

UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

**Minutes of the 80<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council held at 4pm on 22 November 2021  
in the Oak Suite, Elm Grove, Digby Stuart College and via MS Teams**

- Present: Phil Walker (Chair), Mark Allen, Farrah Black, Dr Priscilla Chadwick, Bishop Jonathan Clark<sup>1</sup>, Janet Cooper, Prof Ann R. David, Sr Christine Edwards, Prof Jean-Noël Ezingear, Dennis Hone, Prof Laura Peters, Sheena Pindoria<sup>2</sup>, Dr Sacha Powell<sup>3</sup>, David Sharkey,
- Secretary: Dr George Turner
- Notes: Elaine Lentell
- Apologies: Jennifer Coupland, Revd Dr Tim Macquiban, Revd Canon Dr Jennifer Smith, Kevin Thomas
- In attendance: Prof Anna Gough-Yates, Baljit Kaur, Liam Hurley, Jordan Kenny, Tom Rowson

**Regular Business Matters, Minutes and Reports**

**1. Welcomes, introductions, apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 Dr Sacha Powell, as CEO of the Froebel Trust, declared an interest in the LPFA section contained in the Director of Finance's Report at Item 8.

**3. Notification of Any Other Business**

- 3.1 It was agreed that any other business would be discussed at the end of the meeting.

**4. Minutes**

- 4.1 The minutes of the 79<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council, which was held on 4 October 2021 (Paper RUC80/1), were **confirmed** and Council **approved** the redactions for the published minutes as highlighted.

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<sup>1</sup> Attended the meeting via MS Teams

<sup>2</sup> Attended the meeting via MS Teams

<sup>3</sup> Attended the meeting via MS Teams

## 5. Matters Arising

5.1 Council noted progress on the matters arising as set out in Paper RUC80/2.

### Strategic Reports

## 6. Chair's Items

There were no items to report.

## 7. Vice-Chancellor's Report

7.1 Council received the Vice-Chancellor's Report (Paper RUC80/3) and noted the following points in particular:

### *External Environment*

- a) That there had been no specific announcement relating to Higher Education in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's autumn budget and spending review announced on 27 October 2021, apart from a reiterated commitment to lifelong learning and updates on research funding policy. Separately, an announcement on the Augar Review was expected in the lead up to Christmas.
- b) That a relatively small number of Roehampton academics had voted in favour of national strike action on 1-3 December, even though there was a majority among those who voted. The University had been planning for such a scenario and the plans in place were threefold:
  - i. Ensuring that student assessments due to be submitted during or soon after the strike were not adversely affected. Deadlines during this period had therefore been moved back by three working days.
  - ii. Providing enhanced pastoral support during the strike period.
  - iii. Offering a range of alternative activities to support student education.

### *Sustainability*

- c) A separate paper on enrolment is provided at item 10 (Paper RUC80/6).
- d) That the University was progressing well on work to develop Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and degree apprenticeships as detailed in section 2.3 of the report. The University was in the process of recruiting a senior academic member of staff to oversee the development of these qualifications.
- e) It was confirmed that the University had received confirmation from UKVI of the successful renewal of its sponsor license.
- f) Council congratulated Professor Laura Peters on her recent appointment to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development and Sustainability).
- g) Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### *Student Education*

- h) That there was continuing improvement in graduate outcomes. A Graduate Support Manager had recently been recruited to further support improved outcomes and oversee relationship management with the University's graduates.

### *Research and Knowledge Exchange*

- i) The University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Centres had formally launched week beginning 22 November and events were planned to mark the launch. Members of Council had been invited to attend the events.
- j) Council noted the recent press coverage of the University in Annex B.

## **8. Director of Finance's Report**

8.1 Council received the report (Paper RUC80/4) and noted the following key points:

8.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

8.3 That the journey from the budgets approved by Council in June and November 2020 to the current outturn position was achieved through a variety of measures as detailed on page 1 of the report and illustrated by graph 1.

8.4 LPFA Pension costs had risen to £6.4M, resulting in a £2.0M adverse variance compared to the Quarter three forecast.

8.5 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

8.6 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **9. Students' Union Report**

9.1 Council received and noted the contents of the President of the RSU's report (Paper RUC80/5), including the following:

9.2 That RSU by-elections had recently taken place and the results announced. Overall turnout had increased compared with the 2020 autumn by-elections and had resulted in a 6% increase overall (the candidates' demographics were detailed in the report). Mushtaq Ismail was elected to the vacant Vice-President (Education) role for a term of office running from 3 November to 30 June 2022.

9.3 Council noted the breakdown of programme representatives recruited by academic department, as well as the overview of the number and type of cases dealt with by the RSU Academic Advice Service.

