

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 02 DECEMBER 2022**

Present: Lord Keith Bradley (Chair), Angela Adimora [from COU.22.96], Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Jennifer Bayjoo, Dr Tony Coombs, Garry Dowdle [via Microsoft Teams], Philip Green, Merlyn Lowther, Professor Helen Marshall, Councillor John Merry, Sean O'Hara, Micheal Omoniyi, Sam Plant [via Microsoft Teams], Festus Robert, Alan Roff, Helen Taylor [via Microsoft Teams], Dr Katherine Yates, and Dr Elsa Zekeng.

Apologies: Simeon Anyalemechi, Ben Gallop, Ian Moston, Councillor Phil Cusack and Professor Mike Wood.

In attendance: Julie Charge (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Finance), Professor Karl Dayson (Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise), Dr Sam Grogan (Pro Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience) Professor Jayne Mitchell (University Secretary, interim), Jackie Njoroge (Director of Strategy), Jo Purves (Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Development) Huw Williams (Chief Operating Officer), and Elaine Pateman Salt (secretary).

By invitation: Andy Hargreaves (Director of Engagement, University of Salford Students' Union) and Haroon Sulimankhiel (student) [COU.22.96] and Pradeep Passi (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity) [COU.22.112].

**COU.22.89 WELCOME**

Noted: that Dr Katherine Yates was welcomed to her first meeting as the newly appointed academic staff member.

**COU.22.90 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Noted: that no new declarations of interest pertaining to the agenda were raised.

**COU.22.91 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Confirmed: the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 October 2022 (COU/22/74).

**COU.22.92 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Reported:

- i) that the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) management report omitted from the October meeting agenda was to be received at this meeting [Item 19];
- ii) that where outstanding actions had been consolidated at the previous meeting, these would continue to be progressed at the next Governance, Nominations and Ethics (GNEC) meetings.

**COU.22.93 CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS**

Confirmed: that Item 22 (Use of University Seal; COU/22/96) was noted without discussion.

**COU.22.94 CHAIR'S ACTION: MEMBERSHIP**

Received: a report of Chair's Action regarding approval for the appointment of the academic staff member to the membership (COU/22/75).

**COU.22.95 CHAIR'S ACTION:**

Received: a report of Chair's action regarding approval of the annual report to the Office for Students on the discharging of the University's duties under the Government's Prevent anti-terrorism strategy (Prevent Annual Data Return and Accountability Statement 2021/22) (COU/22/76).

**COU.22.96 STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Received: a video presentation (in advance) on loneliness as a key barrier to learning, followed by a deep dive with students on their experiences and the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU) anti-loneliness strategy (COU/22/77).

Reported:

- i) the view of the Chair that the video had been a powerful presentation of the issue;
- ii) that a large and varied number of projects and activities were run by the USSU, delivered by students;
- iii) that demand for clubs, societies and events was always large, and that participation was important for those students looking for community and connection;
- iv) that the research undertaken by the USSU had identified a fear amongst students of becoming lonely;
- v) that the USSU had facilitated purchase and use of the Umii application (app), which was a student networking platform;
- vi) that there had been 2800 unique users of the application recorded by USSU in the past 18 months;
- vii) that students had chosen to continue to use the platform to facilitate their connections instead of moving to alternative methods;
- viii) that approximately 19k connections had been recorded this year, and that usage had remained high beyond the expected spike during induction weeks;
- ix) that the data indicated that the app was considered by students to be a safe space to communicate;
- x) that there had been two reported safeguarding incidents arising from use of Umii since installation, and that both had been progressed through the University's 'report and support' process;
- xi) that the USSU recognised that it wanted to 'do more', for example through segmented or targeted support;
- xii) that it was largely reliant on volunteers, with circa 1k engaged in current delivery activities;
- xiii) that the USSU was reviewing the administrative burden across its extracurricular activities, as it was seen as a key risk to effective delivery;
- xiv) that there was some emerging evidence of a negative impact on participation arising from the increased cost-of-living environment;
- xv) that one of the main barriers for the USSU was access to campus facilities; for example, it cost £40k per annum to hire facilities, of which £36k was directly paid to the University and £4k to external providers;
- xvi) the view of the USSU that the University had not provided a like-for-like replacement following the loss of Castle Irwell site;
- xvii) that for example, the Hockey Team required a 12-mile round trip to access practice facilities following the loss of the site and this represented an additional cost and time barrier to participation;
- xviii) that in particular, the USSU struggled to facilitate access to campus during the day but that this was also in view of timetable priorities;
- xix) that feedback was positive for activities undertaken between 6pm and 10pm, but that there clearly remained a challenge for commuting students to participate;
- xx) that it was the intention to develop micro volunteering and micro societies in the near future;
- xxi) that peer-led activities were proven to increase engagement and respond to student wants and needs;
- xxii) that currently each student society was supported by an administrative committee including a wellbeing officer, and that budgets reflected this structure;

