

MINUTES OF A COUNCIL MEETING

Held on 18th November 2021

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION	WHO
1.	<p><u>Apologies & Absences</u></p> <p>For a record of attendance, apologies and absences, see attached list.</p> <p>This was the first in-person meeting since February 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Chair was unavoidably unable to attend the start of the meeting, so Richard Barnes (Deputy Pro-Chancellor) deputised as Chair.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair welcomed to Keele the lay Council members that joined us during the pandemic – Tracy Bullock, Jane Burns and Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal. He welcomed the staff and student members that joined during the pandemic - Shalini Sharma, Masi Noor, Lisa Dikomitis, Holly Brooks and Atieme Ogbolosingha. He noted that this was, however, the last meeting for Lisa as she was leaving Keele next month and also for Atieme who had graciously stepped into the position of Acting President of the Keele Postgraduate Association in September but would hand over to his successor very shortly. He welcomed one of the Governor Apprentices – Lucy Robinson but unfortunately Marie Feliho was unable to join us. He welcomed Stephen Avery (Interim Chief Financial Officer) and Frances Hewison (Interim HR Director) who were in attendance for the first time. He welcomed Tim Collier (Associate Director of Finance) who was also in attendance. Finally, he welcomed Clare Stevenson to her first meeting in-person as Secretary.</p>		
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>All the staff members of Council and all the staff attendees declared that they were members of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). Lesley Thompson declared that her husband was a member of USS.</p>		

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3.	<u>Student Story</u> <i>Item confidential</i>		
4.	<u>Minutes and Actions</u> (i) <u>Minutes</u> Council received and approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 th September 2021. (ii) <u>Actions List</u> Council received and noted the actions. It was noted that plans were progressing with the externally led Council Effectiveness Review and that a further update would be provided at the next meeting.		
5.	<u>Matters Arising</u> None.		
PART A – REPORTS & APPROVALS			
6A.	<u>Vice-Chancellor's Update</u> Members received an update on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Item commercial in confidence</i> ▪ Following the announcement that Rachel Adams, Director of HR, had left Keele at the end of October 2021, Council thanked her for her enormous contribution to the University over the last 20 years and wished her well. Frances Hewison had been appointed as Interim Director of HR to support us in the short term. Unfortunately, the Chief Financial Officer position was not appointed to following the recent recruitment process, so Stephen Avery's appointment as Interim Chief Financial Officer had been extended until the end of 2022. It was reported that both Ms Hewison and Mr Avery had settled in well and were bringing the benefits of fresh insight. ▪ Keele has strong links with Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust where the Ockenden Review has been set up to independently assess their maternity services following letters of concern to the Health Secretary from bereaved families. The University was monitoring the situation in relation to the ongoing review carefully and had put a number of mechanisms in place to review activity and provide assurance. ▪ The Vice-Chancellor was delighted to report that the 		

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	<p>University had entered into a new collaborative partnership with Navitas to give international students a new pathway to enable them to progress onto a course at Keele. The partnership would allow us to further enhance our offering to international students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Item commercial in confidence</i> ▪ <i>Item commercial in confidence</i> ▪ In addition to the recent opening of the Co-Op on campus, a new branch of Greggs has opened and the newly refurbished CENTRAL space in the Chancellor's Building was opened ahead of the return of students to campus. The official opening of CENTRAL would be performed by the Chair of Council later that afternoon. ▪ Keele was successful in being awarded £1.23m capital funding from the Office for Students in a competitive bid. It focused on additional spectroscopic and analytical equipment for forensic, analytical and chemical sciences, the refurbishment and repurposing of space and equipment for clinical skills and simulation teaching for health sciences and new mobile computer provision for data analysis and blended learning in laboratory-based sciences. ▪ <i>Item commercial in confidence.</i> ▪ The Vice-Chancellor delivered his annual address to staff on 10th November 2021, covering the Academic Delivery Plan (ADP), which sets out the University's approach to integrated academic and financial planning. The ADP is the latest strategic initiative to be launched in support of the Our Future strategic plan, as discussed at the Council Away Day. ▪ In recognition of the hard work and dedication of our staff throughout the pandemic and in the last 12 months, an additional discretionary day of leave would be allocated to all staff on 23rd December 2021. The usual level of campus operations would commence a day early, with arrangements made for those staff not able to take the day off over Christmas to do so at another time. ▪ A number of league tables had been published since the previous meeting, and highlights for Keele included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2022 Guardian University Guide - Keele was ranked 48th overall, which was down on the previous year. Strong subject performances were seen in Medicine (4th placed English University) and a further seven subjects achieved a top 20 result. 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keele had climbed three places to 48th in the 2022 Sunday Times Good University Guide with a significantly improved score. Strong subject performances were seen in Medicine and Radiography, both in the top 10. ○ Keele saw a good improvement in its subject rankings in the Times Higher Education World Subject Rankings. All subjects with the exception of Business & Management and Computer Science had a banded global ranking. Law had been ranked in the top 200 globally, which was an excellent performance. ▪ The University submitted its Access & Participation Plan Monitoring Provider Impact Report to the Office for Students (OfS) and received confirmation that it found no issues with Keele's return. ▪ In 2020-2021 good degrees (first and upper second class) increased by 5.3% to 84.8%. From 2018-2019 to 2020-2021, good degrees increased by a total of 8.8%. Sector results were not yet available but the continued increase in good degrees across the sector in recent years remains of interest to the OfS. At Keele, a research project to examine the increase was being undertaken by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). ▪ <i>Item commercial in confidence</i> ▪ The latest version of the University Risk Register, which had previously been considered by the University Executive Committee (UEC) and the Audit & Risk Committee was presented. It had been updated to reflect the latest impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to outline the significant increase in our risk profile at present, and identify the implications and controls, contingency plans and assurance mechanisms that had been or would be put in place. ▪ An update was provided on the University and College Union (UCU) ballots for strike action on pay and pensions. The University had been informed that at Keele there had been a 64% turnout for both ballots, which was above the required threshold of 50%. Strike action was planned for 1st, 2nd and 3rd December 2021 and action short of a strike thereafter until May 2022 or until UCU deemed there had been a satisfactory conclusion to the dispute. The University was working through the implications of this and how it would respond and would communicate with staff in detail 		

