

COUNCIL
**Loughborough
University**

Minutes of the meeting of 30 March 2023

COUN23-M1

Attendance

Christine Hodgson

Kerri Akiwowo (ab)
Penny Briscoe (ab)
Marcus Collins
Malcolm Cook
Graham Corfield
Andrea Davis
Lisanne Gibson (ab)

Naomi Hudson
Harry Hughes
Nick Jennings
Chris Linton
Jennifer Maxwell-Harris
Nicky Morgan
Emma Nadin

David Price
Surinder Sharma (ab)
John Sinnott
Danny Smith
Luke Stott
Paul Taylor (ab)
Mike Wedderburn

In attendance: Alex Owen; Dan Parsons; Richard Taylor; Rachel Thomson; Luke Vulpiani

Apologies received from: Kerri Akiwowo, Penny Briscoe, Charlotte Croffie, Lisanne Gibson, Surinder Sharma, Paul Taylor

23/1 Minutes & Matters Arising

1.1 Minutes

COUN22-M4

Council **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022.

1.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

23/2 Chair's Report

The Chair paid tribute to Peter Saraga who had died. Peter was a member of Council, though he had been unable to attend recent meetings owing to illness. Thoughts and condolences had been passed to Peter's family.

SECTION A – Items for Discussion

23/3 Strategy Update and Key Performance Indicators

3.1 Strategy and Enabling Project Updates

COUN23-P1

Council **NOTED** an update on the University Strategy and Enabling Projects, including progress and timelines on the development and implementation of the core plans and resourcing.

The strategy has six aims, each premised on a core plan, which are the main mechanisms for delivering the strategy. Council had previously approved the International core plan and is asked to approve the Education and Student Experience core plan in the next agenda item. The strategy is underpinned by enabling projects, and each core plan by a set of actions, which ensure delivery and progress.

The core plans are at different phases of development (with some in the process of being written) but delivery of the strategy is not waiting for the core plans to be written and a broad range of work is being undertaken. The strategy has already delivered a Private Pathway Partnership which will bring 300-400 more international students a year to study, and Project Compliance has improved compliance, with information security training compliance now at almost 100%.

Financial assumptions have been made in anticipation of the core plans and there is investment resource available to ensure the plans are delivered and that resources prioritised. Council requested to see a summary of the overall plan for investment. At its meeting in June Council will be updated on the medium-term plans for the resourcing of the strategy.

The Strategy will ensure that the University develops its world leading research and international profile, alongside a commitment to EDI. The Research and Innovation core plan will build on the University's strong results in the recent Research Excellence Framework.

It is important that the strategy is owned by all staff; the Vice-Chancellor will report progress to the General Assembly in April and work is also being undertaken through staff networks. It is also important to ensure that alumni are linked into the core plans and strategy and there has been work with the alumni association for international events and Council asked that work with Alumni was highlighted in future reports.

3.2 Education and Student Experience Core Plan

COUN23-P2

Council **RECEIVED** the Education and Student Experience Core Plan.

The Education and Student Experience Core Plan is one of the strategy's six core plans. The plan has undergone extensive consultation with staff and students and has been approved by Senate.

The plan focuses on four broad and overlapping themes: the academic experience; an equitable, inclusive student experience; a future-fit learning and living environment; and delivering life-long learning offer that engages students and learners beyond the current reach. For each theme, there is a corresponding objective, which provides a touchstone for the key actions that the University will undertake and its measures of success.

The plan has a focus on the campus experience and raising postgraduate taught and postgraduate research student satisfaction levels to that of undergraduates. The plan also seeks to continue to improve learning and accommodation facilities: Loughborough is consistently top-ranked in these areas, however, it is important to continue to invest and develop. The University was recently awarded £5.8m to create a suite of DIGILabs to support STEM students.

The core plan has a focus on assessment and feedback, which was considered at Council in October 2022 following the results of the National Student Survey. Work has been undertaken to reduce the total number of assessments and to ensure assessments are more effective.