- xxiii) that it was anticipated that removing the administrative structures for individual societies would allow the USSU to implement its anti-loneliness strategy across the whole student body;
- xxiv) that the USSU was undertaking a strategy refresh, including in its approach to loneliness;
- xxv) that Mr Haroon Sulimankhiel provided an overview of the peer-to-peer wellbeing service – Rafiki;
- xxvi) that first-year students were approached to see if they had any needs in the first instance;
- xxvii) that often international students were seeking friendship and connections prior to their arrival in the UK;
- xxviii) that the peers provided a listening service, demonstrated that students were not alone in their experiences, and could provide further information or referral to professional wellbeing services;
- xxix) that up to 30 events were offered each month during the academic year;
- xxx) that the support could be as small as offering a home-cooked meal or an international dish to help negate 'home-sickness'.

Noted:

- i) that published data from a variety of sources confirmed that there was no single resolution to the issue of loneliness;
- ii) the view that following the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, the experience of returning to campus was 'different' in many ways;
- iii) the view that it was good to hear about a mixed offer of online and in-person events and activities;
- iv) that it was anticipated that micro-societies would offer further online support to commuting students, and that with less administrative costs and burden these could be set up quickly in response to trending interests;
- v) that the USSU needed to build on its relationship with Campus Living Villages (CLV) to facilitate space and events;
- vi) that USSU was considering a pre-enrolment trial for academic subject group societies, whereby a student would opt out of the group if they did not wish to be involved but that this was at a very early stage of consideration;
- vii) the view that it was important to consider the anti-loneliness strategy outside the limited terms of sabbatical officers particularly to ensure maximum penetration;
- viii) the view that a joint strategy with the University could be considered;
- ix) that, there were currently 45 sports societies and if each ran a daytime activity each week this would equate to 90 hours per week;
- x) that daytime activities were generally centred on University House where space was more readily available; that this clearly impacted on understanding and addressing demand at Media City Campus;
- xi) the view that external support should be investigated, given the prevalence of information emerging on the national issue;
- xii) that the USSU had partnered with the charity MIND previously;
- xiii) that external funding had normally been available for sport and that arts, and that the USSU had been successful with some funding bids but that it did sometimes struggle to meet eligibility criteria;
- xiv) that the USSU received a block grant from the University, and was in some instances constrained by University contracted services, for example Chartwells catering services;
- xv) that the Chair thanked the USSU for an informative presentation and discussion, noting the importance of the issue to members.

## COU.22.97 **VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on key issues affecting the University (COU/22/78).

Reported:

- i) that the external political and policy environment continued to change at a fast pace;
- ii) that Sir Micheal Barber had been appointed to lead on the Government's skills reform programme;

- iii) that the Office for Students (OfS) condition of registration 'B3' metrics had come into force on 3 October 2022;
- iv) that eight universities had been selected for the first round of inspections by the OfS, regarding business programmes;
- v) that it was anticipated that the second round of inspections would focus on computer science programmes, but that this was yet to be confirmed;
- vi) that the Vice-Chancellor had joined a call with Susan Lapworth, Chief Executive of the OfS, earlier in the day and had requested further information and guidance on the inspection methodology;
- vii) that it had been announced that the OfS will assume the role of the designated quality body (DQB) once the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) finished its notice period at the end of March 2023;
- viii) that the University expected to resolve the contractual delays with the Department for Education (DfE) in the new build for the Greater Manchester Institute of Technology (GMioT) shortly, and that programmes were planned to commence from September 2023;
- ix) that the process to establish the GMioT had been challenging, but that the University was the first successful Higher Education (HE) lead partner and that there had inevitably been some different issues raised during the process;
- x) that it was planned to hold a launch event for the GMioT in the new year.

