



**COUNCIL**

**The 262<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Council was held on Friday 1 April 2022  
from 9.30am to 1pm**

**AGENDA**

**PART 1 - PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**1. Welcome and apologies**

1.1 Present: Dame Denise Holt (Chair), Adrienne Fresko (Vice-Chair), Kirstin Baker, Nehaal Bajwa, Tony Bullman, Professor Steve Caddick, Professor Sara Crangle, David Curley, Mark Devlin, Dr Paul Gilbert, Jane Parsons, Rosemary Martin, Professor Jo Moran-Ellis, and Professor Rachel Mills, Professor Paul O'Prey, Max O'Donnell-Savage, Aleema Shivji and Richard Zaltzman

1.2 In attendance: Dr Tim Westlake, Professor David Maguire and Sally Priddle, Allan Spencer (Director of Finance), and Georgina Seligmann (Deputy Head of Governance Services)

**2. Apologies for absence**

1.1 Apologies were received from Nick Watson, Gerhard Wolf and Rubeca Hussain.

**3. Declarations of interest**

3.1 Professor Stephen Caddick, Professor Sara Crangle, Dr Paul Gilbert, Professor Rachel Mills and Professor Jo Moran-Ellis reported to be members of the USS Pension Scheme.

**4. Minutes**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2021 (C/260/M).

4.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2022 (C/261/M).

4.3 The note of the briefing held on 18 February 2022 (C/262/M).

**Resolved:**

4.4 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2021 (C/260/M) were approved as an accurate record.

4.5 The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2022 (C/261/M) were approved as an accurate record.

4.6 The note of the briefing held on 18 February 2022 (C/262/M) were approved as an accurate record.

**5. Matters arising**

**Noted:**

- 5.2 It had been agreed that it would be beneficial that Council received a presentation from the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, it had been agreed that they would provide the briefing for the November Council meeting.
- 5.3 The academic business planning was near end of the process, Senate had reviewed the academic drivers at its last meeting, they would be revised in line with feedback and finalised in the summer. The final version would be returned to Council in summer.
- 5.4 As reported at the January Council, following the One Professional Services review, 5 colleagues had not been moved into new roles. These colleagues had now identified new roles and no colleagues were at risk of redundancy. There were recruitment challenges but the plans were in place to be fully staffed by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

**6. Chair's Action and Report**

- 6.1 The Chair has not taken any action on behalf of Council since the previous meeting.
- 6.2 The Chair thanked members for the support and engagement with the recruitment of new Vice Chancellor, it had been a robust and thorough process.

**7. Vice-Chancellor's Report**

**Received:**

- 7.1 A report from the Vice-Chancellor

**Noted:**

- 7.2 The defining issue this term had been the industrial action, both strike periods and action short of a strike. The action had impacted staff and students, those participating and those who had not. The annual pay negotiations had begun, a position would be agreed through UCEA in the summer.
- 7.3 The five strategic priorities were progressing well. Size and Shape was drawing to a close and moving to business as usual. The funds in principle for the Education and Research Investment Programme had been approved by Council in November and projects were being moved into business planning or resourcing phases. The Governance Effectiveness Review was progressing well and a number of matters were being reported back to Council later in the meeting. There had been less activity around Enhancing Sussex but the new Pro-Vice Chancellor Culture, Equalities and Inclusion was reviewing the current work underway and identifying priorities to take forwards. Student Experience remained a top priority for the university, the NSS would provide a data indicator of the implementation of projects to date.
- 7.4 The Government's response to Augar had been published, it was challenging but good to have some clarity on the potential next steps. The undergraduate fees would remain fixed until 23-24. There would be a reduced fee for foundation year courses which would result in the university having to review the feasibility of its provision. The changes aimed to manage the government's exposure to student loans. A series of consultations would be held over the coming months. Size and shape had ensured the university was in a good place to meet the changes but if all the proposals were implemented it would be challenging for the university's finances. The likelihood of the changes could not be foreseen but it was reasonable to suggest that some of the proposals would be implemented. These changes would have significant

challenges for students as well as institutions, the changes to funding would impact the offer of universities and when they would be required to start repayments. Middle to lower earners would be likely to repay more of their loans.

