

University of Exeter

**COUNCIL**

**MINUTES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

6 July 2023

11am-4pm

Council Chamber, Northcote House

NB text in BLACK for publication; text in BLUE has been redacted for publication

**CONTENTS**:

Council Meeting

***No: Item:***

* 1. Chairs’ Welcome and Declarations of Interest
	2. Matters arising
* Nominations for Independent Council Memberships (1 August 2023)
* Council Committee Memberships 2023-24
* Nominations for Trustee Appointments 2023/24
* Council New Member Induction Programme 2023/24
* Council Buddying Scheme 2023/24
* Council Assurance Review: Scope, Members, Terms of Reference
* Updates to agenda (6 July 2023)
	1. Minutes from the meeting of 18 May 2023
	2. Action Log
	3. Vice-Chancellor’s Briefing
	4. Risk Report 3
	5. Student President Reports
	6. Report on Full Review of Mental Health and Wellbeing
	7. Strategy 2030 Delivery Plan
	8. Financial Forecast 2022/23 Growth Plans
	9. Budget 2023-24 and Later Year Plans (including capital programme)
	10. Admissions Update
	11. Penryn 2.0 (ESI Extension Outline Business Case)
	12. SITS (Student Information System) Cloud Migration Business Case
	13. Future Structures – End of Programme Report
	14. Business Engagement and Innovation Strategy
	15. Institutional Annual Performance Report
	16. Degree Outcomes Statement
	17. Degree Outcomes Sector Benchmarking Report
	18. PGT Degree Classifications Summary Report
	19. Academic Assurance Report 2021/22
	20. Education Governance Review Recommendations
	21. Chair’s closing remarks and Part II ‘For Decision’

**Attendees:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Quentin Woodley Pro-Chancellor and Chair

Professor Lisa Roberts Vice-Chancellor

Sir Richard Atkins Pro-Chancellor

Sarah Buck Pro-Chancellor

Jo Binding Independent Member (online via Microsoft Teams)

Nicholas Cheffings Independent Member

Shades Chaudhary Professional Services Representative

Georgi Griškevičienė President, Falmouth and Exeter Students’ Union

Graham Cole Independent Member

Professor Barrie Cooper Senate Representative

Professor Alex Gerbasi Senate Member

Andrew Greenway Independent Member

Professor Janice Kay Provost

Salam Katbi Independent Member

Lily Margaroli President, Exeter Students’ Guild

Amoetsoe Mkwena Independent Member

Professor Sue Prince Senate Representative

Professor Tim Quine Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)

Alison Reed Independent Member

Malcom Skingle Independent Member

Glenn Woodcock Independent Member

**SECRETARY**

Mike Shore-Nye Registrar and Secretary

**MEMBERS APOLOGIES**

Lounette Dyer Independent Member

**STAFF IN ATTENDENCE**

Andrew Connolly Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Executive Divisional Director of Finance, Infrastructure and Commercial Services

Professor Martin Siegert Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Cornwall)

Professor Rich Smith Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategy and Resources)

Professor Gareth Stansfield Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean (HASS)

Alison Chambers Chief Executive Officer, University of Exeter Guild of Students

Dr Jeremy Diaper Assistant Director, Governance (minutes)

Joe Wall Assistant Director, Finance (items 9, 10 and 11)

Stuart Brocklehurst Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Business Engagement and Innovation)

 (Item 16)

Dr Michael Wykes Divisional Director of University Corporate Services (Items 9 and 17)

Professor Richard Follett Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement)(Item 12)

Alicia O’Grady Executive Divisional Director of External Engagement and Global

 (Item 12)

Amie Fulton Director of Cornwall Operations (Item 13)

**IN ATTENDANCE AS OBSERVERS AND JOINING COUNCIL ON 1 AUGUST 2023** Sally Cabrini Pro-Chancellor and Senior Independent Governor

Connie Chilcott President Exeter

**1. Chair’s Welcome and Declarations of Interest**

* 1. The Chair welcomed Council members to the Council meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Lounette Dyer.