Noted:

- i) that a modest number of programmes would be opened for the GMioT in 2023, and that the new building would be operational from the second year of operation;
- ii) that the number of students recruited would reflect the need to manage the first year of operation;
- iii) that the University had done everything in its power to facilitate opening in September 2022, but that the final negotiations with DfE made it unfeasible;
- iv) the view that the changes in the DQB role was significant, and that the OfS presented a quality control and compliance process rather than a quality assurance process as was currently the approach under the QAA;
- v) that universities had autonomy to offer and validate their awards;
- vi) that several University colleagues were experienced QAA auditors;
- vii) the view that there was little guidance on how the OfS proposed to manage the quality of research;
- viii) that Universities UK (UUK) was preparing a response to OfS on the matter of the DQB and its processes;
- ix) the view that the University might want to consider the implications of the OfS revising its regulatory framework and assuming the DQB role, and how this might be addressed in its existing governance and academic governance structures;
- x) the view that high quality degree programmes was paramount to the purpose of higher education institutions (HEIs);
- xi) that the Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (GNEC) was poised to consider appropriate governance arrangements in the coming months as the regulatory environment shifted.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted, and that the Council receive a briefing on the possible implications and risks to HEIs from the OfS assuming the role of the DQB at a future meeting.

**ACTION: DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY**

COU.22.98 **Vice-Chancellor Search and Appointment Process CLOSED MINUTE**

- *redacted* -

COU.22.99 **Annual Accountability Return Requirements Overview**

Received: an overview of the University's annual accountability returns requirements under the terms and conditions of funding for Higher Education Institutions, to the Office for Students for the year 2021/22 (COU/22/80).

Reported: that the succeeding documents had been considered in detail by the Audit and Risk (ARC) and Finance and Resources (FRC) Committees.

COU.22.100 **Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22 CLOSED MINUTE**

Received: on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2021/22, produced by PwC (COU/22/81).

- *Redacted* -

COU.22.101 **Annual Health and Safety Report 2021/22 CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Health and Safety Annual Report 2021/22 (COU/22/82).

- *Redacted* -

Noted: that regarding sickness absence, the University had seen an increase in respiratory sickness as one cause and was providing free flu jabs to colleagues.

COU.22.102 **Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2021/22 CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, its Annual Report to Council for 2021/22 (COU/22/83).

Reported: that the Committee was able to provide assurance of its work on behalf of Council during the past year.

Noted: the thanks of the Chair to the Committee members for their diligence and hard work.

RESOLVED: that the Report be accepted.

COU.22.103 **Annual Remuneration Report 2021/22**

Received: on the recommendation of Remuneration Committee, the Remuneration Report for 2021/22 (COU/22/84).

Reported: that the content of the Report had been informed by the business considered at Committee meetings over the course of 2021/22, and that it was fully aligned to the requirements of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code.

COU.22.104 **Office for Students (OfS) Annual Accountability Returns and Supporting Documentation 2021/22: External Auditor's Audit Highlights Memorandum CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of Audit and Risk Committee, the following element of the Annual Accountability Returns to the OfS for the year 2021/22: the External Auditor's Audit Highlights Memorandum and Management Letter (COU/22/85).

Reported:

- *Redacted* -

RESOLVED: that the Memorandum and Management Letter be confirmed and submitted to the OfS as part of the annual accountability submission.

COU.22.105 **Office for Students (OfS) Annual Accountability Returns and Supporting Documentation 2021/22: University Representation Letter CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of Audit and Risk Committee, the following element of the Annual Accountability Returns to the OfS for the year 2021/22: the University Representation Letter (COU/22/86).

RESOLVED: that the Chair be approved to sign the Representation Letter on behalf of the Council.