## 10. Student Recruitment update

- 10.1 Council received the paper (Paper RUC80/6), which provided a summary of recruitment to date and set out the plans in place to increase recruitment in January, April and September 2022. The points below were highlighted:
- 10.2 International student recruitment had increased and now accounted for up to a third of the total intake. However, there had been a reduction in the number of home and EU undergraduate students enrolling, which had resulted in a year-on-year reduction in new enrolments. Home undergraduate recruitment has been impacted by several factors, including changes to A-Level grade distribution resulting from Government policy changes, and selective universities increasing their intakes. Business and Psychology, traditionally strong areas of recruitment for the University, underperformed as a result, compounding continued declines in Arts and Humanities subjects.
- 10.3 In response, several initiatives had been agreed, which included expanding marketing activity, maximising the January 2022 intake, portfolio development and subject transformation. Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 11. Approval of the development of a Healthcare Hub

- 11.1 Council received the proposal for the development of a Healthcare Hub (Paper RUC80/7) and the following key points were noted:
- 11.2 That the demand was high for healthcare subjects and programmes aligned with allied health professions. The Healthcare Hub would enable the University to expand its portfolio in these areas and thereby significantly increase intake.
- 11.3 Council noted that circa £950,000 would be University investment, in addition to the £2M awarded by the Office for Students (OfS).
- 11.4 Council **approved** the commencement of the Healthcare Hub project and overall project spend of circa £2,950,000.

### Annual Reports and Returns

## 12. Revised financial forecast for 2021-22 and 2022-23

- 12.1 Council received the revised financial forecast for 2021-22 and a high-level forecast for 2022-23 (Paper RUC80/8). The following points in particular were noted:
- 12.2 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

12.3 That there were a number of risks relating to tuition fee income for September 2021. This included 138 Overseas students who were studying in their home countries because of travel restrictions and would need to travel to the University in early 2022. Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

12.4 That the forecast for 2022-23 included significant cost savings, which the University would consider how best to deliver in the remainder of 2021-22. Council noted that the forecast for 2022-23 also included stretching recruitment targets. Assurance around delivery of these targets had been set out under Item 10 and Council noted that early warning mechanisms available during 2021-22 would allow for further cost reduction measures if it became clear that the targets were not deliverable.

12.5 That all three loan covenants would be met under the current forecast, both for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

### **Amended Going Concern statement**

12.6 In addition to the revised forecast Council received an amended Going Concern statement (Paper RUC80/8i), the purpose of which was to provide additional assurance in respect of the 2020-21 and 2022-23 financial forecasts.

12.7 Council noted that the amended statement had been produced following additional meetings of the Audit Committee and Finance and Resources Committee on 19 November 2021. Both Committees had considered the question of going concern in light of the revised financial forecast and endorsed the amended statement presented to Council.

12.8 Council **approved** the proposed amendments to the Going Concern Statement and agreed that it be included in the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021.

## **13. Audit Committee Annual Report including the Internal Auditors' Annual Report**

13.1 Council received the Audit Committee Annual Report and associated submissions (Paper RUC80/9), which had also been provided to the Vice-Chancellor in line with the University regulations.

13.2 Council noted that the report confirmed the view of the Committee that the work of internal and external audit throughout the year to 31 July 2021 was satisfactory. The report also confirmed the opinion of the internal auditors that they can provide satisfactory assurance that the University has adequate and effective arrangements in place regarding risk management, control and governance; sustainability, economy, efficiency and effectiveness; and the management and quality assurance of data submitted to HESA, the Student Loans Company, the Office for Students, Research England, and other bodies.

13.3 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

13.4 Council further noted that, overall, the Committee was able to conclude that, based on the information presented to it, the University has adequate and effective arrangements in place regarding the matters detailed above and agreed that the report be duly signed by the Vice-Chair of Audit Committee in the Chair's absence.

**Action: Secretary**

#### **14. External Audit Report**

14.1 Council received the External Audit Report for the year ended 31 July 2021 (Paper RUC80/10).

14.2 Council noted the key judgements and estimates on pages 11 to 15 of the report.

14.3 Council noted that the auditors were satisfied with the University's approach to the pension assumptions set out in the report, which were based on independent advice from the University's pension advisors.

14.4 Council further noted that the Finance and Resources Committee considered that the bad debt assumptions were appropriate based on receipts during the year and that risks had been appropriately provided for. The External Auditors were content with the assumptions that the University had made.

14.5 Council was assured that the outstanding matters had now been completed, except for receipt of the letter from Lloyds Bank and the going concern assessments for the University subsidiary companies, which would be concluded prior to the final signing of the report.