**2. Matters arising**

* 1. The Chair provided a verbal update on the following matters arising:

**a) Nominations for Independent Council Memberships (1 August 2023) (CNL/23/66 Confidential)**

* 1. The Chair provided an update on the final phase of the recruitment process for new Independent Council Memberships in 2023/24. Following endorsement from Nominations Committee on 28 June 2023, Council approved the appointment of three new Independent Members of Council (Class II) and a renewal for a third term of office for the Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Chair (Class I) as follows:

**Approved:** the appointment of Tim Weller as Independent Council Member (Class II) for a first term of office from 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2026;

**Approved:** the appointment of Sarah Matthews-DeMers as an Independent Council Member (Class II) for a first term of office from 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2026;

**Approved:** the appointment of Damaris Anderson-Supple as an Independent Council Member (Class II) for a first term of office from 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2026;

**Approved:** the formal extension to Sir Richard Atkins’ term of office as Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Chair for a third term from 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2026;

**b) Membership of Council Committees 2023-24 (CNL/23/67 Confidential)**

* 1. following endorsement by Nominations Committee, the Chair of Council provided an update on the proposed membership of Council Committees for the beginning of the Academic Year 2023/24 for Audit and Risk Committee, Remuneration Committee and Nominations Committee as detailed in the paper, which was noted and approved by Council;
	2. it was noted that the approach to Council membership on additional committees/groups and membership of Council sub-committees would be reviewed further following the conclusions of the Council Assurance Review;
	3. that in light of Sarah Buck stepping down as Pro-Chancellor and Senior Independent Governor (Class I) from 31 July 2023, the Independent Council membership of the Health and Safety Committee would be reviewed and considered;

***Secretary’s Note:*** *following endorsement by Nominations Committee to progress via Chair’s Action and further discussion by the Chair of Council, Registrar and Secretary and Assistant Director (Governance), it was agreed in consultation with the current Chair of Audit and Risk Committee that they would serve as a member of Health and Safety Committee in the Academic Year 2023-24.*

**c) Trustee Nominations 2023/24 (CNL/23/68 Confidential)**

* 1. further to endorsement by Nominations Committee on 21 June 2023, Council approved the recommendation to appoint the following Trustees of the Exeter Retirement Benefit Scheme (ERBS Trustee Ltd):

**Approved:** the appointment of Steve Balmont as a Trustee of the Exeter Retirement Benefit Scheme (1 August 2023 – 31 July 2025);

**Approved:** the appointment of Ray O’Connell as a Trustee of the Exeter Retirement Benefit Scheme (1st August 2023 – 31 July 2025);

**Approved:** the appointment of Margaret Laithwaite (1 August 2023 – 31 July 2027) as a Trustee of the Exeter Retirement Benefit Scheme:

2.7 further to endorsement by Nominations Committee on 21 June 2023, Council approved the

 recommended appointments to the Investment and Endowment Group:

**Approved:** the appointment of Sarah Bourgein and Nick Roberts as members of the Investment and Endowment Group.

**d) Council Member Induction Programme 2023/24 (CNL/23/69 Confidential)**

2.8 the Chair of Council provided an update on the proposed Council Member Induction

 Programme for the Academic Year 2023/24, which would include an in-person induction

 session on Wednesday 11 October 2023 for all new members of Council. In addition to the

 formal induction session in October a range of other information and training

 materials would be made available to all Council members via Diligent and the mandatory

 training requirements would be reviewed to ensure that it was directly relevant to new Council

 members;

**e) Council Buddying Scheme 2023/24 (CNL/23/70)**

2.9 the Chair of Council provided an update on the proposed pairing of new and existing Council

 members as part of the Council Buddying Scheme in 2023/24 following Nominations

 Committee endorsement on 28 June 2023. Members were advised that buddies would be

 assigned their Council buddy and provided with further guidance via email;

**Approved:** the implementation of the Council Buddying Scheme for new members of Council in the academic year 2023/24;

**f) Council Assurance Review (CNL/23/71)**

2.10 the Council Assurance Review would be focused on examining the current assurance

 processes in place in order to identify the most effective, efficient and robust mechanisms for

 providing assurances on major projects, policies and strategies and oversight of the

 management of key risks;

**Approved:** the scope, methodology and indicative timescales for the Council Assurance Review.

**g) Updates to Agenda (6 July 2023)**

2.16 to enable the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)

 to meet with the Labour Shadow Minister for Higher Education, the Chair advised members

 that the previously published agenda had been reordered to minimize disruption.