COU.22.106 **Office for Students (OfS) Annual Accountability Returns and Supporting Documentation 2021/22: Going Concern Status CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of Finance and Resources Committee, the following element of the Annual Accountability Returns to the OfS for the year 2021/22: the evidence for the University's financial statements to be considered on a 'going concern' basis (COU/22/87).

Reported:

- *Redacted* -

RESOLVED: that nothing had arisen since approval of the budget which indicated that the University could not approve the accounts on a going concern basis, and that consequently the accounts for year-ending 31 July 2022 be approved under that proviso.

COU.22.107 **Office for Students (OfS) Annual Accountability Returns and Supporting Documentation 2021/22: Integrated Report CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of Audit and Risk Committee, the following element of the Annual Accountability Returns to the OfS for the year 2021/22: the Integrated Report; Audited Financial Statements for the financial year ending 31 July 2022 (COU/22/88).

Reported: that detailed consideration had been undertaken by ARC, supported by FRC, and that members should be assured of financial transparency throughout the process.

Noted:

- *Redacted* -

RESOLVED: that the accounts be approved, and that the Chair, the Vice-Chancellor, and the Executive Director of Finance sign the financial statements (integrated report) on behalf of the Council.

COU.22.108 **Subsidiary Company - University Letter of Support CLOSED MINUTE**

Considered: on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, a letter of support from the University to Salford Professional Development (SPD) Ltd (COU/22/89).

Reported:

- *Redacted* -

Noted: that SPD had improved its financial position over the last few years.

RESOLVED: that the letter of support be approved and that the Executive Director of Finance be authorised to sign the letter, and that the undernoted minute be entered on the record:

COU.22.109 **ENABLING STUDENT SUCCESS**

Received: a presentation on the University's strategic action plan for enabling student success (COU/22/90).

Reported:

- i) that of the 33 threshold measures released under the OfS' 'B3' metrics, the University had met 32;
- ii) that regarding the measure which had not been met, this related to a postgraduate taught programme that had since been discontinued;
- iii) that the work undertaken through the 'enabling student success' (ESS) activities had facilitated the successful result; that thanks were noted to all colleagues involved;
- iv) that it was expected that the minimum thresholds would increase as improvements were made across the sector, and that OfS had declared its intention to make available subject-level threshold measures;
- v) that there remained a risk to 'business-as-usual' if student outcomes and student experience activities were discontinued or not prominent in the business to progress continuous improvement;
- vi) that the Education and Employability Strategy had been approved in principle by Senate, and that the next stage was to develop the component business cases;
- vii) that the Strategy had been designed to create significant change projects;
- viii) that it was intended the Strategy would 'overlap' with the USSU strategy refresh, in order to facilitate a joint approach;
- ix) that staff capacity had improved but the situation still needed to be formally resolved;
- x) that student progression (continuation) had reduced slightly, and that analysis and actions had been undertaken around this;
- xi) that much of the issue centred on a larger student cohort taken in via clearing, with further impact from the A-level / BTEC award gap;
- xii) the view that there was residual impact from the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that this included teacher-assessed grades;
- xiii) that it was a complex area that required careful analysis, and that the University remained committed to widening participation but providing the right support for this.

Noted:

- i) that grade inflation had been recognised across the sector, and that work was underway to support a return to more normal grade averages;
- ii) that the University had in place guidance for a minimum entry tariff of three C's (A-level) or equivalent, but might seek to make this a formal requirement in some subject areas; that no decisions had been proposed yet;
- iii) that it was important to focus on the support provided to those entering on the lower end of tariff and also through clearing;
- iv) that entry via clearing was often a quicker decision made by the student;
- v) that anecdotal evidence was emerging of other impacts arising from the pandemic, for example missing life skills;
- vi) that on this occasion the support services had been in place but had been overwhelmed by the additional draw on resources;
- vii) that the University was to seek to address academic and pastoral approaches to the clearing process;
- viii) that the timeframe for the main objective (to be a 'top 50' University by 2027) remained;
- ix) that the inputs to achieve that objective would come from the seven projects underpinning the Education and Employability Strategy;
- x) that internal and external stakeholder engagement would be undertaken;
- xi) the view that visibility of the outcome of those consultations at Council meetings would be appreciated;
- xii) the view that alternative 'rites of passage' events for those entering HE might need to be agreed and actioned;
- xiii) the view that staff capacity would be a critical determining factor for strategic success;
- xiv) that it had become clear during the analysis that the University needed to extend further into the pre-arrival experience than it had traditionally done;

