Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2018

Present:
The Chair of Council
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Research (Professor D Smith)
Pro-Chancellor (Mrs D Jagger)
Pro-Chancellor (Ms J Unwin) [Acting Chair from M17-18/108 onwards]

Mr S Bayley
Mr P Carpenter
Ms C Chamberlain (GSA)
Dr R Curwen
Dr K Dittrich
Dr C Dye
Professor A Field

Mr M Galloway
Professor C Hunter
Professor Q Summerfield
Mr C Thompson
Mrs C Thomson
Mr J Durcan (SU)

In attendance:
Registrar & Secretary, Ms J Horsburgh
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Students),
Professor J Robinson
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Partnerships & Knowledge Exchange), Professor J Timmis
Director of Finance, Mr J Lindley
Governance Officer, Dr P Evans (Assistant Secretary)
Governance Administrator, Ms B Carter Ellis
Acting Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Officer, Ms B Christou
Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Officer Designate, Mr I Wiggins
Planning Officer, Dr G Harrison (for M17-18/97)
Operations Manager, Ms R Desport (for M17-18/97)

Apologies for absence were received from the Treasurer and Mrs N Inchbald.

17-18/97 University Strategy
[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

17-18/98 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Members were invited to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to the business of the meeting. The following interests were declared:
(a) Denise Jagger declared an interest as a partner in *Eversheds* law firm which was involved in due diligence work on behalf of the University (M17-18/103 below refers) and as regards her proposed re-appointment to the Finance Committee (M17-18/110 below refers);

(b) Sam Bayley declared an interest in matters relating to student accommodation provision (M17-18/113 below refers) as his partner worked in Accommodation Services;

(c) Professor Saul Tendler declared an interest as Chair of the Board of Directors of York Science Park Ltd (M17-18/113 below refers).

**17-18/99  Minutes**

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 (C.17-18/89) were approved and Council also noted the action-schedule based on the minutes (C.17-18/90).

**17-18/100  Key Performance Indicators**

Council received for information the current RAG rating of its revised key performance indicators (C.17-18/91), noting in particular the University’s improved ranking in the *Guardian University Guide* (up five places to twelfth position).

As regards the indicator for research income per academic FTE, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) reported that this data would be subject to review in order to better harmonise the underlying methodology with that used for the benchmark institutions.

In response to a query as to how certain competitors had managed to achieve student number growth without an associated decline in entry tariff, it was suggested that these were highly selective institutions that had been able to expand within an existing market segment. It was also noted that such an expansion would only have been feasible in certain subject areas, but that this nevertheless remained an area the University would actively explore. As regards correlation between entry tariff and degree classification (i.e. input versus output measures), it was noted that this was referenced in the annual statistical report to Senate on degree outcomes (M17-18/119 below refers).

**17-18/101  Regional Bioeconomy**

Further to M17-18/34 (*Biorenewables Development Centre*), Council received for information a report on the Centre’s role in the wider strategy for the regional bioeconomy (C.17-18/92). The Pro-Vice-Chancellor
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(Research) also tabled a prospectus recently published by the BioYork initiative.

In discussion of the report it was noted that developments in this area were not merely regional but connected to a national bioeconomy strategy that would shortly be launched by government. Connections were also noted with other University activities such as research-led teaching, new academic appointments, preparation of REF impact case studies and development of apprenticeships. Related work was also ongoing beyond higher education through the three local LEPs and other external partners.

Council commended the interesting report and decided to request further briefing at a pre-lunch session during the next academic year.

17-18/102 Safeguarding Policy

Further to M17-18/60 (Report from the Vice-Chancellor), Council noted that, having received initial consideration by the Student Life Committee, the University’s updated Safeguarding Policy would be submitted for information to a future meeting following consideration by UEB.

17-18/103 Acquisition of Stodham Investments Ltd

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

17-18/104 Office for Students

Further to M17-18/89 (Office for Students Registration), Council received for information a letter to the Chair (tabled) confirming that the OfS had decided to include the University in its register of English higher education providers.

The following additional points were noted:

(a) The OfS was expected to publish new guidance on Student Protection Plans, which were designed to facilitate continuation of study in the event of unforeseen course or institutional closures.

(b) The University had acknowledged in its Access and Participation Plan that there remained further data analysis to be undertaken and it would therefore continue to engage with the Office for Fair Access on this matter.

(c) The OfS decision was not intended to have enduring status and reserved the right to reach a different view on matters relating to the ongoing conditions of registration in the future.
(d) Being, in effect, a consumer protection organisation to represent the interests of students, the OfS had identified a number of initial priorities, including senior remuneration, value for money and effective governance.

17-18/105

**Executive Report from the Vice-Chancellor**

Council received an Executive Report from the Vice-Chancellor (C.17-18/94) covering the following areas:

- TEF Gold Award
- Guardian University Guide 2019
- HEPI annual conference
- USS pension update
- pay award negotiations
- campus masterplan
- new SU/GSA sabbatical officers

During discussion the following points were noted:

(a) The TEF Gold award was acknowledged as a great credit to all those involved in teaching and learning at the University and congratulations were offered to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (TLS) and his team for drafting the successful submission and to the wider University with respective to the positive work that had supported such a strongly evidence narrative. Council also congratulated the University on its rise from 17th to 12th in the recently published Guardian University Guide 2019.

(b) The cost-sharing process to be imposed by the USS pension fund trustee under §76.4-8 (split 35:65 between members and employees) would see the University’s required contribution rise from 18% to 21%, which would equate to an additional cost of ca. £8-10m per annum. It was noted that a contingency provision had been made for this increase in the University’s budget (M17-18/108 below refers). It was also noted that staff contributions would rise from 8% to 11.7%.