- 7.5 The changes to fees and inflation was having an compounded impact on university expenditure and projects, with the potential changes to Augar this would put additional pressure on the university finances. There was a limit to how much university income could grow.
- 7.6 The applications for this academic year were moving to offers and acceptances, the current position indicated the university would meet its targets next academic year. The data trends were mirroring those identified through Size and Shape. International and Postgraduate numbers were looking good but there was a lot of work to be done to convert applications and secure targets.
- 7.7 The Interim Vice Chancellor and Provost had nearly completed their tour of all Schools and Professional Services Directorates, it had been a positive experience meeting with and hearing directly from staff and students. There were some clear challenges, including the estate, industrial action and morale but these were not universal.
- 7.8 The university had returned to in person varsity for the first time since Covid and had won the competition.
- 7.9 The university had responded to the consultation on minimum grade requirements, the changes would have a big impact on the university's widen access and participation aims and values.

**Action:**

- 7.10 Schedule a short discussion at a future Council for how inflation was affecting student hardship.

PART 2 - MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

**8. Update on University's response to Ukraine**

**Received:**

- 8.1 A presentation on the University's response to Ukraine.

**Noted:**

- 8.2 Richard Follett, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor International, had formed a working group to consider the impact of the situation and how the university could respond.
- 8.3 The University had publicly condemned the situation and was looking at all options for supporting those affected. The university was taking its duty to students, staff and the local community seriously. The working group was reviewing the existing projects and schemes to see how they could be enhanced to support people. Additional funding had been added to the student hardship fund, this was would remain in the fund and therefore be available to other students in need beyond those affected by this crisis.

- 8.4 The university worked with Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA). It was also investigating how the university could become a place of sanctuary in a sustainable way as well as people who were displaced in the Sussex region.
- 8.5 £100k had been allocated to support initiatives, £50k for the student hardship fund and £50k for other work.
- 8.6 The university wanted to ensure its response was balanced and sustainable. A fundraising campaign through alumni groups had also been initiated.
- 8.7 Council agreed that the principles behind the university's response were strong, they were pragmatic and focused on where it could add value.
- 8.8 Council discussed how the university responded the variety of conflicts around the world; how it could ensure its response was consistent and there was clarity on when and where additional support was provided.

## **9. Strategic Performance and Resources Committee**

### **Received:**

- 9.1 An oral report from Ms Kirstin Baker, Chair of Strategic Performance and Resources Committee (SPRC).

### **Noted:**

- 9.2 It was reported that the Committee received a deep dive into People matters including the revised strategy and the staff survey results. People issues were a top risk on the university's risk register and the Committee sought assurance that the planned actions would address the risk. The Committee had agreed that the staff survey was disappointing and although there were some contextual reasons for the responses, they were not where the executive or Council wanted them to be. The revised People strategy provided a clear vision and recognised people were at the heart of the university; the Committee had challenged how the university's values were integrated into the strategy. It was agreed that the university's values were not visible enough. It had been agreed that regular progress reports would be provided to the Committee to ensure there was robust oversight and that data dashboards on basic HR information would be provided to the Committee annual to provide baseline information. The final revised People Strategy would return to the Committee and Council in July for approval.
- 9.3 Council discussed the success measures for the revised strategy and staff survey, engagement did not necessarily equate to improvements. It was felt that bullying and harassment was a key area of improvement for the university.
- 9.4 It was agreed there needed to be a greater understanding of workload and how it operated across the university, a workload project was underway. There needed to be transparency in the data and how it was being applied to secure the trust of staff.
- 9.5 Visibility of leadership and actions in response to feedback were a strand of UEG's response to the survey.
- 9.6 Council asked for clarity on what the top 3 aims of the strategy were that the university was going to put resource into.