- xv) that programme leader development had been addressed through the organisation and management strand of the ESS action plan;
- xvi) the view that some employers were also noticing different skills sets from graduates, and that early liaison with industry partners could be very beneficial;
- xvii) the view that it was not clear how value-for-money (VFM) and contributions to society were measured;
- xviii) that this was a sector-wide challenge, but that VFM data was collated nonetheless;
- xix) that the University's mission to be a civic university, widening participation across the region, had not changed, but that OfS had focused more of its metrics on outputs and not the support provided to students along their journey;
- xx) that the University would continue to focus on the right support to enable students to achieve the outcomes they deserved;
- xxi) that in addition, the University had sought to develop a range of academic pathways and different pedagogical styles to support its mission;
- xxii) the view that care should be taken in the potential to 'side-line' individuals into apprenticeship programmes;
- xxiii) that the INTO University partnership was seeking to develop math skills in advance of a university programme;
- xxiv) that mathematics continued to be a barrier to achievement for some students with BTEC awards;
- xxv) that Senate would make academic approval decisions on the projects under the Strategy, and that VCET would consider operational matters;
- xxvi) that Council would be kept informed through both governance routes.

**COU.22.110 Academic Governance and Assurance**

Received: and update on the University's preparations for submission to the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) under the Office for Students' ongoing condition of registration (B6) (COU/22/91).

(Secretary's note: that Professor Jayne Mitchell presented the item under her substantive interim role as Executive Director for Governance and Assurance).

Reported:

- i) that this was the third time that the TEF exercise had been undertaken (the University of Salford was participating for the second) but that some changes had been made in the methodology since the University's initial participation;
- ii) that submission to the TEF was now mandatory for registered providers;
- iii) that the threshold measures had been made available under the 'B6' condition of registration;
- iv) that the TEF exercise was intended to incentivise excellence;
- v) that the outline structure and guidance documents had now been published for providers and students;
- vi) that the USSU would also be making a submission;
- vii) that assessment of the submissions was undertaken by an independent panel;
- viii) that three sources were used for assessment: public benchmarking data; written submission by the institution; an optional written submission from the student body;
- ix) that the USSU had indicated it intended to exercise its option to submit, and that the USSU was working in collaboration with the University project team;
- x) that two main areas of focus were included in the submission: student experience and student outcomes;
- xi) that there were four awards ratings: gold; silver; bronze; and "requires improvement";
- xii) that an award would be held for four years;
- xiii) that the written submission had to be made by 24 January 2023, and that the University was working at significant pace to achieve this;
- xiv) that a copy of the draft submission would be made available to the VCET, the Senate and the Council in January 2023;



Noted:

- i) that the University had previously been awarded bronze, but that the exercises were not directly comparable as three ratings were made in the 2023 exercise rather than a single overall rating as in previous exercises;
- ii) the view that it was hard to gauge the ambition of the University for this exercise (which had previously been to seek a silver award);
- iii) that the constitution of the independent panel had not yet been made public, and nor had the guidance provided to the panel on its approach to assessment;
- iv) the view that the University had a credible narrative and evidence of continuous improvement, as evidenced by the earlier ESS discussion;
- v) that the panel assessment would be a desk-based exercise and that no provider visits would be undertaken;
- vi) that the guidance currently provided indicated that the panel should base 50% of its judgement on the written submission;
- vii) that consequently, the University was concentrating on those areas that might be more difficult to explain its performance than those areas that were materially above the data benchmarks;
- viii) that the data used is from the previous four years and, due to lags in data capture and reporting, that it did not necessarily demonstrate the most recent improvements that had been made;
- ix) the view that the timeline to prepare a submission was very short, particularly given the end-of-year break.

