

COUNCIL
Wednesday 27 September 2023 from 14.00-18.00
Oak 1 and 2
MINUTES

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Members:	Chair – External member	Mr Charlie Geffen
	Joint Vice-Chair – External member	Mr Vib Baxi
	Joint Vice-Chair - External member	Ms Rachel Hubbard
	Treasurer - External member	Mr Robert Napier
	President & Vice-Chancellor	Prof Max Lu
	Provost & Executive Vice-President	Prof Tim Dunne
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Andy Chalklin
	President, Students' Union	Ms Jo Yau
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Josh Andresen
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Charo Hodgkins
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Jin Xuan
	External member	Mr Elliot Antrobus-Holder
	External member	Prof Julia Buckingham
	External member	Ms Judith Eden
	External member	Ms Pam Jestico
	External member	Mr Nigel Jones
	External member	Ms Pam Powell (to 23/113.2)
	External member	Sir Philip Rutnam

In attendance: Mr Nigel Alcock, Interim Chief Financial Officer (to 23/109)
Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services (secretary)
Ms Martine Carter, Vice-President Strategy, Planning & Performance (to 23/108)
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel

By invitation: Ms Jo Bell, Director of Estates and Facilities (23/109)
Ms Jessie Billing, Director of Advancement (23/104 and 105)
Mr Patrick Degg, Vice-President, External Engagement (23/104 and 105)
Mr Paul Harvey, Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions (23/112)
Ms Kerry Matthews, Chief Student Officer (23/111)
Prof Emma Mayhew, Interim PVC Education (23/111)

A INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

23/098 Preliminaries

- .1 There were apologies from Elliot Antrobus-Holder and Nigel Jones.
- .2 The three new Senate representatives were welcomed to their first meeting.

23/099 Declarations of Interest

- .1 None

23/100 Minutes

- .1 Council **approved** the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 July 2023 for publication.

23/101 Matters Arising

- .1 The updated actions log was **noted**. It was agreed to request an update on Sensitive Jurisdictions for the next Council meeting.
Action: RA

23/102 Vice-Chancellor's Report and Performance Monitoring

- .1 The VC presented the report.
- .2 The following further points were noted:
- The University has been involved in the political party conferences.
 - The University is looking at international collaboration beyond Horizon Europe.
 - Sir Steve Smith is reviewing the University's international recruitment strategy and performance and will provide his initial views at the Council dinner following the meeting.
 - The University has sufficient space, staff and facilities to grow to 18,500 students. There is enough University and private accommodation to support this growth.
 - The President of the Students' Union requested further information on recent changes to the guarantor scheme for overseas students renting accommodation. It was noted that the changes have been made to ensure better access

B ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR APPROVAL

23/103 Strategy update (COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE)

- .1 Martine Carter presented the paper.
- .2 Council noted the context, progress and next steps in the development of the Strategy. The goal remains ambitious, focused on building a stronger global reputation, whilst recognising that a global reputation is grounded locally.
- .3 There was discussion of student growth plans, recognising the longer-term plan to grow to c. 20,000 students whilst maintaining an excellent student experience. The University is considering plans for size and shape, including what should be stopped or not pursued.
- .4 Degree apprenticeships are under consideration but would be delivered with a partner. In the longer term, degree apprenticeships may largely replace the Professional Training Year.
- .5 Council requested further information on how the whole HE landscape is likely to change and how Surrey will differentiate itself.
- .6 There is still a focus on the 'research towers' for those research areas in which the University is particularly strong. It was suggested that the proposals for what Surrey is/should be known for should have more emphasis on technology. There was discussion of whether Surrey should have

a tag line such as 'Leaders for technology and society', recognising that it would need to ensure that it did not make some groups feel excluded.

- .7 Members were asked to feed other thoughts to ML and MC ahead of the EB awayday on 5 October.

23/104 Advancement Annual Report (COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE)

.1 Jessie Billing and Patrick Degg attended to present the paper.

.2 The headlines from the report were noted:

- The income raised was above target.
- The team have focussed on principal and major gifts.
- A full events programmes was arranged which engaged with thousands of the alumni.

.3 It was noted that the University's Philanthropic Gift procedure follows international standards. A stewardship programme ensures transparency and continuing engagement with donors. Council requested that future reports provide a further breakdown of philanthropic income, to enable a better understanding of commitments, cash received and benchmarks. Further explanation of the categorisation of income for research as either philanthropic income or research grants was also requested. It was **agreed** that a separate briefing on Philanthropy would be arranged for Council members.

Action: RA

.4 The Chair and VC congratulated the Philanthropy team for its significant success and expressed their strong appreciation.

23/105 Philanthropic Donations

.1 Jessie Billing and Patrick Degg attended to present the paper.

.2 Council **approved** the acceptance of the two philanthropic gifts as outlined in the paper.

23/106 Management accounts year end outturn

.1 Nigel Alcock presented the paper.

.2 Council noted the year-end outcome, broadly in line with the full year forecast.

.3 The graph of year-on-year performance shows the challenges as almost every area has increased costs. Roughly 1/3 of the University's income does not increase with inflation.

.4 The end of year cash position was noted. It was noted that a ten-year cash flow projection is maintained but will be updated shortly in light of planned budget improvements and final student numbers. The University has put in place a new process to manage capital expenditure so the capital expenditure year will now run from 1 October to 30 September to enable the year end outturn and forecast student numbers to be known.