**3. Minutes of the meeting of 18 May 2023 (CNL-23-72 Confidential)**

* 1. The minutes of the meeting of 18 May 2023 were **APPROVED** by Council.

**4. Action Log (CNL-23-73 and CNL-23-73a Confidential)**

* 1. The Council action log was received for information and the following updates were noted:

i) *in relation to action 8 (2022/23):* that the action could be closed as low-cost options for

 hot meals were now available on the Penryn Campus, including an equivalent offer to the Exeter

 campus meal deal;

 ii) in relation *to action 15 (2022/23):* work was still being progressed on the development of

 a full multi-year programme of IDM decarbonisation investment proposals, but this would be

 scheduled for a subsequent meeting of Council in the Academic Year 2023/24 to enable more

 detailed development of the proposals and Council discussion on the approach to

 reduction of carbon emissions.

**5. Vice-Chancellor’s Briefing (CNL-23-74 Confidential)**

* 1. Council received the Vice-Chancellor’s briefing report which provided a summary of recent developments at the University and in the Higher Education sector.
	2. The following was noted in relation to the Marking and Assessment Boycott:

5.2.1 an updated joint statement with the Exeter branch of the University and College Union (EUCU)

 had been issued on 21 June 2023 and the University Executive Board had encouraged the

 national UCU and UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association) to resume talks to

 re-engage with the Terms of Reference agreed at ACAS and to find a path to ending the

 ongoing impact on students and colleagues;

5.2.2 the University and the EUCU had agreed further extensions to the marking deadlines for

 colleagues who had participated in the UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) to return

 marked and/or moderated work without deduction of pay. The new Policy implemented on 21

 June 2023 indicated that the University would not withhold pay for any action taken in May

 and June 2023 on the basis of certain conditions. Following the policy change on 21 June 2023

 there had been an improvement in the number of marks being submitted, but the precise

 number of students who would not know the classification of their degree would only become

 clear closer to graduation;

5.2.3 that in spite of previous measures introduced there were still students with missing marks. It

 was hoped that the deadline extensions would help to reduce the time that impacted students

 may have to wait to receive any missing marks;

5.2.4 the University had a policy in place on withholding of pay during industrial action and was

 initially withholding pay at 50% for each day of participation in the marking and assessment

 boycott. The impact of the industrial action was continuing to be reviewed and the

 University reserved the right to withhold up to 100%;

5.2.5 for students in their final year, where marks were missing at the time of awards being made,

 provision of interim transcripts and additional support to students was being provided to

 enable them to progress to further study or employment;

5.3 the University was hosting the 11th annual NEON Summer Symposium on 6th-7th July 2023, which

 brought together key figures from across the education sector, including policymakers,

 employers and organisations committed to social mobility through widening access to Higher

 Education;

5.4 according to the latest CWTS Leiden Ranking, which offered important insights into the scientific

 performance of universities worldwide, the University had moved up by 9 places to 31st in the

 worldwide ranking and 6th in the Russell Group. There had been particularly strong performance

 in Earth Sciences, which was placed 8th place globally and 1st in UK. Further data analysis would

 be undertaken in due course;

5.5 Professor Catherine Gallop (Associate Professor, Clinical Psychologist and Director of CEDAR) had

 been selected as a National Teaching Fellow, a prestigious higher education award from Advance

 HE. The Grand Challenges team had also been the winner of a Collaborative Award for Teaching

 Excellence, which provided undergraduate students with the opportunity to work in

 interdisciplinary groups with other like-minded students to design innovative solutions to real

 world challenges;

5.5 the results of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2023 were scheduled to be announced on 10

 August 2023 and an update would be provided to Council in due course;

5.6 The West Park Student Residences Reserved Matters Planning Application had been approved by

 Exeter City Council at a planning committee meeting on Monday 19 June 2023, following the

 scheme being granted Outline Planning consent in September 2021;

**Closed Minute**

**APPROVED:** the appointment of Professor Krasimira Tsaneva-Atanasova as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact from 1st August 2023.