#### COU.22.111 **Academic Governance and Assurance**

Received: an update report on the University's preparations for the assessment of the quality of training provision of its higher and degree apprenticeship programmes under the Office for Students' range of ongoing conditions of registration to ensure the standards of higher education qualifications awarded by degree awarding bodies. (Assessment visits are assigned to the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, or Ofsted) (COU/22/92).

Reported:

- i) that the University was due a visit from Ofsted to assess the quality of delivery for its higher and degree apprenticeship provision;
- ii) that the last time Ofsted had visited (2019) there had been only two programmes running, and that the provision had grown substantially during the interim period;
- iii) that the framework for review had changed and that further information had been provided in the Report;
- iv) that Ofsted expected the University to be in a 'constant state of readiness' and would notify of an assessment visit only a few days before arrival on campus;
- v) that it was estimated a full assessment visit would involve between eight and twelve inspectors on site;
- vi) that the administrative group was supporting the development of the provision, but was also now addressing the possibility of an assessment visit;
- vii) that four delivery teams made up the quality assurance and management of the provision;
- viii) that management information (MI) had also improved considerably since the previous Ofsted visit, and that there was a consistency across the University's operation of the provision;
- ix) that however, there were some different methodologies in this type of assessment, for example Ofsted would want to assure itself of the University's delivery of fundamental British values to its apprentices;
- x) that the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Development was supporting the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience in executive sponsorship of the provision and preparedness for assessment;
- xi) that it was anticipated that Ofsted would want to engage with the governing body, but that it was likely only a small number of members would be called upon to meet with the inspectors.

#### COU.22.112 **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity**

Received: on the endorsement of the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team, an update on the University's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) action plan for the period July to October 2022

(COU/22/93), and an oral update on planning towards an EDI strategy and key performance indicators.

Reported:

- i) that the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (AVPC) – Mr Pradeep Passi – had taken up position since the previous meeting;
- ii) that the creation of the substantive role would enable a clearer strategic focus on EDI in the future;
- iii) that role had also been added to the attendees at VCET Meetings to support the Executive in its role as EDI sponsors and champions;
- iv) the view of the AVPC that the University had undertaken some positive initiatives and activities regarding EDI prior to his arrival;
- v) that there was evidently a desire to make progress in this area, but that the progress was not currently 'joined up' and focussed;
- vi) that the next step was to develop an EDI statement of ambition for the next five-year period, that was aligned to the Corporate Strategy;
- vii) that it was helpful an EDI pillar had been included in the strategy refresh to facilitate this work;
- viii) that key performance indicators (KPIs) were required in order that the Council could assure itself (or not) of progress;
- ix) that it was the intention to have dedicated workstreams for necessary interventions, clear role responsibilities, and a whole-institution approach;
- x) that a task and finish group had been established to that end, with a view to presentation to Council in the summer of 2023;
- xi) that the preferred terminology was 'equity' rather than 'equality', as it was felt that this indicated fairer outcomes and the institution would be encouraged to adopt this language;
- xii) that the AVPC was keen to engage with members further;
- xiii) the view that it would be remiss not to mention the potential resources required to meet the ambition, and that a reasonable proposal would likely develop over the coming months.

Noted:

- i) that the management report had been a useful tool to sight members on various interventions, but that it did not represent a strategic approach;
- ii) the view that a large amount of feedback and consultation had already taken place regarding several of the interventions, and that there was an emotional impact to consider when seeking to revisit this information;
- iii) that the AVPC was aware of the data already gathered and was sensitive to revisiting issues, and provided his assurance that the focus would be on consultation and feedback on the actions undertaken to-date;
- iv) that the role of AVPC would assist in providing leadership in this area;
- v) that the Report and Support system was under the remit of the role's responsibilities;
- vi) the view that colleagues in the University were not confident in using the platform as there had been considerable delays in responding to reports;
- vii) that this had been raised as an issue with HR and would be addressed;
- viii) the view that EDI was a sensitive area, and that triangulation, deployment, control, and measurement was complex and hard;
- ix) the view that an early review of the statement of ambition across governance structures would provide healthy debate in its development;
- x) that some components were already underway, for example GNEC was to discuss the approach to Lead Members at its next meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Report be noted, and that the traffic light rating for the Report and Support system be reduced from 'green' to 'amber'.