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	<p>the following week. There was understanding of the concern felt by staff at the proposed increases in pension contributions, particularly against a backdrop of rising inflation and living costs. It was reported that many staff went above and beyond what was expected of them so the effect of action short of a strike would need to be closely monitored. The Vice-Chancellor reported that he had received a letter directly from the OfS reminding him of the University's conditions of registration, the requirement to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by the strike action and the right of the OfS to fine institutions or insist it issued tuition fee rebates. This was the first time the OfS had issued such a letter to Vice-Chancellors. The University committed to communicating regularly with students throughout the period in question and to do all it could to ensure they were not disadvantaged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An update was provided on recent sector reports. <p><u>Covid-19 Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An update on the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted that infection levels on campus remained well below the community rate of transmission in the last few weeks, which provided substantial assurance that the measures implemented through Operating Level 2 of the University's response plan had been effective. ▪ The Silver Command Team continued to closely monitor the situation and regular reminders were being sent to staff and students on the measures required to maintain safety on campus. 		
<i>The Chair of Council took over the chairing of the meeting from this point onwards</i>			
7A.	<p><u>Recruitment & Admissions Update</u></p> <p><i>Item commercial in confidence</i></p>		
8A.	<p><u>Statutory Returns</u></p> <p>(i) <u>Part I: Statutory Accounts</u> <i>Item commercial in confidence</i></p> <p>(ii) <u>Part II: Draft 3 Year Budget and OfS Forecasts</u> <i>Item commercial in confidence</i></p> <p>(iii) <u>Prevent Report</u> Council received the annual prevent return for submission to the OfS.</p>		

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	<p>The OfS revised the reporting requirements each year but this year the revisions had been greater than normal, including removing the requirement for providers to submit an accountability statement. In the absence of this, an annual report was presented to Council to provide assurance of the University's compliance with the Prevent Duty.</p> <p>The University was required to submit a Prevent Accountability & Data Return, which had been signed off by the Chair of Council.</p> <p>The return was approved by Council for signing by the Chair and submission to the OfS.</p>		
9A.	<p><u>Finance Update</u> <i>Item commercial in confidence</i></p>		
10A.	<p><u>Secretary's Report</u> The Secretary to Council presented her report as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council approved the Annual Report of Council to Senate ▪ Council approved an amendment to the terms of reference of the Audit & Risk Committee to add an additional co-opted member and appointed James Rushton to that position ▪ It was noted that the annual reviews of Council and committee members had been completed. A summary of the themes and actions to improve effectiveness were presented and their implementation would be overseen by the Nominations & Governance Committee ▪ Council received and noted the Council annual plan 2021-2022 ▪ The Access & Participation Plan Impact Report was received for information ▪ <i>Item commercial in confidence</i> ▪ It was noted that 16 documents had been sealed since the previous meeting ▪ Council was presented with information on training and some useful resources. 		
11A.	<p><u>Student Reports & Accounts</u></p> <p>(i) <u>Report of the Students' Union (SU)</u> The Union Development & Democracy Officer presented</p>		

