



Minutes Meeting of Council

Date:	12 July 2021
Present:	Mr Pedder, Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); Mrs Hope and Mr Mayson, Pro-Chancellors; Mr Sutcliffe, Treasurer; Professor Lamberts, President & Vice-Chancellor; Mr Bagley, Mr Belton, Ms Brownlie, Ms Croxford, Dr Forrest, Ms Hague, Professor Hartley, Professor Kirby, Professor Layden, Dr Nicholls, Mr Rodrigo, Professor Valentine, Mr Wray
Secretary:	Dr Strike
In attendance:	Mr Smith, Mr Swinn, Mr McSweeney; Professor Hounslow, Mr Sykes and Ms Morgan (item 10); Ms Fraser-Krauss and Ms Abrams (item 11)
Apologies:	Professor Brazier, Mr Sly

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting, which was being held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular he welcomed Ms Croxford, the new Students' Union President, who was attending her first meeting.

1. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

1. The Report of the Council Nominations Committee, item 16, included recommendations relating to some Council members who would not take part in decisions relating to them individually.
2. Professor Kirby noted that the capital approval request under item 12 related to her Faculty.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

(Meetings held on 26 April and 15 June 2021)

- 2.1 The Minutes were approved as an accurate record.

3. Action Log and Matters Arising on the Minutes

- 3.1 Council received and noted the action log. There were no questions on this or other matters arising on the Minutes.

4. Health and Safety Update

- 4.1 Council received and noted the update. In response to a question it was reported that the Estates Committee had received an update on the health and safety aspects of the return to campus following the end of national Covid restrictions at its meeting on 12 July.

5. Category C Matters

- 5.1 Council considered Category C business, which are covered in Minutes 17-25, below.

6. President & Vice-Chancellor's Report

6.1 The President and Vice-Chancellor presented his report, in which he drew attention to the following:

(a) Covid-19 Easing of National Restrictions:

Following the announcement that the Government would move to step 4 of the roadmap from 19 July, DfE had published updated operational guidance for the HE sector. The University was evaluating the detailed implications of this guidance, which removed restrictions in line with wider society and included updated information on outbreak management plans, testing, and new and returning students travelling from overseas. UEB had also considered the implications of the removal of all Covid-19 restrictions on the delivery of Learning and Teaching in the 2021-22 academic year and institutional readiness to adapt to any changes in Government guidance. The University would need to balance delivery of the best possible student experience with its duty of care to students, along with health & safety implications. The University would continue to monitor developments across the sector and ensure the University remained in alignment. Similarly, the University continued to work in close cooperation with the City Council's Director of Public Health. The University was committed to increasing face-to-face teaching as soon as possible and there was optimism that a relatively normal student experience could be delivered in the forthcoming academic year.

(b) Admissions:

The undergraduate home applications position had increased from 2020 and increased international applications had also offset the fall in EU applicants. The impact of the national approach to A level examinations could have an impact on admissions for 2021 entry and the University continued to monitor the position. Clearing and Adjustment would be crucial again this year and related campaigns and awareness raising had already started.

Postgraduate taught recruitment was more complex due to the timing of applications but as uncertainty around the pandemic decreased and market confidence increased, the University was relatively confident that recruitment would be in line with forecasts. However challenges for overseas students presented by Covid-19 globally and in relation to study in the UK were continuing, including concerns about the availability of flights, ability to obtain visas in time and particular issues for applicants from India with regard to the timing of receiving their results. There was also concern from Chinese applicants about the move away from face-mask wearing in England. Colleagues in Global Engagement and the University's in-country managers continued to monitor, engage proactively and plan accordingly.

Postgraduate research applications had recovered slightly as applicants' confidence in the prospects for the next academic year increased.

(c) Research Awards:

It was pleasing to note continued strong performance in the University's research activities across multiple disciplines. The total value of new awards for the last 12 months to the end of May 2021 was £200.9m, an increase of £29.4m on the previous twelve month period.

(d) USS Pensions:

Council had recently received and considered several updates relating to the USS 2020 valuation and future plans for the scheme. The University had submitted a response to the latest UUK consultation but the outcome of that had not yet been received. The Russell Group had also responded to that consultation in similar terms to the University submission. Council and Finance Committee continued to

be kept updated regarding developments around USS and the 2020 valuation and further information and updates would be provided in due course.