- 9.7 Council asked for clarity on whether the stretching KPIs and targets could actually be achieved, it was important that there was context to targets so progress could be understood. The KPIs would be reviewed once the new Vice Chancellor was in post, the success measures need to align with the strategy and reflect the increased data sets the university now collected.
- 9.8 University Leadership Team had a session on response to the Staff Survey results; sharing best practice on how Schools and Divisions have responded to their results.
- 9.9 A progress report on the University Strategy 2018-23 was provided to Council. The targets within the strategy were ambitious; the report outlined where progress was on track and where there had not been intended progress. Student Experience was progressing and key actions had been implemented but it remained a priority area for the university and all KPIs had not been achieved. Research priorities were being driven forwards, the 2022 REF results would be a key indicator of the progress made and plans were already in place to respond to the results when they were published in May. The set of strategies and actions under Building on Strengths strand had been progressed and they were in the embedding phase. Individual things within the Engage for Change strand had been delivered but they were not coordinated.
- 9.10 Council welcomed the update and agreed it helped provide context to the University's KPIs and ambitions; it was agreed it would be helpful for the document to be provided to new members of Council as part of their induction.
- 9.11 The KPIs form part of the strategy update; Council discussed whether some of the ambitious should have been agreed without clarity on a coherent plan to deliver them. When the KPIs were revised, Council requested that the executive worked with the community to consider whether the KPIs reflected the ambitions of the university and whether they were ambitious enough. When the KPIs were revised, Council wanted to ensure clarity not just on the targets, but also on the milestones towards them to facilitate monitoring of progress. There was some concern that some KPIs were outside the control of the university and there would need to be additional contextual information so that Council could focus its attention on issues within the university's control.
- 9.12 Whilst Council agreed that the Stratton news strategy and risk register were effective tools for management, there would need to be greater clarity on interim targets to allow for measuring progress on the mitigation of risk. It was noted that while some targets were absolute, others were relative to the performance of comparators. Once the framework had been agreed, there would need to be a cultural journey to engage the community with its targets. This pointed to some difficult conversations about future priorities. With a range of possible strategies and projects in hand, Council needed to be clear on the top priorities for investment, whether of financial or human resources. Heads of school and professional services should have input into this conversation. As things stood, Council was concerned that too many things were planned without clarity on our capacity to deliver. Council sought feedback on the executives prioritisation at its next meeting.
- 9.13 Inclusive Sussex was the university's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy. The strategy was in the process of being revised by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Culture, Equality and Inclusion. There were a variety of EDI projects which were happening outside of the strategy; there was a need for all work to be collated, connected and more effectively monitored. The EDI unit was a small resource but additional resource was being recruited, including an interim Assistant Director. Council was asked to endorse the direction of travel and for feedback on what additional information it may require to assure itself of the oversight and its legal role. Council asked for the link to the Student Voice strategy to be brought out in the document.

- 9.14 Council discussed the community engagement with Inclusive Sussex and how colleagues understood their role in contribution to its success. It was important that the challenging discourse moved from a negative experience to one that was a strength of Sussex and a positive opportunity for securing change. The ambition was to be exemplar and the work already underway but the university in a good place to achieve this. Council endorsed the proposed direction of travel and requested regular updates on progress.
- 9.15 Council discussed how the university promoted the positive things it had achieved or the strategies that intended to make a difference. It was felt that sometimes the university did not share the good stories as much as it could.
- 9.16 For example, Council received an update on the Financial forecasts for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The forecasts for 2021/22 had been updated evaluating the 1 Dec 2021 student census, the Education and Research Investment Programme (ERIP) Council decision in November 2021 and reflecting the implementation of Size and Shape. It now appeared that the university's anticipated operating surplus would come in close to the original estimate, thus increasing the funds available for reinvestment in the university by between £13m - £28m, with £22m as a mid-range forecast. The initial anticipated operating surplus for 2022/23 budget- before ERIP and pension adjustments- was in the range of £11m to £22m, with a £16m mid-range forecast. This increased surplus should help retain the value of the funds earmarked for ERIP. The report also provide an update on Major Projects in progress, Cash and Liquidity and Treasury and Investment Performance, which demonstrated that the university remained on track to produce £200m of ERIP investment funds. Inflation was the big risk underpinning the finances, as the university's income remained stagnant as costs increase.
- 9.17 The National Audit Office had produced a report on the higher education sector's health, Sussex was in the upper quartile with many institutions in a weaker position. Council had carefully overseen the finances to ensure sustainability of the institution during a challenging period, but now rising inflation leading to Increased costs were and would continue to impact the institution's ability to generate funds for investment, and how far those funds would go when invested.
- 9.18 The Provost reported that School finances were now being monitored and coordinated collaboratively with all Heads of School.
- 9.19 Council noted the strong financial position and thanked colleagues for their work. It was aware that additional investment projects were identified through the original Education and Research Investment Programme plan and could be brought forwards if required. It was important that University Executive Group had oversight of the range of projects, had the ability to spend the money required and capacity to make the changes required.

**Action:**

- 9.20 Bring the final revised People strategy to Council in the Summer term.
- 9.21 Provide an update to Council at its summer meeting on what the top priorities within the strategy for the Executive, including investment and resource.
- 9.22 Update the Inclusive Sussex Strategy to highlight the link to the Student Voice.