Council noted that there were opportunities for Loughborough to be sector leading for sustainability, employability and industrial placements. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation recently led a sustainability governance townhall day bringing all sustainability actions together. The plans for the Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park and the redevelopment of the student village also have sustainability at the core.

Council **APPROVED** the Education and Student Experience KPIs for inclusion in its framework. There will be a single KPI for each of the 4 themes based on a basket of measures and a 5-point RAagG scale will ensure transparency.

3.3 Key Performance Indicators

COUN23-P3

Council **ACCEPTED** a transitional KPI reporting framework and noted the updated KPIs for this quarter.

The new strategy means that there is a change to the KPIs that are reported to Council and a transitional KPI framework has been formulated to bridge the move to the new strategy. Each of the new strategy's core plans will have a number of KPIs – about four each – which will be reported to Council. As Senate and Council approve the KPIs for each core plan, they will replace the “transferred” KPIs on the new framework. A five-point RAAG rating will ensure transparency in the assurance to Council.

Some of the proposed new KPIs may need further discussion.

Council **APPROVED** a change to the international student population KPI, the target was revised to 6000 from 6500 to correct an inaccuracy in earlier modelling.

3.4 Staff Experience Survey

COUN23-P4

Council **RECEIVED** a report from Human Resources Committee on the results of the staff experience survey.

The last staff survey was conducted in 2016 and therefore the results were not easily comparable to the recent survey, which focussed on a comparison to other Higher Education institutions.

The survey received a good response with 66% of staff responding. The University's scores for most of the themes were positive and higher than the sector benchmark. Two themes scored below the sector benchmark: reward and recognition, and wellbeing. Professional service staff scored higher than academic staff, which is common in the sector.

The Deans and Directors of each School and Service are sharing their local results with staff and developing plans and actions for tangible improvement focused on the staff experience. Human Resources Committee will receive regular updates on progress, which will be RAG rated by schools and services to aid the governance and monitoring of activity and outcomes.

A further Staff Experience Survey will run in November 2023 and each year after so that trends and progress can be monitored effectively. While benchmarking to national HE levels is important, the aspiration is not to be on the benchmark. It was also important to celebrate success when it happens.

The staff survey results will be a KPI or included in a basket that contributes to a KPI.

Council requested detailed reporting on protected characteristics could be reported in future for assurance purposes. The COO reported that there were few material differences in the survey results between protected characteristics on which the University has good data.

23/4 Finance

4.1 Financial Update

COUN23-P5

Council **RECEIVED** a financial update for 2022/23.

Overall the financial position for the University is strong and provides a good base to invest in the strategy and other key projects. There was an increase in the surplus and cash balance forecast for year-end. The forecast retains contingency for both revenue and capital expenditure which if not utilised will improve the year end position further.

Interest received on cash balances has increased as a result of interest rate increases and proactive treasury management aligned with the revised University Treasury policy.

Work has been undertaken on the collection of student fees as part of an on-going review of systems. A partnership with flywire – a global payment network that enables seamless, secure transactions – has made it easier for students to pay fees and led to a direct increase in working capital. The University won an innovation award for its work on the partnership.

The 2023/24 budgeting process has begun with the Finance Committee reviewing and approving the key principles and assumptions on which the budget will be prepared for final approval by Council at the June 2023 meeting.

Council sets the financial measures that are reported to it for assurance and asked that it be brought back for discussion whether cash-balance or surplus was the best metric.

4.2 Capital Thresholds

COUN23-P6

Council **APPROVED** an update to the University's major capital project procedures and capital thresholds: the threshold for a capital project to be considered as major has increased from £1m to £3m; the threshold at which a major capital project needs to be considered by full Council has increased from £4m to £7m.

With higher inflation, more capital projects would need to come to Council for approval. The updated capital thresholds ensure an appropriate and pragmatic approach to approving major projects, with oversight and assurance being provided through regular reporting to Council.