The President & Vice-Chancellor invited and responded to questions on these highlights and any other matters contained in his report

7. University Vision

7.1 Strategic Delivery Plans

Council considered and approved Strategic Delivery Plans for each of the four Pillars of the University Vision, which had been developed and agreed by UEB and had been presented in summary form at the Council Away Day. It was noted that these Delivery Plans would inform the development of Faculty and Departmental plans (See Minute 7.2, below). Council also approved a recommendation to extend the period to be covered by the Vision to cover the 2026/27 academic year, thereby enabling the delivery plans to span four to five academic years as originally intended, following changes to the timetable that had been necessary to manage the impact of the pandemic. It was noted that the extended timetable may require UEB to review the current KPIs to ensure that they reflected progress and priorities. Any proposed amendments would be presented to Council for approval.

7.2 Planning Round Outcomes and Actions

Council received and, following questions from Members, noted an update on planning activity completed during 2020/21 and scheduled for 2021/22. The priority for 2021/22 would be for Faculties to assess departments against the Departmental Framework and propose five year plans for each of them, informed by a prior review by UEB to ensure that the Framework was understood and applied in a consistent manner.

8. Financial Strategy

- 8.1 Council received an update on the development of a Financial Strategy which would be presented to Finance Committee and Council in the autumn for approval. It was reported that work to evaluate options around the University's existing borrowings had been completed, and the strategy would seek to increase minimum year-end cash balances from the current agreed level, ensure the strength of the balance sheet, and financial performance metrics. Further work was reported in relation to IT infrastructure requirements and the prioritisation of physical estates projects, with particular reference to major cross-cutting strategic themes.

9. Financial Forecasts and Budget

- 9.1 Council discussed and considered the financial forecasts 2020/21 to 2025/26 and the budget for 2021/22 following approvals from UEB and Finance Committee. It was noted that income growth over the forecast period was exceeded by expenditure growth, which accounted for the relatively small operating surpluses across the six years. Although year-end cash balances declined slightly over the period, in all years the year-end cash balance would remain above the current agreed minimum balance. Council also noted the average liquidity days and levels of self-funded capital expenditure, and that the University was not forecast to have recourse to the RCF or to breach any bank covenants over the period. In response to uncertainties and to mitigate downside scenarios, the forecasts included central contingency funding in each year, as well as strategic funding for investment in priority areas. Clarification was provided that the inclusion of those sums partly explained the relatively low forecast underlying surpluses but that there was flexibility around the use of these funds to respond to future pressures if necessary.

- 9.2 Attention was drawn to the key assumptions informing the forecasts. These included the retention of the £9,250 home UG student tuition fee, continuing student growth, no further residential contract refunds, and no additional borrowings. Council noted that the principal uncertainties and risks that could exert a material impact on the forecasts included the continuing effect of COVID-19 on student recruitment; cost pressures or industrial action resulting from the 2020 USS valuation; and the potential changes to the tuition fee regime in the expected Comprehensive Spending Review. With respect to tuition fee income, the assumed growth in total fee income included in the forecasts was equivalent to that originally projected. However, the total sum was anticipated to reflect greater diversity across all student categories resulting from ongoing strategic activity, and had been reduced across the period as a further contingency measure. It was reported that UEB would be considering ways in which to maximise headroom to fund strategic initiatives whilst increasing financial contingency and resilience.
- 9.3 It was noted that the OfS required providers to submit their updated forecasts by the end of February 2022 through the Annual Financial Return, following the same timetable as in 2021. The forecasts and key assumptions would be reviewed and updated in November, including to reflect actual student recruitment, any changes required as a result of the impact of Covid, the USS valuation and government policy. Following requests from Members, further details would also be provided in relation to downside risk and mitigating action, noting that the current estimated cumulative impact of key risks, while representing a significant challenge, could be accommodated within the current forecasts without risk of insolvency or breach of bank covenants. These were also all matters that the external auditor would consider as part of its going concern assessment.
- 9.4 Council noted the financial forecasts 2020/21-2025/26 and approved the annual budget for 2021/22.

10. Closed minute and paper

11. Technology Enabled Strategic Framework - Phase 3

(Ms Fraser-Krauss and Ms Abrams in attendance for this item)

- 11.1 Council considered the proposed release of £15m of funding for Phase 3 of the TESH, which followed detailed deliberations through UEB and its IT Sub-Group, an initial presentation and overview provided to Council at its April meeting, and which had been approved by Finance Committee. 60% of the £15m request would be funded from the University's revenue budget and 40% from the capital budget. Particular attention was drawn to the strategic aims and overall objectives; the principles informing the programme, including an iterative, product-led approach that was designed to be flexible and responsive to change; and the principal goals of each TESH roadmap (Education, Research, Workplace and Collaboration, Corporate Services, and Infrastructure and Enablers) across Phase 3. It was noted that the progress of TESH objectives would be contingent on the successful management of several risks, chief among which were the ongoing capability and capacity within IT Services to deliver on agreed products and the continuous refinement of roadmap requirements in response to changing priorities.
- 11.2 During discussion, Council noted the following points:
- (a) The overall investment for the TESH across the next three financial years was intended to transform the University's IT capability and cyber security posture, and reduce its technical debt.
 - (b) The objectives had been developed carefully on the basis of what were realistically achievable, which informed the level of funding sought in the context of the University's overall financial position. It was also noted that the University

continued to make other investment in IT through the IT Services core and Shared Costs budgets.