**APPROVED:** the appointment of Professor Alex Gerbasi as interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy from 1st August 2023.

**APPROVED:** the proposed job titles to the Vice-Chancellor, Provost, Registrar and Secretary and Deputy Vice-Chancellors a detailed in the paper, noting that these would be formally ratified via the Privy Council to enable the changes to be reflected in the governing documents of the institution.

*The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) left the meeting to meet with the Labour Higher Education Shadow Minister.*

**6. Risk Report 3 – 2022/23 (CNL-23-79/79a/79b Confidential)**

* 1. following review by the Compliance Committee, UEB and the Audit and Risk Committee, the risk report 3 was provided to Council for information and assurance. Section 3 of the report set out information on the 6 risks scored at red or high amber;
	2. Council noted the importance of the following: maintaining an appropriate risk appetite across the organisation to ensure that risk aversion did not impede the successful delivery of large strategic projects; exploring the potential risks surrounding performance in REF 2028 as a result of the expanded definition of research excellence and revised weightings; capturing more clearly the potential risks associated with not aligning effectively the planned enhancements to student experience with international student requirement and expectations;
	3. that the following risks should be captured on the risk register: the associated impact of not achieving the ambitious postgraduate taught international student recruitment targets on delivery of major strategic initiatives within Strategy 2030 delivery plan;
	4. that further consideration would be given to including the risks surrounding the potential impact of change fatigue on staff mental health and wellbeing across the organization.

**7. Student President Reports (CNL-23-85, CNL-23-85a and CNL-23-86 Confidential)**

7.1 the Guild had worked in consultation with students and University partners to reimagine the

 approach to welcome week in September 2023 by distributing welcome events and activity more

 from welcome week to week six to help create a sense of belonging and develop a positive,

 friendly and supportive environment;

7.2 it was recognised that whilst the performance in the National Student Survey 2022 in relation to

 the core questions on the Students’ Union (Association or Guild) had been disappointing, it was

 anticipated the Guild rebrand would have a positive impact on the sense of belonging to the

 University and improve performance in relation to this question in the NSS. It was also noted

 that the change in title and remit amongst Guild Officers would also help to enhance NSS

 scores;

7.3. the Student Cost of Living report provided a comparison between the University of other Russell

 Group institutions. The report had been shared with a number of groups across the University

 and consideration would be given to sharing it more widely with staff to enhance awareness of

 the current impact on students. Further would be undertaken in due course to develop a set of

 recommendations to enhance support provided to students;

7.4. in relation to the section on Support on page 16 of the Cost of Living report, it was noted that c.

 40% of students surveyed were not aware of the University hardship funds or financial

 assistance and that International Students were the least likely to be aware of the Success for all

 Fund. Further efforts would be undertaken by University and Guild to enhance the

 promotion of these schemes during the welcome process to raise the visibility and awareness of

 financial assistance available to the wider student population;

7.5 Connie Chilcott (President Exeter) provided a brief overview of their manifesto priorities for the

 Academic Year 2023/24, including a focus on providing a University experience relevant to a

 modern context, including consideration of the climate emergency, cost-of-living crisis and

 equipping students with the skills to create change within their communities and career paths.

 Council welcomed the focus of the manifesto priorities and that these would align with

 approach to students as change agents and that the issues of cost-of living and

 accommodation needed to be considered within the context of Cornwall, as these challenges

 were particularly pronounced in the local area.

