise Ltd. had been approved by the Registrar and Secretary on behalf of Council:

- (i) Mr Andrew Sleigh - for 1 year from 1st January 2021;

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- (ii) Mr John Powell (as chair) - for 1 year from 1st March 2021;
- (iii) Mrs Brenda Reynolds - for 1 year from 1st April 2021.

21/40 Capital Projects over £10m

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Received:** the progress update on Capital Projects over £10m (CO.21.04.22).

21/41 Affixing of the University Seal

**Received:** a report noting the transactions which had required use of the University Seal since the last meeting of Council (CO.21.14.23).

21/42 Any Other Business

**Reported:** that there were no items of Any Other Business.

21/43 Programme of Meetings

**Noted:** the programme of meetings of Council for 2020/21 and 2021/22:

Arrangements for June 2021 meeting to be confirmed.

2021/22

Tuesday 28th September 2021

Wednesday 29th September 2021

Tuesday 23rd November 2021

Wednesday 24th November 2021

Tuesday 1st February 2022

Wednesday 2nd February 2022

Tuesday 5th April 2022

Tuesday 28th June 2022

Wednesday 29th June 2022