

**Present:** Joe Docherty (Chair), Rebecca Askew, Joanna Barker, Jonathan Bewes, Kay Boycott, Richard Crisp, Leslie Ferrar, James Grierson, Michael Hampel, Denise Lievesley, Colin Macpherson, Joe McGarry, Amir Michael, Cheryl Millington, Liadi Mudashiru, Karen O'Brien, Nigel Perry, Ari, Sadanandom, Corinne Saunders, Terry Toney, and Jun Jie Wu.

**In Attendance:** Laura Curran, Amanda Wilcox, Stephen Willis and Kelly Knapp (Minutes)  
Jeremy Cook, Sam Dale and Simon Forrest (Minute 85)

**Apologies:** Alison Hastings

**Minutes of a Meeting of Council held in the  
The Penthouse Suite, Collingwood College**

**74. Welcome and Thanks**

The Chair thanked Kelly Knapp for her service to Council.

**75. Declarations of Interests in relation to Agenda Items**

**Noted:**

- a) the Vice Chancellor, Chief Financial Officer and University Secretary – roles approved by Council – raised a conflict in relation to the Revised Disciplinary Regulations (Minute 84);
- b) Ari Sadanandom raised a conflict as a Professor within the Department of Biosciences in relation to the Finance Committee Report (Minute 88).

**76. Minutes of Meetings held on 31 January 2023**

**Approved:** the minutes of the meetings held on 31 January 2023.

**77. Matters Arising**

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

**78. Action Log and Schedule of Business (C/22/67 and C/22/68 Confidential)**

**Noted:** the status of the Action Log and Schedule of Business.

**79. Chair's Business**

**Received:** a verbal update that Green Park had been retained to assist with lay member recruitment and a timeline agreed. Three lay members were sought – two to begin their first term this year (1 August 2023) and one to begin their first term next year (1 August 2024) and observe in the interim.

**80. Vice Chancellor Report (C/22/69 Confidential)**

**Noted:**

- a) the recently appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost, Mike Shipman, would join the University on 1 August 2023. He was scheduled to attend the July pre-Council event and Council meeting and would like to meet with lay members – one-to-one meetings would be scheduled;
- b) a delegation of University employees had recently returned from a productive trip to India. Separately, the Indian High Commission had visited Newcastle and the Vice Chancellor attended an event that had resulted in constructive discussions where agreement was reached that a delegation would visit the University as there was interest in the Arts & Humanities as well as the University's museums;

- c) the Recruitment, Admissions and Target Setting (RATS) Group was providing regular updates to University Executive Committee (UEC) that offered real time monitoring;
  - i. postgraduate recruitment – international and UK – was volatile and a trend experienced by other universities as the current cost of living hindered students. The University was exploring financial options for potential students;
  - ii. feedback indicated a perception that the University’s undergraduate decision making had long lead times. Management did not consider there to be specific concerns; however, certain resources had been redeployed to support international recruitment;
  - iii. changes were needed within the Recruitment and Admissions Team to help improve its processes. The Team’s reporting line would be transferring to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) and the University was recruiting for a new Deputy Registrar role;
- d) the University would be subject to further planned industrial action. There had been confidential discussions between unions and Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) resulting in an impasse on pay;
  - i. following the conclusion of the national pay negotiations for the 2023-24 academic year, the pay award had been agreed between 5% and 8%, depending on an employee’s point on the pay spine;
  - ii. an interim pay lift to staff had been agreed, backdated to 1 February 2023 with the rest of the uplift from 1 August 2023;
- e) recruitment for the new University Librarian – a challenging role that included the University’s museums and collections – would begin shortly;
- f) the University had been awarded nearly £1 million in funding for solar panels that would be used to support Computer Science;
- g) the University had lost its teacher training accreditation as had other universities. A judicial appeal was considered a probable solution but was not considered financially feasible. As such, the University had reached agreement with Newcastle University to offer a regional solution.

**81. Strategy Refresh Update (C/22/70 Confidential)**

**Noted:**

- a) the Update provided a summary of stakeholder feedback that would be utilised to refine the Strategy Refresh prior to further socialisation with Senate later this month and in preparation for its submission to Council in May;
- b) the timeline had slightly altered whereby Finance Committee was now scheduled to review the Capital Plan at its meeting in June versus April as reflected in the Update.

**82. Senate Report (C/22/71 Confidential)**

**Noted:** the matters discussed by Senate at its meeting on 14 February 2023.

**83. Durham Students’ Union (DSU) Report (C/22/72 Internal)**

**Noted:**

- a) the cost of living and housing continued to be the main area of concern for students;
  - i. a meeting was scheduled between the DSU, University, Local Member of Parliament, and local estate agents to discuss;
  - ii. certain Students’ Unions were investigating housing policy solutions for students that leveraged existing renter protection legislation;
- b) there had been low turnout for the recent DSU elections, which would be investigated. There was a perception that new multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements may have hindered turnout, but further work was required to confirm this.