**10. Senate**

**Received:**

- 10.1 A written report from Senate and an oral report from Professor David Maguire, Chair of Senate.
- Noted:**
- 10.2 It was reported that Senate had reviewed the PRES and PTES results; Senate had expressed disappointment at the results and discussed how these results were used as a measure of quality and experience. It was felt that NSS scores were a clear driver and focus but this was not yet mirrored for postgraduate surveys. A task force had been established to review and respond to PTES results and the doctoral school were reviewing the PRES results. It was agreed that a response report would return to Senate to assure members of the actions in place to address challenges.
- 10.3 The Student Voice Strategy had been considered at the last Senate meeting, the team integrated the feedback into the revised strategy and worked closely with USSU to ensure their role and views were represented. It was felt that the revised strategy would deliver the university's ambitions and aims in this space. The student voice strategy was approved by Senate for implementation. Council asked why the Student Experience Committee was not mentioned in the Student Voice Strategy. Council noted the revised Student Voice strategy.
- 10.4 Council noted that Senate had approved the proposal that the university's standard mode of assessment would be online assessment. This would provide several benefits, including contributing to decrease in the awarding gap. It was agreed that in-person assessments could still be arranged for pedagogical reasons, for example in science disciplines. It was agreed that further work was required to understand potential opportunities for academic misconduct and how to mitigate them.
- 10.5 Senate had received an update from the Relaunching Senate Working Group on its consideration of the recommendations and how they could be taken forward for the benefit of Sussex's governance. Senate endorsed the direction of travel with the governance effectiveness review and agreed that the guidance documents should be widely circulated within the university and used to support understanding of Senate's role and responsibilities. Senate approved for recommendation to Council the revision to elected Senator's term of office, as recommended in the Halpin Governance Effectiveness Review. Council approved the revision to Regulation 4.
- 10.6 At the Autumn Senate meeting, the first Higher Research Degree was awarded in 10 years, Senate requested that the process be revised to ensure clarity and consistency. Revisions to Regulation 25: Higher Education Degrees was presented and Senate approved for recommendation to Council the revisions. Council approved the revision to Regulation 25.
- 10.7 Over the course of the academic year, Senate receive 15 evidential reports designed to provide assurance that the university continues to be compliant with the Quality and Standards B conditions of registration with the Office for Students (OfS). At its March meeting, Senate reviewed the Postgraduate Degree Outcomes annual report, Postgraduate Taught External Examiners Report and Annual Course Review for 2020-21; no major risks were identified. On the recommendation of Senate, Council noted Senate's assurance that the University remains compliant with the academic OfS Conditions of Registration.
- 10.8 Senate received an update on the three OfS consultations on a new approach to regulating student outcomes, on a the Teaching Excellence Framework and on regulating Student Outcomes. The University would respond to all consultations. The USSU representative sought clarity on engagement with the TEF consultation, the Executive to meet with the USSU outside of the meeting to discuss.

**Action:**

- 10.9 Update the Student Voice Strategy to include the Student Experience Committee.
- 10.10 Schedule a meeting with USSU to discuss the TEF consultation.

**Resolved:**

- 10.11 Council approved the amendments to Regulation 25: Higher Research Degrees.
- 10.12 Council approve the amendments to Regulation 4: Senate.

**11. REF Response**

- 11.1 An Research Excellence Framework (REF) Developments and Plan.