**8. Report on Full Review of Mental Health and Wellbeing (CNL/23/84/84a/84b Confidential)**

* 1. the review had been launched following the tragic suicide of a student in order to consider how the University of Exeter supports student mental health and wellbeing, including the provision of support services and wider environment, to identify where improvements can be made;
	2. the review had been undertaken in addition to the University’s immediate response to the coroner’s recommendations which had either been or implemented or were underway. No further engagement with the coroner was anticipated as the University had already responded to indicate that it would be implementing the recommendations in full;
	3. Council commended the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Review and recognised that the comprehensive report and recommendations had been informed by the breadth of expertise on the panel, including national higher education health policy expertise, external legal expertise, subject-matter experts from the charitable sector and NHS professionals in the field of mental health;
	4. that the review group was satisfied that a strong model of service delivery was in place and that a well-informed, good service level was currently being provided by a skilled, professional and compassionate team. The 20 recommendations outlined in the report would build on this current practice, and enable the University to deliver a leading edge sector provision;
	5. institutional oversight of the development of the University Mental Health Strategy and achieving the University Mental Health Charter would be maintained by the establishment of a new sub-group of the Wellbeing, Inclusion and Culture Committee (co-chaired by the Provost and Executive Divisional Director of Human Resources);
	6. the training and development at the University for suicide Safety and appropriate training for academic and professional services staff had already been bolstered, and relevant training opportunities and materials would continue to be developed further to ensure frontline staff were appropriately supported in managing associated demands. A costed delivery plan had been produced to ensure that there were sufficient funds to and provide additional support and enhanced training provision to staff;
	7. a high-level executive summary of the review would be made publicly available from mid-September 2023, including a summary of the key themes, a statement from the Chair of the Review and an overview of the University response.

**Closed Minute**

**Approved:** the implementation of the recommendations and associated delivery plan in response to the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Review;

**Agreed:** that a further progress update on the implementation of the associated recommendations of the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Review would be provided to Council in the Academic Year 2023-24;

**Agreed:** that a full analysis and cross-referencing of the recommendations of the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Review with the Student Academic Support Task and Finish Group would be undertaken in Term 1 of Academic Year 2023-24 to ensure these were in alignment and progressed within future academic tutoring models.

*The Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) rejoined the meeting.*

**9. Strategy 2030 Delivery Plan (CNL-23-76 and CNL-23-76a Confidential)**

9.1 the Strategy 2030 Delivery Plan provided an overview of the major strategic initiatives and future

 size and shape of the University and would serve as an institutional ‘roadmap’ for the way in

 which Faculties and Professional Services would align their own operations and priorities;

9.2 the major strategic initiatives would accelerate step-change growth in STEMM

 research income and research power, ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the

 organisation; and enable growth and diversification of the international student community;

9.3 Council welcomed the level of detail incorporated within the Strategy Delivery Plans and noted

 the importance of the following in discussion: reflecting further on the key elements of

 differentiation from other peer institutions; enhancing the vision for the

 student ‘customer’ experience; ensuring there was greater consideration given to the cultural

 and people aspects associated with successful delivery of the strategy; maintaining a focus on

 developing innovative and agile ways of working; embedding an institution-wide focus on

 successful delivery of Strategy 2030 and ensuring that every member of staff across the was

 aligned with the institutional mission and the implications of the Strategy for the individual areas

 of work; developing an effective mechanism for measuring whether the strategy was being

 successfully delivered across the organization; considering inclusion of a wider mixture of KPIs

 that benchmarked against global competitors; a metric for measuring digital engagement and

 digital transformation was still in process of being developed, but consideration would be given

 to utilising engagement with social media as a metric;

9.4 in relation to the customer value proposition: that it would be helpful to enhance further the

 focus on the customer and value proposition and to develop a clearer vision for enhancing the

 ‘customer’ experience; that the customer value proposition would be integral to the approach

 towards growing the international student community, online delivery, TNE partnerships and

 the educational offer in Penryn; that a new approach was being developed to help monitor the

 level of student satisfaction, including utilising pulse surveys to elicit feedback in real time;