- (c) Clarification was provided that priority actions had been agreed with the relevant UEB category leads with reference to those strategic priorities which needed enabling through technology. These were well defined in year 1 but would be reviewed and refined to inform plans and related funding approval requests for future years of the programme. A key priority for the first year was to put in place the systems, processes and teams to enable delivery of specific strategic aims in future years.
- (d) It was noted that previous phases of the TESH had demonstrated that activity could be successfully delivered to budget, and that the phase 3 had been designed iteratively to deliver key priorities within the available funding.
- (e) Although TESH Phase 3 represented further major investment in IT while SLP was continuing, it was recognised that these were different types of initiatives. Although SLP would contribute to addressing areas of technical debt, there were significant IT matters outside the SLP which required investment in order to service the wider, complex needs of the organisation.

11.3 Following discussion, Council noted the prioritised roadmap objectives that made up Phase 3 and approved the release of £15M for the financial year 2021/22. It was also agreed that Council would receive a further progress update towards the end of year 1, which would explain what was being delivered as capacity and capability increased and set out plans for future actions and objectives. This update would include external assurance around delivery in order to support the monitoring and oversight of expenditure in line with the approved budget and strengthen the assurances provided to Council. With respect to external assurance, this would be considered further as part of the wider remit of the review of estates governance (see Minute 13, below).

12. Capital Programme: Update and Business Cases

12.1 Council received an update on progress of projects in the capital programme, including projects recently considered and approved by ECSG, UEB and Finance Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. Specifically, Council approved recommendations relating to an increase in the project budget for the Gene Therapy Innovation Manufacturing Centre, due to increased market costs relating to the impacts of Brexit and Covid-19. Council requested that these cost pressures be carefully considered as part of ongoing capital prioritisation work to ascertain the potential impact of the market on existing and potential future projects.

13. Review of Estates Governance

13.1 Council approved a proposed review of the University's approach to governance around estates matters on the terms set out in the related paper, and approved the membership of a Review Group to lead the review and report to UEB and Council in due course. Lay members of Council were invited to contact the University Secretary to express an interest in joining the Review Group, with the Chair to be determined once the membership was finalised. Council also agreed that the review could usefully reflect on how the University defined its "estate" as it related to digital and physical infrastructure.

14. Archaeology Review

14.1 Council considered a proposal from UEB in relation to the University's provision of archaeology education and research, which followed an initial Council discussion on 15 June and agreement to consider the proposal in July having first sought the advice of the Senate. The Senate discussions and the advice provided were reported to Council as part of item 17, below, and considered during Council's deliberations under this item. Council

noted that members of Council had received additional representations from a wide range of correspondents external to the University, as well as Trade Unions, students and from some members of Senate separate from that included under item 17 below. Noting that Senate had agreed to provide advice to Council through the report of its discussions on 23 June and the dedicated questionnaire, Members were mindful of the need to ensure that Senate's views were considered in a thorough and balanced manner as part of the comprehensive set of papers provided to Council to support its consideration of the matter.

