

**Present:** Joe Docherty (Chair), Rebecca Askew, Navreet Badwal, Jonathan Bewes, Kay Boycott, Leslie Ferrar, Freddy Fossey-Warren, James Grierson, Alison Hastings, Dan Lonsdale, Col Macpherson, Amir Michael, Cheryl Millington, Liadi Mudashiru, Karen O'Brien, Nigel Perry, Philip Plyming, Ari Sadanandom, Corinne Saunders, Rob Senior, Mike Shipman, JJ Thakkar, Terry Toney, and Junjie Wu

**In Attendance:** Oliver Foster, Neil Scott, Amanda Wilcox, and Stephen Willis (all items), Tony Fawcett for Minute 30, John Pritchard and Claire McDonald for Minute 32, and James Walsh (Minutes)

**Apologies:** Denise .387 Tw Teerc9 (ox)-2.10 Tc BD1 0 T (eni)2i.34 TJ0 Tci0 prepared on 30 Dec 2023  
being prepared for consideration by Governance & Nominations Committee on 30

## 26. Chair's Business

### Noted:

- a) the Chairs of Council and Audit & Risk Committee (AR

- b) the Shadow Secretary of State for Education had accepted an invitation, from the Chair, to visit the University for a meeting with the Chair and the Vice-Chancellor.

## 27. Vice-Chancellor's Report (C/23/25 Confidential)

### Noted:

- a) in relation to student enrolment the following:
  - i) the data return deadline to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) was in December and final figures were still being confirmed, although Council would receive a more comprehensive update in Epiphany Term;
  - ii) home Undergraduate (UG) targets had been slightly exceeded within the threshold allowed and compensated for international UG figures which were slightly under;
  - iii) international Postgraduate Taught (PGT) were higher than anticipated, possibly as a result of the accommodation offer;
  - iv) home PGT student numbers had not reached their target, which was reflected across the sector, although more analysis was required about the impact of the Dean's Scholarship for PGT students in the Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences & Health Faculties;
  - v) due to the ongoing financial environment, the University had taken a decision to reduce PhD scholarship funding and this reflected the number of enrolled PhD students;
  - vi) indications were the overall student enrolment would confirm the University's Q1 Financial Forecast was on budget.
- b) recent Government announcement on tightening immigration rules required further consideration. Although Postgraduate Research (PGR) students were unlikely to be affected, it was interpretation of the message by international students which may be impact on future student numbers;
- c) in relation to para 5.1 2024/25 University Funded Durham Doctoral Scholarships (DDS): Council welcomed the reintroduction of the DDS for one-year. This initial reinstatement would allow the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PGR) time to consider the DDS within the current review into the University's response to PGR, as outlined in the Strategy Refresh.

## 28. Senate Report (C/23/26 Internal)

- c) although the DSU was pleased by the decision to raise the Durham Grant, this had been tempered by the increase in accommodation fees, with the DSU asking for clearer justification for price rises to be communicated;
- d) in relation to the use of University communication channels by the DSU the following:
  - i)

- c) the DSU Annual Assurance report had been endorsed by Governance & Nominations Committee by-circulation for approval at Council.

**Agreed:** to approve the: Occupational Health & Safety Policy Statement & Arrangements; Fire Risk Management Policy; Research Integrity Statement; Prevent Monitoring Report; DSU Annual Assurance.

### 32. Strategic Performance Indicators and Strategy Update (C/23/29 Confidential)

**Noted:**

- a) following approval of the Strategy Refresh, the Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs) had been updated to ensure that progress against the Strategy could be measured;
- b) several SPIs related to sustainability. With recognition for the exceptional work by the teams led the PVC (Global) and Director of Strategy, Planning & Insights, in evidencing the University's response to the United Nation's (UNs) Sustainability Development Goals (SDG). This had contributed to celebratory improvements in the University's positioning in the QS Sustainability University Rankings 2024;
- c) the University had been working with the DSU in developing a mental health charter and would refresh its Access & Participation Plan in response to changes to OfS guidance;
- d) Council agreed that the SPIs were clear and welcomed the approach taken by the Strategy, Planning & Insight Office in communicating how progress against the Strategy would be measured. Council would receive a 6-monthly progress update of progress in relation to the Strategy;
- e) in relation to the ambitious target set for research income generation, as noted in the Strategy Refresh, confidence in this figure had been based on several factors:
  - i) the University's performance in relation to similar sized institutions and other Russell Group universities;
  - ii) changes in research income generation which had been achieved in the 2022-23 Academic Year;
  - iii) analysis of the funding landscape available for research grants, including horizon scanning for the likely future direction of research funding.

### 33. Remuneration Committee Report: 14 November 2023 (C/23/35 Confidential)

**Noted:** the report of items discussed at the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 14 November 2023, with particular note of the agreed decision by the Committee to discontinue the Pay in lieu of pensions scheme for new entrants, but to continue for current members.

### 34. Council and Joint Senate and Council Committee Terms of Reference

**Noted:** the consideration of Terms of Reference by the sub-committees of Council and the joint sub-committees of Council and Senate.

**Agreed:** to approve the Terms of Reference.

### 35. Finance Committee Report: 15 November 2023 (C/23/32 Confidential)

**Received:** 2022/2023 Financial Outturn (C/23/32a Confidential)

**Noted:**

- a) the report of items discussed at the Finance Committee meeting held on 15 November 2023;
- b) in relation to the 2022/2023 Financial Outturn the following:  
**Closed Minute**

### 36. Ethics Committee Reports: 27 October and 16 November 2023 (C/23/33 Confidential)

**Noted:**

- a) the report of items discussed at the Ethics Committee meetings held on 27 October and 16 November 2023;
- b) in relation to the KSA-UK Joint Institute for Clean Hydrogen the following:
  - i) the research proposal was at a letter of intent stage, with Ethics Committee asked for its input in relation to the ethical matters culminating from the proposal;

- ii) Ethics Committee had considered issues relating to the challenge of the project funding potentially coming from a fossil fuel exporter and the issue of human rights in the country;
  - iii) the research proposal was not thought to be state funded and Ethics Committee would receive a further update at a future meeting, advising Council of the outcome.
- c) The issue of international security risks and the challenges the University faced, was a topic which had been proposed for consideration at the Joint Senate Council Event, scheduled for 26 February 2024.

**37. People and Organisational Development Committee Report 2 November 2023**

**Noted:** the report of items discussed at the People & Organisational Development Committee meeting held on 2 November 2023.

**38. Statutes and Regulations Update**

**Noted:** the approval of the updated University Statutes by the Privy Council on 11 October 2023.

**39. Business Agreed by Circulation since Last Meeting**

**Noted:** the approval by Council by-circulation of the following decisions:

- a) Professor Clive Roberts as the Executive Dean for the Faculty of Science;
- b) Professor Tony Fawcett as the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education).