**Agreed:**

- a) a comparison of DSU election turnout results versus other Students’ Unions be presented to Council; DSU
- b) members of Council be invited to the annual University Charity Fashion Show. DSU

#### 84. Diversity Pay Annual Report (C/22/73 Confidential)

**Noted:**

- a) the agenda to be updated to reflect the acting Provost as the Sponsor
- b) the former Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost had led efforts in response to the diversity pay gaps within the University. As a result, the gender pay gap continued to close – nearing the agreed target – but further work was needed.

**Agreed:** the updated Action Plan and performance indicators.

#### 85. Revised Disciplinary Regulations (C/22/74 Confidential)

**Noted:**

- a) the agenda to be updated to reflect the Vice Chancellor as the Sponsor;
- b) there had been an in depth discussion at Senate regarding the proposed changes;
- c) certain proposed changes to the Regulations also required updates to the Statutes, which were pending Privy Council approval;
  - i. the University had recently received feedback from Privy Council following its submission of proposed changes to the Statutes in spring last year. The feedback was being reviewed by outside counsel after which, if deemed required, the Statutes Review Working Group would reconvene to assess next steps;
- d) separate work was underway to update the University's Conflict of Interest and Personal Relationships at Work Policy that would be presented to Council at a later date.

**Agreed:** changes to the Disciplinary Regulations subject to the following changes:

- a) removal of 7.2 (k) "behaviour not in keeping with the University's values...;"
- b) revision of 16.2 to read "The dismissal of any senior member of staff, who have been appointed by Council as per the University Statutes, requires the approval of Council."

*Jeremy Cook, Sam Dale and Simon Forrest joined the meeting for the following item.*

#### 86. Student Support Project

**Received:** a presentation on the Student Support Project from the Director of Student Support & Wellbeing. Once implemented, the system would help facilitate the sharing of information amongst relevant interested parties across the University and thereby reduce the requirement for student in distress to recall their circumstances multiple times. Complemented with process improvements and training, the project aimed to achieve more efficient processes and a more effective student / staff experience.

**Noted:**

- a) the system was an "off the shelf" tool that had been slightly customised for the University;
- b) the system would capture confidential data that needed to be appropriately protected – not only to align with regulatory requirements but also ethical obligations – and access would be appropriated embedded and monitored;
- c) the Team currently leveraged data to adapt its operations and services. A more comprehensive review would be undertaken utilising the system's enriched data to assess other opportunities for improvement;
- d) approximately 25% of students raised disclosures, which was not uncommon across the higher education community. Societal changes had provided an environment for increased disclosure – mental health was the most common disclosure versus learning disabilities which had historically been the most common disclosure.
- e) the University was considered one of the best in the country for its provision of student support, especially for autistic students.

**Agreed:**

- a) Audit & Risk Committee to review the Student Support Project and provide assurance by design; ARC
- b) a summary of Council's safeguarding obligations to be provided in alignment with recent case law; AW
- c) a post implementation update to be provided to Council. JC / SD

*Jeremy Cook, Sam Dale and Simon Forrest left the meeting*

**87. Audit and Risk Co-opted Members (C/22/76 Confidential)**

**Agreed:** appointment of Alison Alden and Richard Dale as Co-Opted members of the Audit and Risk Committee commencing 1 August 2023 for a period of three years until 31 July 2026.

**88. Changes to UEC Terms of Reference (C/22/77 Confidential)**

**Agreed:** the change to the membership of the University Executive Committee.

**89. Finance Committee Report 22 February 2023 (C/22/78 Confidential)**

**Noted:** the significant matters discussed by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 22 February 2023.

**90. Remuneration Committee Report 23 February 2023**

**Noted:** the proposed contract renewals were for a period of three versus five years, which had been discussed by the Remuneration Committee.

**Agreed:** contract renewals for the following:

- a) Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) for a further three (3) years from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2027;
- b) Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Colleges and WSE) for a further three (3) years from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2027;
- c) Executive Dean for Arts and Humanities for a further three (3) years from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2027.

**91. Ethics Committee Report 15 February 2023**

**Noted:** the matters discussed by the Ethics Committee at its meeting on 15 February 2023 where quoracy had been challenged, due in large part to industrial action.

**Agreed:** a revised report that clarified the acronyms noted within the report be circulated to Council members. **NP**

**92. Campaign Board Report 19 January 2023**

**Noted:** the matters discussed by the Durham Inspired Campaign Board at its meeting on 19 January 2023.

**Agreed:** the new Director Of Development, Develop and Alumni Relations, and Campaign Board Chair to present their respective fundraising plans to Council. **AW**

**93. Advance HE Report: Leading an Inclusive Culture**

**Noted:** the Final Report from the Inclusive Culture Programme and that the results would be subject to consideration by the People & Organisational Development Committee.

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

**Noted:** on 16 February 2023, Council approval, following the recommendation of the Joint Council and Senate Panel, of the appointment of Professor Mike Shipman as University Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.

**95. Dates of Future Meetings**

**Noted:** the dates of future Council meetings: 16 May 2023 and 11 July 2023.