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## UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

### COUNCIL

27th November 2024 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\*; Dr Clive Hickman OBE; Mick Laverty; Professor Stephen Jarvis (Provost); Anthony Lilley OBE; 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); Nicolle Charlton (Deputy Director of Finance) - for Minutes 24/94 to 24/96; Erica Conway (Chief Financial Officer); Professor Neil Hanley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Rebecca Lambert, Director of Planning and Performance Insight - for Minutes 24/92 and 24/93; Professor Deborah Longworth (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Professor Robin Mason (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)); Colette McDonough (Head of Governance); Andrew Page, Director of People and Culture - for Minutes 24/91 and 24/98; Dr Alaric Rae (Deputy Director of External Relations) - for Minute 24/93; Professor Rachel O'Reilly (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)); Dr Emma Robinson (Academic Registrar) - for Minute 24/97; Lee Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Mark Senior (Chief of Staff); Professor Marika Taylor (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Nick Vaughan-Williams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College).

Apologies: Harjinder Kang.

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

#### 24/86 Declarations of Interest

**Noted:**

- (a) the Register of Interests of Members of Council and UEB (CO.24.11.01);
- (b) that members of Council and UEB were asked to notify the Head of Governance of any amendments to the Register;
- (c) there were no interests declared in relation to any item on the agenda.

#### 24/87 Minutes

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 10th October 2024 be approved (CO.24.11.02).

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### 24/88 Matters Arising from the minutes not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

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

### 24/89 Pro-Chancellor's Items

#### (1) Registrar and Secretary

**Reported** that:

- (a) after 16 years as Registrar and Secretary of the University, Lee Sanders would be retiring on 30th September 2025;
- (b) Lee had been one of the leading Registrars in the sector for many years and it was difficult to overstate the contribution he had made to the University and the wider higher education sector. Lee had been the guiding hand ensuring the biggest initiatives of the University were successful, including many of the major campus developments of the last decade. He had also built a very high-performing team in Professional Services, his leadership during the pandemic had been instrumental to the University surviving and building back successfully and he had led on development of the 2042 Campus Vision over the past year;
- (c) the University would mark Lee's retirement next Summer, noting that it would very much be business as usual in the meantime;
- (d) Perrett Laver would be supporting the search for Lee's successor with the aim of making an appointment at Council in April 2025;
- (e) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation for Council, the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council would, on behalf of Council, approve the composition of the Appointment Committee and report his decision to Council in due course.

### 24/90 Vice-Chancellor's Items

**Considered:** the report of the Vice-Chancellor (CO.24.11.03).

#### (1) Discussion

**Reported** that members of Council discussed the report of the Vice-Chancellor, focussing on:

- (a) the financial health of the higher education sector;
- (b) the Government's five priorities for reform of the higher education system;
- (c) the actions taken by Council in response to the financial challenges facing the sector, including approval of the University's Financial Sustainability Voluntary Leavers' Scheme. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (d) the international student recruitment market, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) what new opportunities might emerge for the University as a result of the changes in the higher education external environment **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

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

### 24/91 People and Culture - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

#### (1) Annual Assurance Report to Council

**Considered:** the Annual Assurance Report to Council on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (CO.24.11.04).

**Reported** that:

- (a) Paper CO.24.11.04 reported on:
  - (i) delivery of activities in relation to the 2021-2024 EDI Strategy objectives;
  - (ii) progress against the EDI Strategy key success measures;
  - (iii) delivery of the Bold Vision signature initiatives;
  - (iv) Athena and Race Equality Charter accreditations;
  - (v) University gender and ethnicity pay gaps for 2024;
  - (vi) College EDI activities and outputs;
  - (vii) representation on key decision-making committees;
- (b) the current EDI Strategy concluded in December 2024. The new EDI Strategy for 2025-2028 was being developed and would be shared with UEB, SPRC and Council in the new year;
- (c) the discussion of Council covered:
  - (i) the work being led by the EDI Centre to seek feedback from the University community in relation to EDI, including 6 EDI Listening Events in 2023/24, with approximately 400 attendees;
  - (ii) whether the target setting for EDI was bold enough, noting that Council would have the opportunity to consider this further when it considered the new EDI Strategy in February 2025;
  - (iii) that ambitions around gender had been achieved when recruiting the first phase of Birmingham Anniversary Chairs and Fellows. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
  - (iv) that more work would be done on support for disabled staff and to encourage an increase in the rate of staff disability disclosure;
  - (v) the scope to improve the University's Race Equality Charter and Athena Swan Charter performance, noting that both were currently at Bronze.