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	<p>her report, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 'Girls Night In' National Movement against spiking ▪ Be Better Do Better ▪ Freedom of Speech (Higher Education) Bill ▪ Forthcoming strike action <p>(ii) <u>SU Accounts</u> <i>Dave Brown (SU Deputy CEO, Operations) attended the meeting to present this item.</i> The SU accounts for the year ended 31st July 2021 were received and noted.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Report of the Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA)</u> The Acting President of the KPA presented his report, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KPA election update ▪ KPA Events: Welcome Week, induction, Black History Month ▪ November campaigns/wellbeing events ▪ UCU balloting for strike ▪ KPA turnaround/constitutional changes ▪ Christmas and vacation planning ▪ International students ▪ Clubhouse updates ▪ Forthcoming strike action <p>(iv) <u>KPA Accounts</u> The KPA accounts for the year ended 31st July 2021 were received and noted.</p>		
PART B – COMMITTEE REPORTS			
12B.	<p><u>Committee Reports</u></p> <p>(i) <u>Nominations & Governance Committee</u> The Chair of the committee reported on the meetings held on 17th September and 15th October 2021 at which the following items were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chancellor appointment ▪ Pro-Chancellor appointment ▪ Corporate governance statement ▪ Information governance update report ▪ Reportable event <p>(ii) <u>Senate</u> The Chair of the Committee reported on the meeting held on 13th October 2021 at which the following items were</p>		

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	<p>discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education report Research report Secretary's report Recruitment update Student Officer updates Vice-Chancellor's report <p>(iii) <u>Business Review Committee</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee reported on the meeting held on 21st October 2021 at which the following items were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory accounts Draft 3 year budget and OfS forecasts <i>Item commercial in confidence</i> Ethical Investment Code of Practice KRF investment monitoring report Treasury and investment management report Insurance renewals 2021-2022 SU management accounts <p>(iv) <u>Audit & Risk Committee</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee reported on the meeting held on 20th October 2021, in which the following items were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk register Research integrity and governance annual report Management and quality assurance of data annual report External auditors for non-assurance services policy Internal audit progress report Internal audit programme 2021-2022 Internal audit annual report Statutory accounts External audit highlights memorandum <p>Council noted the reports.</p>		
PART C – THEMED DISCUSSION ITEMS			
13C.	<p><u>Financial Sustainability Plan</u></p> <p><i>Item commercial in confidence</i></p>		
14C.	<p><u>Network Transformation Project</u></p> <p><i>Item commercial in confidence</i></p>		

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PART D – ANY OTHER BUSINESS			
15D.	<p><u>Other Business</u></p> <p>The Chair noted that it was the last meeting for Lisa Dikomitis and thanked her for her valuable contributions during her time on Council and as a member of the Nominations & Governance Committee. She also thanked Atieme Ogbolosingha who had stepped in as Acting President of the KPA and would shortly be stepping back into his Vice-President role.</p>		
16D.	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The date of the next meeting is 10th February 2022</p>		

Dame Jo Williams	Pro-Chancellor
Richard Barnes	Deputy Pro-Chancellor
Sally Bucknell	Deputy Pro-Chancellor
Richard Callaway	Deputy Pro-Chancellor
David Hall	Honorary Treasurer
Professor Trevor McMillan	Vice-Chancellor
Professor Mark Ormerod	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY STAFF

Professor Lisa Dikomitis	Senate Member
Dr Masi Noor	Senate Member
Dr Shalini Sharma	Senate Member
Emma Colley	Appointed by the Professional Services Staff

LAY MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL

Ruth Bagley
 Tracy Bullock
 Jane Burns
 David Brown
 Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal
 Manali Lukha
 A Andrew Macleod
 Sherree Schaefer
 Dr Lesley Thompson

STUDENT MEMBERS

Holly Brooks	Union Development & Democracy Officer, SU
Atieme Ogbolosingha	Interim President, Keele Postgraduate Association

SECRETARY TO COUNCIL

Clare Stevenson	Secretary to Council
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IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Mark Bacon	Chief Operating Officer
Frances Hewison	Interim Director of Human Resources
Stephen Avery	Interim Chief Financial Officer
Tim Collier	Associate Director of Finance
Dave Brown	SU Deputy CEO, Operations (item 11A(ii) only)
Alex Goffe	Head of Operations & Infrastructure (item 14C only)
Matthew Bailey	IT Network Manager (item 14C only)
Lucy Robinson	Governor Apprentice
A Marie Feliho	Governor Apprentice

SECRETARIAT

Fiona Dumbelton	Governance Manager
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