23/5 Gender Pay Gap 2023

COUN23-P7

Council **NOTED** the Gender Pay Gap 2023 Report.

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It is mandatory for the University to report its gender pay gap on an annual basis.

The gender pay gap is the percentage difference in pay between all men and women in the organisation. It is a different concept to equal pay, which is about paying men and women the same for work of equal value.

The University's gender pay gap is large and is large for the sector owing to several reasons: insourcing of ancillary operations mainly at lower grades; a heavy STEM offering which is male dominated; and a high proportion of men on higher grades with unequal numbers of women at grade 1 and men at grades 7 to 9.

The University remains committed to closing the gap and a range of actions are being taken to do so as indicated in the report and there had been a decrease in the mean and the median gap this year.

A proactive approach to gender balance in STEM research and teaching staff is being undertaken and the University participates in schemes such as Athena Swan, which aims to encourage and recognise the careers of women in higher education and research.

Further work on recruitment could make the application process more accessible for disabled applicants.

In terms of equal pay: for grades 1-8 the University's pay structure and job evaluation system via grading bands, ensures pay is consistent for work of equal value. Grade 9 is more complicated as it is a broad band that does not describe equal work. Grade 9 could be banded, however, this may only create other issues. For Grade 9 roles, robust benchmarking to the sector has been undertaken, both for professional service roles and by academic discipline, to ensure that pay rates can be justified.

23/6 Audit & Risk Committee

COUN23-P8

Council **RECEIVED** a report from the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 07 February 2023.

In June 2022 Council approved a shift in risk management processes to more post hoc assurance. Audit & Risk Committee have been monitoring progress and is assured that the new risk regime is working well and that there has been an increase in operational efficiency. The areas in which the new risk process was trialled will now become business as usual and other areas in which the approach can be expanded are being considered.

Strategic risk is now on the agenda of every oversight committee with the risk being minuted and documented. Each meeting of Audit & Risk Committee will have a deep dive on one area of strategic risk. The CFO is currently reviewing risk to ensure that Council has assurance that strategic and operational risks are being appropriately managed.

Council **APPROVED** on the recommendation from Audit & Risk Committee that KPMG are appointed as external auditors to the university for a further 5 year term. The winning tender was a fixed-fee over the five year period, which ensures costs are known and effectively managed.

23/7 Governance & Nominations Committee

Council **APPROVED**, on the recommendation of Governance & Nominations Committee, that Jennifer Maxwell-Harris be appointed for a third and final term on Council from 01 August 2023 to 31 July 2026.

Governance & Nominations Committee is considering potential candidates for the remaining vacancy on Council and will report back in due course.

23/8 Health, Safety and Environment

8.1 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report

COUN23-P9

Council was **ASSURED** that the University is fulfilling its obligations with regard to Health, Safety and Environment and **ENDORSED** the annual report. Council also **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the meeting of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee held on 05 October 2022.

The assurance of the University's Health, Safety and Environment obligations is monitored through KPIs and RAG ratings as outlined in the annual report. The University is managing the risks created by its activity and is fulfilling its legal requirements in all areas. There are two areas of risk which are elevated, Water Management and Fire Safety Management, which are being actively managed and closely monitored.

Some capital expenditure is being incurred following changes to fire safety regulation and all fire safety equipment and systems are being assessed and modified to ensure they meet the new regulations. There is no impact from changes to legislation about cladding. There is no risk to life or student safety and a very strict line is taken with students tampering with fire safety equipment.

23/09 Matters for Report by the Vice-Chancellor

Council **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the Vice-Chancellor.

Loughborough was shortlisted in six categories, including University of the Year, at the Whatuni Student Choice Awards.

The Vice-Chancellor undertook a successful trip to the USA building relationships with the NFL, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Oregon. An alumni event in New York was very well attended.

The Black in Sport Summit took place at the London Stadium in Stratford in March and was an amazing student-led event that had been positively received.