**Closed Minute**

**APPROVE:** the targets associated with the delivery of Strategy 2030 and the framework of major initiatives, noting that Full Business Cases will come forward in due course with full details of cost and benefits, and noting the direction of travel in terms of delivering our proposed size and shape;

**APPROVE:** the governance regarding the monitoring and reporting against Strategy 2030;

**AGREED:** that a capital project tracker would be developed for the Academic Year 2023/24, which provided an illustrative summary of projected year-on-year spend, overall spend and under/overspend and provided to Council at regular intervals to provide enhanced visibility surrounding progress against delivery of the capital programme;

**AGREED:** that a specific risk would be incorporated on the corporate risk register in relation to inability to deliver Strategy 2030 as a result of geopolitical or global events.

**10. Financial Forecast 2022/23 Growth Plans (CNL-23-75 Confidential)**

10.1 the final forecast for 2022/23 projected a modest increase in income and cash generation, with

 an operating surplus of 2.1% of income. This strong performance reflected above budget

 increase in QR grant, OfS teaching grant and interest income;

10.2 the 2.1% operating surplus was still below the 3% sustainability target which was required to

 fund the level of capital programme and to service current levels of debt.

**Closed Minute**

**11. Budget 2023-24 and Later Year Plans (including capital programme) (CNL-23-77 Confidential)**

11.1 Council noted the budgeted operating surplus of 1% of income for the Academic Year 2023-24

 and later year plans which had been developed within a financial envelope based on a 3 year

 trajectory to a financially sustainable 3% operating surplus, which would be required to finance

 capital investment and enable delivery of the capital programme;

11.2 the budget for 2023/24 did not take account of the 2023 USS valuation as it was currently

 underway and full details of the outcome would not be known until early autumn 2023. The

 schemes latest monitoring suggested a surplus of over £7.6bn and it was anticipated that the

 employee and employer contribution rates would reduce, effective from April 2024;

11.3 in the event of the undergraduate and postgraduate taught international tuition fee

 growth not materialising or increased inflationary pressures and staff costs, the University

 would have mechanisms to manage finances via an increased focus on efficiency savings and

 scaling back on the planned level of capital investment.

**Closed Minute**

**APPROVED:** the budget for 2023/24, noting the later year projections to 2027/27 and the capital programme with new place-marker proposals in 2023/24 to 2025/26.

**12. Admissions Update (CNL-23-78 Confidential)**

12.1 whilst the University was projected to welcome more international students in the current

 recruitment cycle than ever before, a range of factors being experienced

 across the Higher Education sector which were currently impacting on international and

 postgraduate home recruitment;

12.2 Council note the current risks to the 2023/24 recruitment intake targets and mitigations

 in place to minimize impact on admissions and delivery of Strategy 2030.

**Closed Minute**

**13. Penryn 2.0 – Outline Business Case (CNL-23-80 and CNL-23-80a Confidential)**

13.1 Penryn 2.0 (Outline Business Case) would support the Cornwall delivery of Strategy 2030 by

 creating capacity for new teaching, learning and collaboration facilities that would enable

 delivery of interdisciplinary teaching; growth of the Business and Law programmes; and

 development of a new suite of Postgraduate Taught Programmes;

13.2 the investment into Penryn 2.0 would also enable expansion of laboratories for the

 Environmental Microbiology Group, including two floors of fully equipped Category II labs with

 start-of-the-art microbiology and microscopy facilities, which would help develop the campus

 as a driving force for global solutions in environmental and sustainability challenges;

13.3 the Outline Business Case provided a significant return on investment, with a payback period of

 10 years, which would enable the Penryn campus to deliver further contribution to the student

 and research income of the institution;

13.4 the interdisciplinary Microbiology Research Group included a world-class group of life and

 environmental scientists that had secured c. £30m since 2014 and were leading the £10m