**ACTION: PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR, ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### COU.22.113 **New Bank Account**

Considered: the opening of a new bank account to service the micro bakery and brewery due to open in Spring 2023 (COU/22/94).

Reported: that under the Financial Regulations Council was required to approve the opening of any new bank account.

Noted: that having sought comments from members of the Committee, the Chair of FRC endorsed the proposal.

RESOLVED: that the opening of the bank account be approved.

### COU.22.114 **Committee Chairs' Reports**

Received: a report (COU/22/95) from:

- i) Remuneration Committee (25 October 2022; 17 November 2022);
- ii) Finance and Resources Committee (11 November 2022);
- iii) Audit and Risk Committee (11 November 2021);
- iv) Governance, Nominations and Ethics Committee (17 November 2022).

Reported:

- i) that Remuneration Committee (RemCo) had received updates on the situations regarding disputes and industrial action regarding pay and pensions;
- ii) that RemCo had received and approved its annual reports on remuneration and settlement agreements;
- iii) that there had been fewer settlement agreements during the 2022/23 financial year, but that the Committee had requested comparison between data on leavers and settlement agreements;
- iv) that RemCo had highlighted that there had been a number of individual salary reviews in recognition of a competitive market, and had agreed to review a composite report of all senior remuneration to give proper context and familiarity ahead of any future decisions;
- v) that it was hoped the report would also identify any existing or potential outliers for senior reward;
- vi) that FRC had considered the annual bad debt write-off report and that the Committee had gained a better understanding of the increases, but that the total value was not significant in financial terms;
- vii) that FRC had considered the Treasure Management Policy, and had received a presentation from the University's service provider on risk governance for treasury investments (jointly with ARC);
- viii) that FRC had received a deep-dive presentation into the University's International Strategy delivery plan, and that the Committee had asked the team to return to the next meeting with an updated version;
- ix) that however, the Committee had endorsed the plans for international growth, and that the risks had been identified as part of the delivery plan;
- x) that FRC had received an update on the current pressures surrounding student accommodation, and that the Committee had requested a further update on short- and long-term measures to the next meeting;
- xi) that the substantive items considered by ARC had been recommended to the Council as part of the agenda today;
- xii) that however, cybersecurity was a standing item at ARC meetings, and that the Committee recognised the constant challenges in maintaining an effective security programme;
- xiii) that substantive items considered by GNEC had also been recommended to the Council as part of the agenda today.

Noted:

- i) that a five-year student number recruitment plan was being developed by the Executive;
- ii) that the ambition was to be able to admit up to 30k students, but that the resources had to be in place to accommodate increased numbers;

- iii) that the sector was now in the eleventh year of receipt of a capped undergraduate fee of £9250 per annum;
- iv) that student number growth was to support continued financial sustainability;
- v) that regarding student accommodation, planning would also be considered alongside student number plans;
- vi) that a large number of private rentals had left the marketplace recently;
- vii) that not being able to secure accommodation would be a critical factor for applicants and returning students;
- viii) that the Chair of FRC assured members the Committee had oversight of the student accommodation issue;
- ix) that regarding international recruitment, there was potential for unknown changes in Government policy which could impact on future planning.

**COU.22.115 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Noted:

- i) the thanks of the Chair to Mr Lee Forde for conducting a tour of the School of Health and Society facilities for Members ahead of the meeting;
- ii) the view that the tour had been very interesting and informative;
- iii) the thanks of the Chair to the School for hosting the meeting in the Mary Seacole Building;
- iv) that this was the final Council meeting that Mr Huw Williams would attend in the role of Chief Operating Officer;
- v) the sincere thanks of the members for Mr Williams' work during his time in the role, with particular recognition given to the development of the Campus Masterplan;
- vi) that Mr Williams was to continue in a part-time capacity to support the Masterplan until the end of March 2023;
- vii) that the Chair wished all members best wishes for the seasonal break.

**COU.22.116 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Reported: that the next meeting was scheduled for Friday 13 January 2023.