Loughborough has been awarded £2.6m to open a national facility that will allow unique nanoscale imaging of solar cells.

The recruitment process for the Pro Vice-Chancellor Sport is underway and Council will be updated in due course.

Loughborough has officially opened its brand-new Powerbase gym extension, doubling the size of the University's elite strength and conditioning environment.

SECTION B – Starred Items for Approval

23/10 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sport

COUN23-P10

Council **APPROVED** the proposed committee for the appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sport.

23/11 *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governance

COUN23-P11

Council **APPROVED** governance arrangements for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

23/12 *Research, Training & Enterprise Staff Promotion

COUN23-P12

Council **APPROVED** the criteria for Research, Teaching & Enterprise Staff Promotion.

23/13 *Parking Ordinance Change

COUN23-P13

Council **APPROVED** an update to the Ordinance relating to parking.

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23/14 *Loughborough University Ambassadors**COUN23-P30**

Council **APPROVED** the creation of the role of University Ambassador and the proposal to appoint the named individuals as ambassadors.

SECTION C – Starred Items for Information**23/15 *Matters for Report**

Council **NOTED** the following reports:

15.1 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Experience)**COUN23-P14****15.2 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equity, Diversity & Inclusion)****COUN23-P15****15.3 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)****COUN23-P16****23/16 *Technical Career Pathways****COUN23-P17**

Council **NOTED** the proposed changes to the Technical Services job family and the creation of career pathways as part of the University's Technician Commitment action plan.

23/17 *Office for Students Reportable Incidents**COUN23-P18**

Council **NOTED** that there have been no reportable incidents since the last meeting of Council in November 2022 and no events which needed to be considered if it qualified as reportable.

23/18 *Annual Report on Philanthropy**COUN23-P19**

Council **NOTED** the annual report on philanthropic income 2021-22.

23/19 *Capital Framework Progress Report**COUN23-P20**

Council **RECEIVED** the progress report.

23/20 *Annual Radiation Report**COUN23-P21**

Council **NOTED** the annual report from the Radiation Protection Officer.

23/21 *Common Seal**COUN23-P22**

Council **RECEIVED** the list of documents to which the University Seal has been attached.

23/22 *Senior University Appointments

Council **NOTED** the following Senior University Appointments:

Professor Malcolm Cook as Dean of the School of Architecture, Building & Civil Engineering for 5 years from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2026.

Professor Cees De Bont as Dean of the School of Design and Creative Arts for a further 2 years from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2025.

Professor Claudia Eberlein reappointed as Dean of the School of Science for a further 5 years from 1 August 2023 until 31 July 2028.

23/23 *Reports from Committees

Council **RECEIVED** reports from the following Committees:

COUN23-P23	Ethics Committee – 31 January 2023
COUN23-P24	Finance Committee – 06 January 2023
COUN23-P25	Health, Safety & Environment Committee – 08 February 2023
COUN23-P26	Human Resources Committee – 01 February 2023
COUN23-P27	Infrastructure Committee – 27 September & 29 November 2022
COUN23-P28	Operations Committee – 05 December 2022, 09 January and 06 February 2023
COUN23-P29	Research & Innovation Committee – 22 November 2022 and 14 February 2023

23/24 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 29 June 2023, Loughborough campus, 13:30-17:00

Future Meetings

Away Day and Meeting, Thursday 12 October 2023, 9:00AM, all-day

Thursday 23 November 2023, 9:00AM-12:00PM, Online

Thursday 21 March 2024, 14:00-16:30, Loughborough University London [amended from the previous date owing to Easter]. Council dinner will be early evening on Thursday not the Wednesday evening as this year.

[Secretary's Note: Council **APPROVED**, on the recommendation of Senate and the advice of the University Honours Committee, the award of Honorary Degrees and University Medals by circulation after the meeting.]

Author – Luke Vulpiani

Date – March 2023