

**COUNCIL**  
**Thursday 22 May 2025 from 14.00-18.00**  
**Oak 1 and 2**  
**MINUTES**

*Sections marked Commercial in Confidence are claimed as exempt from publication under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.*

<b>Members:</b>	Chair – External member	Mr Charlie Geffen
	Vice-Chair - External member	Ms Rachel Hubbard
	Treasurer - External member	Mr Nigel Jones (to 25/071)
	President & Vice-Chancellor (interim)	Prof Tim Dunne
	Chief Operating Officer	Mr Will Davies
	President, Students' Union	Mr Liam White
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Josh Andresen
	Member elected by Senate	Dr Charo Hodgkins
	Member elected by Senate	Prof Jin Xuan
	External member	Prof Dame Julia Buckingham
	External member	Mr Nick Gatfield
	External member	Ms Pam Jestico
	External member	Ms Pam Powell
	External member	Sir Philip Rutnam
	External member	Dr Helen Turner
	External member	Mr Philip Whitecross
	External member	Dr Linda Wilding

**In attendance:** Ms Ros Allen, Head of Governance Services (secretary)  
Ms Martine Carter, Vice-President Strategic Growth  
Mr Matthew Knight, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms Sarah Litchfield, University Secretary & Legal Counsel

**By invitation:** Prof Esat Alpay, Associate Dean Education (25/074)  
Prof Lisa Collins, PVC Research & Innovation (25/072-073)  
Mr Patrick Degg, VP Global (25/069-071)  
Ms Caroline Fleming, Director of Surrey Innovation District (25/072)  
Prof Eunice Ma, PVC Education (25/075)  
Prof Ferrante Neri, FEPS (25/069)  
Prof Bob Nichol, PVC and Executive Dean, FEPS (25/074)  
Mr James Raven, Surrey Research Park Advisor (25/067)  
Ms Emma Rowsell, Chief Student Officer (25/076)  
Dr Jim Shaikh, Managing Director ISL (25/073)

#### INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>25/059</b> | <b>Preliminaries</b>  |
| .1            | There were apologies from Rachel Hubbard and Linda Wilding. |
| <b>25/060</b> | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>                             |
| .1            | None  |

**25/061 Minutes**

- .1 Council approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on 31 March 2025 for publication.
- .2 Council approved the minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 May 2025, but not for publication given their commercially confidential nature.

**25/062 Matters Arising**

- .1 The updated actions log was noted. Will Davies reported the two Research Park actions were dealt with later in the agenda
- .2 The Novasphere financials paper was noted. However, there is still some clarification required on the costs to the University when they are agreed.

**STANDING ITEMS**

**25/063 Chair's items**

- .1 Council ratified the following resolutions:
- Award of Honorary Degrees approved by Convene resolution on 10 April.
  - Appointment of Nick Gatfield and Philip Whitecross to Council approved by Convene resolution on 12 May.
- .2 The Chair provided a briefing on pre-meeting discussions. The main focus was on the sector in general and the transition after Professor Max Lu's departure.

**25/064 Vice-Chancellor's Report on strategic matters and sector context**

- .1 The VC presented the report and gave a presentation.
- .2 The following further points on the external political and sector context were noted:
- The political environment in US and UK can be challenging to the university sector.
  - There is review of what actions need to be taken in response to the Supreme Court ruling on transgender rights and freedom of speech and academic freedom issues.
  - The immigration white paper includes a reduction in the duration of the graduate route and the addition of a potential 6% HE levy on overseas tuition fee income (the exact amount and details remain to be decided). PG Taught international applications to Surrey remain strong. If EU students were recategorized as Home students that would potentially provide more students at a lower margin.
  - Given the move to Reform in the recent local elections, the sector needs to find a way to talk to all political parties.
- .3 An update on the internal context and key matters was noted:
- The University has been working on developing the budget and 5-year plan.
  - A financial case for investment in academic talent attraction is being developed.

- The business case for the proposed Pan University Institute (PUI) in Space Science will come to Council in July. PUIs are fairly unusual and inhomogeneous in the sector but are seen as positive, as long as they are focused towards areas where there are already strengths and there are external funding opportunities.
- The University is planning to recruit all new Professional Services staff into Operate Surrey Ltd, with new Terms and Conditions. Staff have expressed concern that it may create a 'them and us' situation between academic and professional services colleagues. However, it was recognised that there are already differing Terms and Conditions between types of staff and from when staff were recruited. The move reduces University costs whilst providing job protection. The need to continue to communicate and bring people on board was recognised.

**25/065      Strategy Scorecard and Performance Monitoring**

- .1            Martine Carter presented the report.
- .2            Progress against the Strategy was noted, recognising that financial capacity is a restricting factor in the early years. The delivery plan was designed to take that into account.
- .3            With respect to performance metrics, there are some very positive improvements, particularly in closing the gap in PG Taught applications. Over 50% of PG students are from overseas. Surrey is also seeing an increase in overseas demand for UG places, due to a combination of factors, including taking market share from the US and the impact of the new scholarships. It was agreed to provide an update to Council in the Autumn on international student recruitment, focused on analysis of the success of the various measures taken.  
**Action: RA to add to agenda for October Council.**
- .4            With respect to research, £3.5m of new awards were notified in the last week, suggesting that the Research Councils are starting to catch up after a delay in announcing their funding.

**25/066      Management Accounts**

- .1            Matthew Knight gave a presentation.
- .2            REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

**25/067      Surrey Research Park**

- .1            James Raven attended to present the paper.
- .2            REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

**25/068      Blackwell Park**

- .1 WD gave a verbal update on Blackwell. The next key decision point is the BPL Board meeting on 4 June, where there will be consideration of recommending progressing to a formal marketing process to Council.

#### ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND/OR APPROVAL

##### **25/069 GIFT City International Branch Campus – Business case**

- .1 Patrick Degg and Ferrante Neri attended to give a presentation.

- .2 REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

##### **25/070 Littauer Legacy**

- .1 Patrick Degg attended to present the paper.

- .2 As the legacy was made quite some time ago, it did not follow the current process for approval, whereby approval to accept legacy pledges is sought at the point they are made.

- .3 Council approved the acceptance of the donation.

##### **25/071 Novasphere and Datasection**

- .1 This item was postponed.

##### **25/072 SETSquared/Qantx Fund Briefing**

- .1 Lisa Collins and Caroline Fleming attended to give a presentation.

- .2 SETSquared is a partnership of six universities with a board and a small central team funded by all the universities. Qantx is an existing fund manager who, whilst they have not done anything at this scale before, they have worked with other universities and have performed strongly to date. REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE Council noted the summary of the background and the legal structure of the investment company. The deal in terms of what the University would get and give was recognised.

- .3 REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

- .4 As more of these opportunities arise, Council asked for the reporting lines to be clarified so that it was clear that ISL owned all negotiations relating to these kinds of funds to minimise the risk of the University agreeing conflicting obligations.

- .5 REDACTED AS COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE

- .6 The level of Intellectual Property (IP) retained would be negotiable and variable. As per the University IP Code, between 7% and 25% of IP would be assigned to the University with the remainder retained by the inventor (who would assign some of the IP to the investor).

- .7 It was hoped to have framework agreement approved by the end of next week with a view to coming to ISL and then July Council.

**25/073 Innovate Surrey Ltd Annual Report**

- .1 Lisa Collins and Jim Shaikh attended to give a presentation.
- .2 An overview of KPI performance was noted along with the commercialisation staged process. The initial insights were noted. There are opportunities to bring in more income for health and medical sciences in particular.
- .3 The overall license performance was noted. REDACTED AS COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE. Licenses are generally for the length of a patent.
- .4 The current spin-out portfolio was noted. It was noted that the focus was on translational and catalyst funding. There are opportunities to make more capital out of spin-out activity.
- .5 The immediate plans were noted. Council would welcome a regular update and asked that they came back to a later Council meeting.

**25/074 Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences Portfolio Review**

- .1 Esat Alpay and Bob Nichol attended to give a presentation.
- .2 It was note that this is a collaborative process reviewing UG and PGT programmes, with the focus on maximising student intake and improving teaching efficiency.
- .3 The outputs, review process and timeline were noted. The completion of the entire process was planned by the end of July 2025.

**25/075 Annual update on continuation, level progression and completion for 2023/24**

- .1 Eunice Ma attended to present the paper.
- .2 Council were pleased to note that level progression improved at levels 3, 4 and 5.
- .3 There was discussion of actions to deal with the gaps between types of students, particularly ethnicity gaps. It was noted that some areas had seen improvement whilst others had worsened. At a high level, Surrey is either better or on par with the sector average. Actions to deal with the issues are in place, some across the University and some discipline-specific. Actions to deal with the black attainment and progression gap include a new code of practice for inclusive education, training for staff and scholarships for black students, data-informed intervention and increasing black representation in teaching and learning environment. There is also consideration of intersectionality and improving engagement for all students, particularly black students. It was recognised that external factors such as the move to online exams during Covid make comparisons difficult.

**25/076      Employability and Careers Report 2023/24**

- .1      Emma Rowsell attended to present the paper.
- .2      The influence of placements on graduate outcomes was recognised. The University is focused on encouraging students to go on placements with a view to getting back to the pre-Covid participation level of 30%. It currently stands at 26%.
- .3      The 2024/25 Graduate Outcomes Survey results have been received but it is embargoed. Surrey has an employment rate of 94% overall, with graduate employment at 85.3%. However, we do not currently know how that compares to other universities.
- .4      There is consideration of the added value of the careers team, particularly in the era of AI.

**25/077      VC Recruitment update**

- .1      Charlie Geffen provided an update on the recruitment of a new VC.
- .2      The panel have now shortlisted four candidates from a strong long list. There will be sessions with the Treasurer, CFO and VP Strategic Growth to engage on the finances. The candidates will undergo psychometric testing and take part in four themed groups chaired by an EB member with an external Council member in attendance, who will feed back to the interview panel. Interviews then take place the following day on 20 June.

**25/078      Council members recruitment**

- .1      Charlie Geffen provided an update.
- .2      Council noted that three new external members had been recruited. Rachel Hubbard is leaving in July, creating another vacancy which it was proposed could be filled later in the year. A more immediate issue is to ensure that committee vacancies are filled.

**25/079      Items for future meetings**

- .1      Council noted the paper. Cyber security will be on the agenda of July Council. Members were asked to let RA or CG know of any other items to be covered. There may need to be an additional virtual meeting or two over the summer.

**C      ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**25/080      Health and Safety Report**

- .1      Council noted the paper. With respect to the recommendations from the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service inspection of the Manor Park residences, it was noted that good progress has been made; the issue of maintenance of ceiling tiles is now dealt with and the fire door recommendations are in progress.

**25/081 Surrey Sports Park Annual Report**

.1 Council noted the paper.

**25/082 Office for Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulation Annual Report**

.1 Council noted the report.

**25/083 Committee reports**

.1 Council noted the reports from Audit and Assurance Committee, Executive Board, Partnerships and Reputation Committee and Senate.

**25/084 Information Pack for Reference**

.1 Council noted the pack.

<b>D</b>	<b>CLOSING ITEMS</b>
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<b>25/085 Any Other Business</b>
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.1 There will be feedback sessions over the summer, including one for the Chair.
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**25/086 Date of next meeting**

29 July 2025

**Mr Charlie Geffen, Chair**