**Resolved:** that the Annual Assurance Report to Council on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion be approved (CO.24.11.04).

(2) **Gender and Ethnicity Pay Report**

**Considered:** the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Report which had been approved by Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee on 13th November 2024 (CO.24.11.05).

**Reported** that:

- (a) Paper CO.24.11.05 highlighted:
  - (i) the year-on-year reduction in the University's gender pay gap since reporting began (from a mean of 19.9% in 2017 to 13.9% in 2024);
  - (ii) the year-on-year increase in the proportion of female and minority ethnic staff in the top and upper-middle pay quartiles;
  - (iii) the impact on pay gaps of the University not out-sourcing key services and its position as a significant local employer and how these factors have contributed to the growth of the ethnicity pay gap in 2024 (from a 12.2% mean pay gap in 2023 to 13% in 2024);
  - (iv) commitment to maximising opportunities to attract minoritised ethnic and female applicants to upper-quartile roles and to support their progression and promotion.
- (b) the discussion of Council covered:
  - (i) how the University's gender and ethnicity pay gap compared to its comparator institutions, noting that the University was committed to further improvement of its position against other members of the Russell Group (whilst also taking account of factors such as the impact of not out-sourcing key services);
  - (ii) that some universities, including Manchester, Nottingham and UCL, were

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already reporting their disability pay gaps on an annual basis. This would be considered further by the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (EDI) and the Director of People and Culture.

**Noted:** the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Report at Appendix 1 to Paper CO.24.11.05. This would be published on the University website and intranet, noting that the gender pay gap data was also published on the government gender pay reporting website.

24/92 Birmingham 2030 Strategic Framework Scorecard and Annual Measures of Success Update

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the Birmingham 2030 Strategic Framework Scorecard and Annual Measures of Success Update (CO.24.11.06).

**Reported** that:

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

**Noted:**

- (i) the Autumn 2024 position against the University's Birmingham 2030 Measures of Success as set out in Paper CO.24.11.06;
- (ii) the planned light touch review of the University's Measures of Success, reflecting on feedback from discussions at the recent UEB and Council strategy away days.

24/93 Enrolment Monitoring and Recruitment and Admissions Update

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the Enrolment Monitoring and Recruitment and Admissions Update (CO.24.11.07).

**Reported** that:

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

24/94 5 Year Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 and 2023/24 Going Concern Assessment

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the 5 Year Financial Plan (FYP) 2024/25 to 2028/29 and 2023/24 Going Concern Assessment (CO.24.11.08).

**Reported** that:

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

**Resolved:** that Council approved the 5 Year Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 and the 2023/24 Going Concern Assessment as set out in Paper CO.24.11.08.

24/95 Report of Audit Committee

- (1) Annual Report of the Audit Committee

**Considered:** the Annual Report of the Audit Committee (CO.24.11.09).

**Reported:** that the Chair of Audit Committee drew particular attention to:

- (a) the improvements which had been made to the process for preparation and external audit of the University's Accounts. The Chief Financial Officer, the External Audit Partner, and their teams, were congratulated on this achievement;
- (b) that the progress of the StARS project would be reviewed at the next meeting of Audit Committee;
- (c) that the Audit Committee recommended to Council that the External Auditor be re-appointed.

**Resolved** that:

- (i) the Annual Report of the Audit Committee be approved as set out in Paper CO.24.11.09;
- (ii) the re-appointment of EY as External Auditor to the University be approved for 2024/25, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(2) Report of Audit Committee

**Noted:** the report from the meetings of the Audit Committee held on 2nd October and 12th November 2024 (CO.24.11.10).

24/96 Annual Report and Accounts for the Financial Year Ending 31st July 2024

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

(1) Accounts

**Resolved:** that the consolidated financial statements for the year ending 31st July 2024 be approved as set out in Paper CO.24.11.11, noting that the External Audit had been concluded and the Chief Financial Officer and External Auditor had confirmed to the Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Audit Committee that no significant issues or concerns had arisen in the final stages of the audit process.