Action: NA share latest cash flow forecast with Council.

23/107 Redacted as commercially sensitive

23/108 USSU Priorities for 2023-24

- .1 Jo Yau presented the paper.
- .2 The focus on cost-of-living will continue. The need to ensure that cheap accommodation continues to be available for students after Hazel Farm is sold was emphasised.
- .3 Council was pleased to note that the new intake of first years has so far been really engaged. It was noted that students in some parts of the University are less likely to engage with the Students' Union (SU). However, the SU is working closely with these areas to try and overcome any barriers.
- .4 Accessibility is a key focus for the SU, both physical and financial access to the SU and University facilities. There was discussion of participation in sport, noting that the University now sponsor the transport to sports matches to remove one of the financial barriers. The focus is on creating an inclusive environment to ensure all are represented and feel able to participate in sports, particularly the BUCS (British Universities and Colleges Sport) matches.
- .5 With respect to capital spend, it was noted that funding has been released for DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliance. With respect to other proposed capital works, funding has been provided for assessment, and projects will go to Operations Committee for prioritisation.

23/109 Redacted as commercially sensitive

23/110 Academic Priorities for 2023/24

- .1 Tim Dunne presented the paper.
- .2 The key goals for the Faculties and Institutes were noted.
- .3 Council noted an update on the SOUL (Surrey Online University Learning) project. It was **agreed** that there should be more consideration of the potential reputational impact of partnering with EdX, including some 'secret shopper' testing of their current programmes and, if possible, further information on student progression. It was noted that the details of staffing of the delivery were currently being worked through. The ambition and the need for a decision very shortly was recognised.
Action: TD to arrange secret shopper testing.
TD to endeavour to gather student progression data.

23/111 Education and Student Experience Update

- .1 Kerry Matthews and Emma Mayhew attended to give a presentation.
- .2 The strong NSS and PTES results and the next steps were noted alongside the potential TEF grading. The improvement in the Assessment and Feedback scoring was welcomed. It had been agreed to continue with the 85 Plan.
- .3 It was noted that the University has a number of early warning indicators of student dissatisfaction, including the Module Evaluation Questionnaires, the Pulse Survey and the MySurrey Voice app.

- .4 Student continuation will be a key focus for the year. MySurrey Engagement provides an early warning of potential issues for individual students. Council requested further information on continuation data in the next report.
Action: EM

23/112 Brand Positioning

- .1 Paul Harvey attended to give a presentation with Andy Chalklin.
- .2 Council noted the need for new branding and the work that had gone into developing it, informed by student and staff feedback. It should inform how the University is presented, whilst being flexible enough to be used for different purposes.
- .3 Council was reminded of the earlier discussion of a University tag line.
- .4 The Corporate Marketing Manager is the custodian of the brand and leads on communication and monitoring of the use of the brand. The approach would be firm but fair and would not require a change in the branding of physical assets, until they were naturally being replaced or updated.
- .5 It was noted that there had been strong engagement from Surrey Sports Park and Surrey Research Park with respect to the branding of these areas.
- .6 It was noted that the rebranding would be rolled out across the University's websites.
- .7 Council took the opportunity to formally thank Paul Harvey for his and his team's successful student recruitment round, particularly the forecast increase of overseas students by 17%, up to around 30% of the population.

23/113 Innovate Surrey Ltd

- .1 Andy Chalklin presented the paper.
- .2 Council noted the recommendation to bring existing subsidiaries under ISL with ISL as the sole corporate director. The existing directors of Surrey Sports Park Ltd (SSPL) and Blackwell Park Ltd (BPL) would step down but be invited to join an advisory board. It was recognised that there were complexities to be resolved and may be nuances required, for example for BPL due to its significant assets. Proposals for amendments to the articles and governance agreements will come back to Council via Convene resolutions. More generally, Council as sole shareholder will have oversight of ISL and its activity and there will be regular discussions between the Chairs of ISL and Council.
- .3 A proposal would come forward regarding commercial activity outside of the subsidiary structure, such as the Surrey Research Park, accommodation and commercialisation.
- .4 It was recognised that there would need to be close management to ensure that the companies continued to prioritise the University's best interests. For example, for SSP, the student experience should continue to be a priority.

- .5 It was noted that there was no intention to have a separate Board sub-committee structure for ISL, so Audit and Assurance Committee (AAC) would cover ISL as well as the University. A paper on the ISL accounting and tax detail will come to AAC.

Action: NA

23/114 Items for future meetings

- .1 Charlie Geffen presented the paper.

- .2 It was **agreed** that Communications and Sensitive Jurisdictions should be added to the list of items for a future agenda or a separate briefing. In future, all Council members should be asked for suggestions for the agenda, ahead of the agenda setting meeting.

Action: RA

- .3 Feedback proposals were noted and agreed. It was further agreed that papers should not in general be longer than four pages, with any supplementary information in the Convene Document Library.

Action: RA to action proposals and monitor their implementation.

C ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

23/115 Health and Safety Report

- .1 Council noted the paper.

23/116 Annual USSU Oversight Report

- .1 Council noted the paper.

23/117 Committee Reports

- .1 Executive Board
Council noted the report.

23/118 Information Pack for Reference

- .1 Council noted the pack.

D CLOSING ITEMS

23/119 Any Other Business

- .1 None

23/120 Date of next meeting

29 November 2023

Mr Charlie Geffen, Chair