 RENEW programme. The investment in laboratory facilities and strengthening of research

 capabilities would provide significant opportunities to expand the excellence of existing

 Microbes and Molecular specialisms;

13.5 Penryn 2.0 would also enable the development of skills provision (including micro

 credentials) in emerging environmental and sustainability sectors such as critical

 minerals and offshore floating wind;

13.6 Council were supportive of the Penryn 2.0 (Outlines Business Case) and recognised it would

 strengthen research capabilities, enable a distinctive research-led education and drive growth

 in student numbers and cohort rebalancing at Penryn;

**Closed Minute**

**APPROVE:** the Outline Business Case for Penryn 2.0 to enable further design of the project and tender;

**AGREED:** that a post investment review would be undertaken at the end of Penryn 2.0 and scheduled for Council consideration.

**Closed Minute**

**14. SITS Cloud Migration Full Business Case (CNL-23-81 Confidential)**

14.1 the Full Business Case for the migration of the University’s on-premise student record system

 (SITS) service into the cloud was the foundational project within the Student Information

 System (SIS) Optimisation Programme. The project aimed to have migrated the current on-

 premise SITS service to a cloud-hosted solution by July 2024;

14.2 the 25 year-old student record system (SITS) was a legacy software which was significantly

 constraining the institutional ability to deliver strategic education change initiatives, meet

 student number growth aspirations, rebalance cohorts and deliver target operating surplus;

14.3 if the University did not migrate SITS to the cloud the end-of-life server farm would need to be

 replaced at a cost of £1.6m;

14.4 the Dual Assurance Lead for Digital and IT reaffirmed the importance of the project and

 indicated that it was imperative that it was progressed at speed to reduce reliance on

 outmoded software. A number of options had previously been discussed and explored and the

 proposed option was endorsed.

**APPROVED:** the SITS Cloud Migration Full Business Case.

**Closed Minute**

**15. Future Structures – End of Programme Report (CNL-23-87/87a/ Confidential)**

15.1 the Future Structures Programme (FSP) had reshaped the University’s academic and

 Professional Services structure to create a simpler structure focused on the three overarching

 strategic goals on Environmental Sustainability; Health and Social Justice, empower

 academic departments with clearer accountability and more local decision-making; and

 enhance professional services support for academic communities;

15.2 whilst the Future Structures Programme had been effectively managed and successfully

 delivered on time and under budget, it was recognised that it had been a very significant

 programme of change and that there would continue to be challenges ahead to ensure new

 arrangements become embedded and objectives continued to be delivered consistently;

15.3 Council noted the following in discussion: the importance of continuing to elicit

 feedback on an ongoing basis regarding the Future Structures Programme, including views of

 Faculties and Departments, to monitor the continued process of adapting to new business as

 usual operations and enable any concerns about new arrangements to be identified and

 listened to; that whilst the structural change been effectively completed, the cultural aspects of

 the change programme would need to continue to be monitored and targeted actions

 identified; further work would need to continue to undertake to enable further leadership

 development and support to be provided to Heads of Department.

**ENDORSED:** the recommended next steps as detailed in section 7 of the paper;

**16. Business Engagement and Innovation Strategy 2030 (CNL-23-82 Confidential)**

16.1 the Business Engagement and Innovation Strategy 2030 was aligned with the University’s

 Strategy 2030 and enable the institution to improve the quality of research, education, improve

 performance in REF, KEF and league table and enhance opportunities for income generation;

16.2 the Strategy would enable the University to double business-related revenue in real terms by

 2030, creating £100m additional income per annum, including an increase in net income by

 £30m per annum. It was recognised this would mitigate against dependency on

 other sources of income across the institutional funding model;

16.3 the approach to enhancing the University’s level of Business Engagement with regional and

 national partners would be focused on current research strengths (climate, environment and

 sustainability, microbiology and genomics) as well as identifying areas for future collaboration

 such as Economics and Data Science.