(c) Following a ballot in which 89% of the members voting had rejected the 2% annual pay award, UCU would launch a national ballot for strike action in August. Any resultant industrial action was likely to be targeted at key points in the student calendar during 2018/19. Although the union did not formally promote any connection between pay and pension matters, the two issues in combination were likely to affect voting in the ballot as the end-effect would be a salary cut for the staff affected.

(d) As regards the campus masterplan, it was noted that Historic England’s decisions regarding listed status were broadly in line with indications
they had previously given. Council also noted that a proposal to relocate the Management School alone (i.e. not together with the Department of Politics) into the former Smith and Nephew building would shortly be considered by UEB, in order to facilitate other departmental moves and developments.

(e) With reference to the 32% of students reporting poor value for money in the national 2018 HEPI Student Academic Experience Survey, it was noted that, while institution-specific data was not available on this matter, it was likely to remain a government priority through the OfS.

17-18/106 Vice-Chancellor Recruitment
[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

17-18/107 Financial Transactions
[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

[Note: At this point the Chair left the meeting for another engagement and Julia Unwin (Pro-Chancellor) assumed the chair for the remaining business on the agenda.]

17-18/108 Budget and Medium Term Plan
[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

17-18/109 Statute Amendments

Council considered a recommendation to delete Statute 6.5 and amend Statute 11.4.q (C.17-18/98), noting that the proposed amendments had been approved and recommended to Council by Senate at its meeting on 10 July 2018.

Presenting the amendments, the Registrar commented that they linked to the new Fitness to Study/Attend Policy (M17-18/119 below refers) and would facilitate the termination of a student’s registration when this proved necessary under relevant procedures.

Council approved the proposed statute amendments, noting that they would next be submitted to the Privy Council for formal ratification.

17-18/110 Appointments Committee

Council considered a report from the meeting of the Appointments Committee held on 26 June 2018 (C.17-18/99) and approved the specific recommendations that:

(a) Denise Jagger (Pro-Chancellor) be re-appointed to the Finance Committee until the end of her current term on Council (31 July 2020);
(b) Claire Wesley (independent lay member) be re-appointed to the Remuneration Committee for a further three year term until 31 July 2021.

Council also noted the Committee’s ongoing consideration of other forthcoming sub-committee vacancies and potential new lay members of Council. As regards the latter, it was reported that the Committee would shortly be conducting interviews with short-listed candidates with a view to seeking Council’s approval for two new appointments over the summer.

17-18/111 Executive Report: Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research

Council considered the annual executive report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Research (C.17-18/101), noting that it covered the following areas:

- preparation for REF 2020
- strengthening the research infrastructure
- research performance 2017/18
- new initiatives 2017/18
- research highlights

During discussion the following points were noted:

(a) It was suggested that a presentation on the University’s Research Strategy might provide an interesting topic for the pre-lunch session at a future Council meeting, combined with the provision of further information on the particular area of the bio-economy (M17-18/101 above refers).

(b) In the context of “REF Check Exercises” and a planned full mock REF early in 2019, it was noted that performance management was a key element of REF preparation in order to provide supportive but critical guidance to individuals and departments. This was particularly important for REF2021 as the new rules required all eligible researchers to be returned in the University’s submission.

(c) Council congratulated the staff concerned for the 2017/18 research highlights identified in the report (Section E refers).

(d) As regards the ongoing decline in NERC awards to the University, which were now below the sector average, this was thought to relate to a degree of structural disconnection within the environmental sciences when it came to funding bids. The issue was noted as being subject to management action.
Council thanked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for her informative report and also approved the Annual Statement on Research Integrity required by UUK’s Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Appendix 1 to the report refers).

17-18/112 In-Year Financial Performance

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

17-18/113 Estates Committee

Council considered a report from the meeting of the Estates Committee held on 21 June 2018 (C.17-18/102) and approved the specific recommendations that:

(a) a compelling case existed to continue with the residential development strategy beyond the current phase;
(b) further work be undertaken to explore the optimum residential options in the future (which might vary according to campus location);
(c) the capital programme be approved (M17-18/108 above also refers).

17-18/114 Halifax Estates

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

17-18/115 York Global Initiative for Safe Autonomy

[FOI exempt/commercially confidential]

17-18/116 Halpin Review

Council received for information The Halpin Review: A Review of Council Effectiveness at the University of Bath (C.17-18/104) and agreed that it might be useful to consider the report’s primary recommendations in more detail at its next annual Away Day.

17-18/117 Business from Committees

Business from the following committee meetings was noted and/or approved (C.17-18/105):

(a) Audit and Risk Committee: 18 May 2018
(b) Finance Committee: 8 June 2018
(c) Health, Safety and Welfare Committee: 22 May 2018
(d) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee: 7 June 2018

17-18/118 Development and Alumni Activities

Council received for information the annual report on philanthropy and alumni engagement activities (C.17-18/106).
Unreserved Business from Senate

Council noted the following unreserved business from the meeting of the Senate held on 10 July 2018:

(a) student admissions (C.17-18/107)
(b) Partnerships and Enterprise Committee (C.17-18/108)
(c) undergraduate/taught postgraduate outcomes (C.17-18/109)
(d) fitness to study (C.17-18/110)
(e) GSA report on sabbatical officer election (C.17-18/111)

Use of Seal

Council approved the use of the Common Seal of the University (details available in the Registrar and Secretary’s office).

Dates of Meetings in 2018/19

The dates of meetings in 2018/19 were noted as follows:

Away Day: Thursday 11 October 2018 [9am-3pm, Lakehouse Room, RCH]

Wednesday 7 November 2018
Wednesday 23 January 2019
Wednesday 27 February 2019
Wednesday 22 May 2019
Wednesday 24 July 2019