**Noted:**

- 11.2 The Chair of Council requested an additional update on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) Developments and Plans to assure Council on the current status of the REF2021 submission, plans for the results, Lessons Learned, and plans for new activities.
- 11.3 The Research Excellence Framework (REF) was a periodic review of the quality and quantity of academic research in publicly-funded UK universities and research organisations. The University made its submission to REF2021 on 30th March 2021. The national process of assessment of REF submissions had been underway since April 2021 and was now being finalised in early 2022. All submissions had been subject to audit processes. For Sussex, this had gone smoothly and the vast majority of queries resolved without issues, although a small number (<1%) of outputs were ineligible for technical reasons. The audit had now been completed.
- 11.4 The REF2021 results were due to be released gradually, starting with a release of the University's own results on 9th May 2022 to the Vice-Chancellor, followed by the release of all universities results under embargo on 10th May, and concluding with full public release of all HEIs' results on 12th May 2022. Results would include an overall profile, showing proportions of the submission rated at 1\*, 2\*, 3\* or 4\* (highest: world leading), and a breakdown for the three sections of the REF submission: outputs, impact, and environment. The results would be presented per Unit of Assessment (UoA).
- 11.5 The university had submitted research to 25 research themes ('Units of Assessment' is the REF terminology; e.g. 'History', 'Mathematics', 'Clinical Medicine') that would be graded and so ranked by media organisations. The University would receive an overall ranking which could be compared to other institutions to show our research standing. Such gradings would be available as soon as the results were made public in May. However the research income that flowed to the University from this (Quality-Related; QR income) would not be known until later in 2022 when such information was released by Research England. The University currently received c£10M each year in QR income as a result of the REF assessment.
- 11.6 The results in individual Units of Assessment would be important in determining the University's overall research strategy, including where to put future focus to maintain 4\* research (world leading); how to move 3\* research (internationally competitive) into 4\*; moving 1\* and 2\* research (both currently unsupported by QR funding) into 3\*. Investment/disinvestment strategies in research support to core research themes and



considerations of central retention of a proportion of QR income to support strategic investment.

11.7 The funding received was important for the university as, unlike research grants, it was not attached to delivery requirements.

11.8 The Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise had commissioned a review of lessons learnt. A briefing would be provided at the July Council meeting.

## **12. USS Pensions Update**

12.1 An update on USS Pensions decision independent review and motion from Senate.

### **Noted:**

12.2 Following Council's decision regarding UCU's proposals for USS Pensions, a paper was received from a member of Senate and a Senate observer, providing an analysis of the University Executive Group's briefing to Council and it was asked that this be discussed at Senate on 16th March 2022. In lieu of discussing the paper, the following motion was submitted and was passed: "Senate is dissatisfied with the decision made by Council in relation to the UUK consultation on UCU's proposal for the USS Pension Scheme. That Council's decision was made on the basis of a Report and recommendation submitted by UEG to Council on February 14th. Senate requests that Council reconsider its decision in the light of an analysis and correction of the UEG report (February 14th) prepared by Jackie Grant (UCU Observer on Senate) and Gordon Finlayson (Elected Senator), and in the light of all new relevant information."

12.3 In response to the Senate Motion, and the paper providing an analysis of UEG's briefing paper to Council, the Chair of Council appointed the Vice-Chair of Council to assess how best to consider the Senate Motion and the issues raised in the paper.

12.4 The Vice-Chair appointed KPMG, the University's Internal Auditors, to undertake an objective and evidenced based assessment, drawn from the University's corporate record, to examine the process followed. KPMG's findings would be reported to Council to consider if there were any lessons to be learned, but had not been completed by the 1 April 2022 Council meeting. It was proposed that an additional Council meeting was scheduled in early May to discuss the report and agree next steps.

12.5 Following Council's decision in February, USS Joint Negotiating Committee had voted to approve the pensions reforms which were implemented from 1 April 2022.

12.6 It was reported that the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was not ready in time for the February meeting of Council however the cover sheet did not properly report this. Following this incident, the University would review at what part of the decision making process equalities assessments were developed and when they were shared. It was agreed that there should have been a sector wide EIA in this instance. EIAs were not yet used effectively by any Higher Education Institutions but this was an opportunity for the University of Sussex to get ahead and become sector leading.

12.7 The pension fund valuation was discussed and the likelihood for the recovery of the fund. Some institutions had published joint statements with their UCU branches stating that when the fund was revalued, if there was recovery, then benefits should be returned to staff. It was agreed that the University should feed into the 2023 valuation.