**Closed Minute**

**APPROVED:** the Business Engagement and Innovation Strategy 2030.

**17. Institutional Performance Update (CNL-23-83 Confidential)**

17.1 the report provided an update on Institutional KPI performance since July 2022 and included

 summary reports on 10 of the current set of 13 KPIs;

17.2 in relation to Student Staff Ratios: it was noted that the institutional student staff ratio had only

 slightly improved from 16.1 to 16, which currently placed the University at the bottom of the

 Russell Group (in comparison to 23rd position last year); that the primary mechanism for

 improving the student staff ratio was the proposed institutional approach to cohort

 rebalancing; the Covid-19 pandemic had impeded further progress with reducing SSRs

 in the Business School as staff recruitment had been paused. Additional staff recruitment in the

 Business School and the Business 2030 project would also serve to further reduce SSRs and

 increase research power.

**18. Degree Outcomes Statement 2023 (CNL-23-88/88a/88b Confidential)**

18.1 the Degree Outcomes Statement 2023 was the University’s fourth full statement and had been

 developed in accordance with best practice and informed by academic and professional

 services expertise and in engagement with student representatives.

**APPROVE:** the Degree Outcomes Statement for publication.

**19. Degree Outcomes Benchmarking Report: Update and Next Steps (CNL-23-89 Open Internal)**

19.1 whilst the University’s strong performance in relation to the rest of the sector and level of

 sector benchmarking and analysis was commended by Council, it was recognised that further

 work would continue to be undertaken on closing degree awarding gaps further including

 continued focus on ethnicity, race and domicile and developing plans for enhancing the

 undergraduate provision and curriculum for change.

**ENDORSE:** the use of the Degree Outcomes Benchmarking Report within Faculties and Departments.

**20. Postgraduate Taught Degree Classifications Summary Report with provisional results for 2022/23: Overview, Developments and Next Steps (CNL-23-90 Open Internal)**

20.1 Council noted the PGT Degree Classifications Summary Report and provisional results for

 2022/23.

**21. Academic Assurance 2021/22 – Quality and Standards (CNL-23-91 Confidential)**

21.1 Council noted the Academic Assurance paper for the Academic Year 2021/22 and

 the University’s refreshed approach to academic assurance following the joint

 Senate and Council meeting in May 2023. The enhanced reporting format was welcomed as a

 mechanism to help ensure Council were actively seeking and receiving assurance that

 academic governance was robust and effective.

**22. Education Governance Review Recommendations Report (CNL-23-92 Confidential)**

22.1 the paper outlined the Education Governance Review recommendations, including proposals

 relating to Education and Student Experience Executive Committee, Education Board and their

 sub-committees to help realise efficiencies and improvements in the academic and executive

 governance for our taught education portfolio.

**Approved:** Council approved recommendation A as detailed in the paper.

**23. Chair’s closing remarks**

23.1 the Chair confirmed that the following items in ‘Part II – For Decision’ had been formally

 approved by Council, including: University of Exeter Honorary Degrees (CNL-23-93); Extension

 to Associate Deans Terms of Office (CNL/23/94); Delegation Framework -Updates to Signatories

 (CNL-23-95); Membership of Global Research Alliance for Sustainable Finance and Investment

 (CNL-23-96) and Academic Year Plans for January Programme Starts 2024 (CNL-23-97);

23.2 the Chair advised that as detailed in the Multi-faith Centre Update Paper (CNL-23-98) a meeting

 of Council Standing Committee would be scheduled on 26 July 2023 to review and approve the

 anticipated increase in costs once the final Gross Maximum Price tender had been received on

 21 July to allow construction costs to commence in August 2023;

23.3 on behalf of Council, the Chair extended thanks to all Council members for their support during

 his first year as Chair and extended a special thanks to outgoing members, including: Sarah

 Buck, Lounette Dyer, Amoetsoe Mkwena, Jo Binding, Graham Cole and Janice Kay. Thanks were

 also extended to the student representatives Lily Margaroli and Georgi Griškevičienė for their

 terrific contribution to Council and ensuring invaluable student perspectives were central to

 discussion and debate.