#### **15. Letter of Representation**

15.1 Council received and **approved** the letter of representation to the external auditors, noting that in doing so Council would be giving assurance that the University is a going concern (Paper RUC80/11).

#### **16. Annual Report and Financial Statements**

16.1 Council received the Annual Report and Financial Statements (Paper RUC80/12). Council noted that the report and statements had received scrutiny from both the Audit Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee, both of which were content that Council should give its endorsement on the basis that the University remains a going concern for the period of 12 months from the date of signing.

16.2 Council **approved** the Annual Report and Financial Statements and recommended that the report and statements be signed by the Chair of Council and the Vice-Chancellor, subject to minor typographical amendments.

#### **17. Annual Report on the University's compliance with the OfS Conditions of Registration**

17.1 Council **approved** the Annual Report on the Office for Students' quality and standards conditions for 2020-21, noting the key risks set out in the report (Paper RUC80/13).

## **18. Prevent Annual Return 2021**

18.1 Council **approved** the Prevent Annual Return (Paper RUC80/14), noting that the University was a member of the London Prevent Network and that an appropriate process was in place for the approval of external speakers invited by Roehampton Students' Union.

## **19. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement**

19.1 Council **approved** the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2020-21 (Paper RUC80/15).

## **20. LIBOR transition arrangements for University loans**

20.1 Council received the proposal that the University transition from the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) to the Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) for the reasons set out in the paper (Paper RUC80/16). If approved, the intention was that the University would move to SONIA at the transition date of 1 January 2022.

20.2 Council **approved** the proposal to progress to the next stage of the process for completing the transition.

20.3 The Chair of Council also **approved** the transition agreement (attached at Appendix 1) and agreed for the signed document to be sent to Lloyds Bank with the related extract from the minutes, to complete the final steps of the LIBOR transition before the deadline of 31 December 2021.

**Action: Director of Finance**

## **21. Proposal to rename the Cedar Building after Beryl Gilroy**

21.1 Council **approved** the proposal to rename the Cedar Building in honour of Beryl Gilroy (Paper RUC80/17).

### **Committee reports**

## **22. Council Committees**

### **22.1 Audit Committee**

- a) Council received the Audit Report (Paper RUC80/18).
- b) Council **approved** the proposed changes to the high-level risk register (Appendix 1).

### **22.2 Finance and Resources Committee**

- a) Council received the Finance and Resources Committee Report (Paper RUC80/19).
- b) It was suggested that increased scenario planning should be undertaken for potential adverse events, and it was noted that this could be considered at a future UEB away day.

### 22.3 Nominations and Governance Committee

- a) Council received the Nominations and Governance Committee report (Paper RUC80/20).
- b) Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### 22.4 Remuneration Committee

- a) Council received a verbal update from the Chair of the Committee and the following points were highlighted:
- b) That there had been no permanent pay increases awarded to senior staff whose roles were covered by the Committee this year.
- c) Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## 23. University Senate

23.1 Council noted the Senate report (Paper RUC80/21) and the following points were highlighted.

23.2 Senate had received annual reports from the Curriculum Strategy and Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees, setting out the work of the committees during 2020-21, and approved the Committees' terms of references for 2021-22. The LTQC's ToRs for 2021-22 also made more explicit the focus on student outcomes in line with the expectations of the OfS, and Senate agreed that it was content that the report gave satisfactory assurance that LTQC was effectively discharging Senate's responsibilities in relation to quality and standards, and that the University Council could also be given such assurance.

## 24. Updated Reportable Events regulatory advice

**Secretary's note:** the item was removed from the agenda as the updated regulatory advice was also included as an appendix to Paper RUC80/13: *Annual Report on the University's compliance with the OfS Conditions of Registration*.

## 25. Any Other Business

25.1 Council members were reminded to submit a brief biography and photo for publication on the University's website if they hadn't already done so. It was

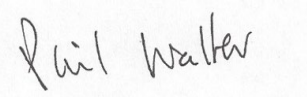


suggested that it would be helpful to focus on the particular skills each member brought to University of Roehampton in their biographies.

25.2 Council **approved** scheduling an additional meeting in January 2022, to consider any urgent business that may arise before the next scheduled meeting in March 2022.

25.3 Council gave its sincere thanks to Bishop Jonathan Clark and wished him a fond farewell and the best of luck with future endeavours, as it was his final meeting.

**Action: Governance & Legal Office**

Signed:   
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Phil Walker, Chair of Council

Date: 28 February 2022

Minutes prepared by:  
Elaine Lentell, Senior Governance Officer, November 2021