- 12.8 Some members felt it would be more productive to look towards the 2023 valuation. It was important to secure a sustainable pension for colleagues, as well as a sustainable financial future for the University of Sussex. Council agreed it was a difficult but required decision. Council discussed how much it challenged the difference between the costings of UCU's proposals, it was asked that this matter be considered as part of the independent review.
- 12.9 Concerns were expressed about the impact of the decision on staff's morale. There may be additional periods of industrial action. Younger colleagues were not signing up to the scheme as it was perceived to be unaffordable; Council agreed this was concerning. There was a legal challenge underway between UCU national and the USS Pension fund; this was separate to the University of Sussex.
- 12.10 Concerns were expressed about the personal nature of some of the accusations that had been made in the report and online. It was important that matters were handled professionally no matter how sensitive. Council's decision had not been made due to lack of empathy but it was a required decision for the longer term sustainability of the scheme.
- 12.11 The amount of Council time and members' time that had been dedicated to discussing and learning about the USS Pensions matter and potential changes was discussed. A significant amount of information had been provided to members, alongside formal and informal opportunities to discuss. Move towards 2023 valuation- looking at the details, none feel there is an ideal solution, set of choices and constraints. Not deciding alone, being implemented for this valuation.
- 12.12 It was agreed that there were process points to be learnt. The independent review would be an opportunity to consider the decision making processes and how they could be improved.
- 12.13 Council members were nonetheless asked to consider whether, based on the information provided, and on previous briefings over a period of several years, they wished to reconsider their position in the Council decision taken on 18th February 2022. A show of hands indicated that clear majority of members felt that they had received adequate information to allow them to make an informed decision, which they did not wish to change.
- 12.14 Council voted, by show of hands, on whether it wished to reconsider its decision of 18 February 2022. A clear majority decided not to do so [Yes-5, No-15, Abstain-1].
- 12.15 It was reported that as Senate had escalated a motion to Council, Council were required to respond to the motion and outline its response. The Chair would provide a response and confirm the independent review.

**Resolved:**

- 12.16 Council by a majority decided not to revisit its decision on 18 February 2022.
- 12.17 Council unanimously decided to hold an additional Council meeting to review the KPMG report and identify if there were any lessons learnt.

**Action:**

- 12.18 Schedule an additional Council meeting to review the KPMG report and identify if there were any lessons learnt.
- 12.19 Write to Senate providing Council's response to its motion in relation to Council's decision on USS Pensions.

### **13. Audit and Risk Committee**

#### **Received:**

- 13.1 An oral report from Mr David Curley, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee.

#### **Noted:**

- 13.2 The risk register had been restructured and focused onto 4 supra risks which impacted the University's delivery of its key aims and objectives. The risks were now owned at University Executive level and updates were routinely reported to University Executive Group to ensure the document was an effective management tool. Since the January meeting, the rating of Risk 1 Student Experience had been increased to 16 from 12, following review by the Interim Vice Chancellor and the Director for the Student Experience.
- 13.3 Audit and Risk Committee had endorsed the format of the Institutional Risk Register and would focus on the progress of mitigations over the coming meetings. The Committee had asked for clarity on how the risks interlinked at the next meeting and milestones towards mitigation to enable effective tracking.
- 13.4 Following the Health and Safety deep dive in the Autumn, the Committee had received assurance reports on the progress of the action plans to address areas for improvement. The Committee reported it was assured by the pace of improvements.
- 13.5 It was reported that the current internal auditors (KPMG) were appointed in August 2015 for a period of 5 years, extended in 2020 for a further 2 years without competition but with a new team installed to lead services. In January 2022 a competition was initiated for the selection of a new internal auditor for five years with an option to extend for a further two. Four expressions of interest were received and two companies were invited to interview. Based on representations made in respect of their internal control environment and experience and on assessment by the panel, the Audit and Risk Committee identified KPMG as the preferred internal audit provider.
- 13.6 The Audit and Risk Committee received assurance that the internal audit programme was going well and the majority of reports received significant assurance.
- 13.7 Audit and Risk Committee considered the interim report on the University's ongoing compliance with OfS conditions of registration and noted the arrangements in place to ensure ongoing compliance. Council noted that the University remains compliant with all conditions of registration on an ongoing basis.

#### **Resolved:**

- 13.8 Council unanimously approved, on the basis of Audit and Risk Committee's recommendation, the appointment of KPMG as the University's Internal Auditor for five years beginning 1 August 2022 and with an option to extend the contract for a further 2 years subject to the approval of Council.
- 13.9 Council unanimously approved that, based on the representations made in respect of their internal control environment and experience and assessment by the panel, the University would inform KPMG that a bid to provide tax services, under a tender to be undertaken in the

summer 2022, would be welcomed alongside other bids and would not be rejected as a result of them being the incumbent Internal Auditor, provided internal controls and procedures remain in place.

#### **14. Capital Programmes Committee**

##### **Received:**

14.1 An oral report from the Chair of Capital Programmes Committee

##### **Noted:**

14.2 The Capital Programmes Committee (CPC) received an update on the progress of the Education and Research Investment Programme and measures in place to ensure projects were delivered on time, budget and meeting the project expectations. The new project management team had installed a governance process to quality assure projects at key intervals, the team were consciously focused on delay of projects and reported there were a variety of levers to pull to ensure projects were delivered.