**Noted:** that Nicolle Charlton, Deputy Director of Finance, would be leaving the University in January 2025 for a role closer to home. Council thanked Nicolle for her tremendous contribution to the achievements of the Finance team during her employment with the University.

(2) OfS Annual Financial Return

**Considered:** the OfS Annual Financial Return (CO.24.11.12).

**Resolved** that Council:

- (i) approved the content of the Annual Financial Return for 2023/24 to be submitted to the Office for Students (OfS), the draft of which was at Appendix 1 to Paper CO.24.11.12;
- (ii) approved the content of the required narrative items relating to the Return, the draft of which was at Appendix 2 to Paper CO.24.11.12;
- (iii) delegated authority to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, as Accountable Officer, to sign off the final Return to the OfS.

24/97 Academic Assurance Reports

(1) Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards

**Considered:** the Annual Report on Academic Quality and Standards (CO.24.11.13).

**Resolved:** that Council approved the annual assurance report on academic quality and standards (CO.24.11.13).

(2) Annual Report on Undergraduate Student Outcomes and Success

**Considered:** the first annual report of internal (2023/24) and benchmarked (2022/23) data on undergraduate student outcomes and success, including an outline of the University's metrics for continuation, attainment and progression (CO.24.11.14).

**Reported** that:

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

**Noted:**

- (i) the annual report of the University's metrics for continuation, attainment and progression (CO.24.11.14);
- (ii) School level data for continuation, attainment and progression, alongside outcome gaps for key student demographics (Black and IMD Q1);
- (iii) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (iv) an outline of institutional actions already underway to support attainment and employability outcomes;
- (v) an outline of the process for ongoing review and monitoring.

24/98 Remuneration Committee

**Considered:** the Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee and the proposed amendment of the Senior Staff Pay Review Policy (CO.24.11.15).

**Reported:**

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

**[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Resolved** that Council approved the proposed amendment of:

- (i) the terms of reference of Remuneration Committee as set out at Appendix 1 to Paper CO.24.11.15, in line with the recommendation of the recent effectiveness review of Council;
- (ii) the Senior Staff Pay Review Policy as set out at Appendix 2 to Paper CO.24.11.15  
**[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

*[Note:*

*At the request of the Pro-Chancellor:*

1. *all members of UEB who had been in attendance left the meeting, except for the Registrar and Secretary;*
2. *the Vice-Chancellor and Principal left the meeting (having confirmed that members of Council did not have any queries about the remuneration of senior staff other than himself);*
3. *Mark Senior, Chief of Staff, who had been in attendance, also left the meeting].*

24/99 Annual Statement on Research Integrity 2023/24

**Resolved:** that the University's Annual Statement on Research Integrity for 2023/24 be approved (CO.24.11.16).

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### 24/100 Annual Report to Council on the Prevent Duty 2023/24

**Considered:** the Annual Report to Council on the Prevent Duty 2023/24 (Paper CO.24.11.17) and the Annual Data Return (Appendix 1 to Paper CO.24.11.17). These provided detail and assurance that the University had discharged its Prevent Duty.

**Resolved:** that Council approved the Annual Report and Data Return for Prevent Monitoring 2024 to inform the declaration and signature by the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council for submission to the Office for Students as set out in Paper CO.24.11.17.

### 24/101 Membership Committee

**Resolved:** that, on the recommendation of Membership Committee (by correspondence), Anthony Lilley be re-appointed as a lay member of Council for four years with effect from 1st February 2025.

### 24/102 Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee

**Noted:** the report of the meeting of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 13th November 2024 (CO.24.11.18).

### 24/103 Senate

**Noted:** the report of the meeting of Senate held on 6th November 2024 (CO.24.11.19).

### 24/104 Capital Projects over £1m

#### **COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Noted:** the progress update on Capital Projects over £1m (CO.24.11.20).

### 24/105 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.24.11.21).

### 24/106 Any Other Business

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

### 24/107 Programme of Meetings

**Noted:** the programme of meetings of Council for the remainder of 2024/25:  
Tuesday 4th February 2025, 5.00pm to 9.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner  
Wednesday 5th February 2025, 9.00am to 12 noon, Council Meeting  
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