14.3 There was a level of cost uncertainty with the Network Replacement Programme, the final business case would be reported to June CPC and July Council.

14.4 The Student Information System would be subject to a robust tender process, a track record working with UK Higher Education Institutions would be key for the successful supplier.

14.5 Ongoing assurance on the portfolio, prioritisation and delivery would be provided termly to Capital Programme Committee. Risks remained around project resourcing and recruitment to the new project management team. Availability of materials and uncertainty around inflation would impact specific projects and these variables were being monitored.

#### **15. Chairs' Committee Update**

##### **Received:**

15.1 An oral report regarding Nominations matters including a recommendation regarding appointments and re-appointments of members of Council.

##### **Noted:**

15.2 Chairs Committee, in its nominations role, had considered the skills, experience and succession of independent Council members. The recruitment of two new independent Council members would begin after Easter. The search would consider diversity of representation and different routes to securing applications. Different headhunters were being approached to ensure Council's aims were achieved.

15.3 It was reported Nick Watson had agreed to sit on the BSMS Joint Board.

15.4 A new sabbatical officers would join Council in September. The governance team were looking at opportunities to secure PGR representation on Council.

15.5 Council received an update on Governance Effectiveness Review, the Relaunching Senate, Enhancing Council and Oversight working groups had all met regularly, they were making good progress with the recommendations and all colleagues were thanked for their spirit and

participation. Not all recommendations would be implemented but all recommendations would be considered and whether they would benefit Sussex's governance.

15.6 Council considered the role descriptors for Council, Senate and Vice Chancellor. Council welcomed the descriptors and how they could be used to benefit understanding of roles and responsibilities.

15.7 Council received an assurance report on the University's compliance with the Public Interest Principles including Register of Interest and Fit and Proper Persons processes.

**Resolved:**

15.8 Council unanimously approved by consensus the Council, Senate and Vice Chancellor role descriptor.

15.9 Council unanimously approved by consensus that Professor Sasha Roseneil should be the University's Accountable Officer from 1 August 2022.

**16. Student Experience Committee**

**Received:**

16.1 An oral report from Ms Jane Parsons, Chair of the Student Experience Committee.

**Noted:**

16.2 It was reported that the Committee had focused on the key projects being implemented by the University to improve the student experience. The committee had noted that the University could do more to celebrate the positive work being done on many fronts. SEC was assured of the University's continued commitment by the improved pace but continued to seek clarity on timeframes and delivery for the key projects.

16.3 The University had made improvements in the attainment gap, narrowing the gap for BAME students.

16.4 The Committee was disappointed with the PRES and PTES results but had been assured the University was taking action to understand the results and what actions could be implemented to improve the responses and provision, where appropriate.

16.5 The Committee had considered and recommended the Sussex Affordable Housing Policy; it was agreed this was a positive initiative for the University and USSU were thanked for their contribution to this piece of work.

16.6 The USSU Council representative provided a presentation to Council outlining progress against the USSU objectives. USSU were looking at ways to improve representation and democracy within its own decision making structures. It had been agreed that USSU would lobby for increasing hybrid learning over the next academic year.

16.7 The new sabbatical officers had been elected and the CEO was leaving after 27 years, the transition would be crucial to ensure support for officers and students. An independent governance review was being undertaken with the support of the University.

**Resolved:**

16.8 Council unanimously approved by consensus the Sussex Affordable Housing Policy

**17. Remuneration Committee**

**Received:**

17.1 An oral report from Professor Steve Caddick, Chair of Remuneration Committees A and B.

**Noted:**

17.2 Remuneration Committee A continued to receive performance assurance against the agreed Vice Chancellor objectives. Remuneration Committee B ensured compliance with expectations set out by the Office for Students and the CUC Code. The Committee was reviewing salaries in categories- maintaining anonymity- it was a challenging but important conversation.

**PART 3- MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

**18. Any Other Business**

18.1 Council thanked the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Culture, Equalities and Inclusion) for his attendance and contribution to the meeting, as well as the provoking Council briefing.

18.2 The University Executive Group were thanked for their reports and the improved Boardpack.

**19. Dates of next meetings**

Thursday 7 July 2022 from 5pm / Friday 8 July 2022 all day

April 2022