- 14.2 Members recognised that a high profile campaign was running across social media and the outcome of Council's determination on the matter was likely to attract attention and it was important to enable staff, students and other stakeholders to be informed of the outcome by the University itself through the appropriate channels of communication. Council also affirmed its support for the principle of collective decision making and agreed not to provide any commentary to third parties or to attribute comments to any individual; as for any matter before Council or any other decision making body, the minutes of meetings represented the record of discussions and decisions taken.
- 14.3 Council noted that the matter reserved to Council for its decision under the University Regulations was the establishment or abolition of Faculties or Departments, and approval of their titles, i.e. whether there should be a separate administrative unit, the Department of Archaeology. Matters arising consequent on any decision; such as retaining areas of strength in the discipline, how to identify any additional areas of strength, and whether to close some programmes to future admission, were matters for the UEB Implementation Group, and subject to consultation, as appropriate, with the Trades Unions, students and others. During the course of introductions from the President & Vice-Chancellor, as the Chair of Senate, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, as the Chair of the Institutional Review, and subsequent questions and discussion, Council carefully considered the evidence and advice provided and discussed each of the substantive matters in turn.
- 14.4 Senate Advice:
- Council noted the information provided in the report of the Senate (referred to at Minute 17, below), including the unconfirmed minute of the meeting, presentations given to the Senate meeting and the responses of Senate members to the questionnaire that Senate had agreed as the means by which to provide advice. Council confirmed that the approach to Senate had, as requested by Council, respected that Senate could express an opinion on any matter and Council's specific request for academic advice on the UEB proposal, and provided an opportunity for Council to hear from all members of the Senate. It was noted that 37 out of 84 Senate members had chosen to comment on the proposals through the questionnaire after the Senate meeting, having heard the debate. It was reported that twenty questions had been asked in writing in advance of the Senate meeting and were dealt with in that meeting, as well as further questions and comments during the meeting.
- 14.5 Council noted that, from the Senate report and related papers and responses to the questionnaire, the views of Senate members were wide ranging and varied. Attention was drawn to the following substantive points which were raised during the Senate discussion:
- (a) It was asked why vacant posts in the Department had not been replaced as staff left or retired. Although the Department's deficit had been reduced this was the result of shrinkage, i.e. not replacing vacant posts, rather than through planned income growth that was needed to fund and sustain new and replacement posts.
 - (b) The Department believed they could increase their undergraduate intake to sustainable levels if they could be permitted to lower their A-Level entry tariff but this was disputed given the size of the applicant pool and the Department's

competitive position. Council noted details of the Archaeology applicant pool by tariff provided in a related paper. (See also Minute 14.8, below).

- (c) The Department had put forward student number projections that were not assessed to be credible by Finance and Planning, Projects and Business Intelligence based on prior performance.
- (d) The Department believed that areas of strength would not survive and thrive alongside relevant cognate disciplines elsewhere in the University, and that to sustain the ecology of Archaeology the Department needed to be maintained and that it should receive investment. Council recognised that sustaining a department as an administrative and academic unit had costs implications and, therefore, the size of the entity must be viable both academically and financially to avoid negative impacts on the sustainability of the discipline and on other areas of the University.

14.6 The President & Vice-Chancellor considered that the advice from Senate did not suggest that UEB should revise or reconsider its proposal, which was therefore put before the Council for consideration and a decision.

14.7 Sustainability:

Council considered the reasons the Department of Archaeology was not considered by UEB to be sustainable; how that situation had arisen; the measures taken previously to seek to support and develop the department and why they had not improved the position; the options considered and the executive's rationale for the proposal before Council. Members also discussed issues raised by many external correspondents, including around management and leadership performance and considered any lessons for the University. The President & Vice-Chancellor reiterated that UEB's recommendation was the result of changes in national demand for archaeology courses and the response of a number of competitor institutions that had left the Department unable to effectively compete for students, the research income was relatively low and the areas of focus too wide given the number of staff and areas of strength, and an absence of effective departmental leadership or engagement to support and exploit areas of opportunity to address declining overall academic performance.

14.8 In response to questions about the competitive environment for archaeology and future prospects, clarification was provided that:

- UCAS data showed that the overall number of undergraduate accepts for courses with Archaeology in the title to the 39 providers offering these courses declined from 1365 to 1205 between 2016 and 2020, with an average of 30% of those accepts at a tariff of ABB+.
- Only 20 undergraduate students had registered with the Department in 2020, which placed the University 23rd in the sector. Although the Department contended that aligning its entry requirements with the sector would support improved student recruitment, these requirements were already aligned with a number of close competitors and the trend of declining numbers predated strategic changes to entry tariff. It was also noted that a number of competitors were able to make change of course offers into archaeology from complementary programmes or disciplines that the University did not offer.
- Despite the efforts of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities and institutional support, the Department had not responded effectively to the increased marketisation of HE that resulted from changes in government policy over a number of years, such that key competitors who had taken positive action had been able to grow market share and achieve significant competitive advantage to the detriment of Sheffield.

- The Department generated relatively low income from commercial opportunities, in short-course provision and services rendered and had not developed proposed PGT programmes around commercial archaeology, which had been a key area of opportunity that had not been realised as it had elsewhere in the sector.

14.9 Clarification was provided that the existing collaborative contributions of archaeology and other University academics to the city and wider region, notably around culture and heritage, were an already identified area of strength to which the University remained firmly committed. The UEB proposal did not represent a closure of the discipline of archaeology at Sheffield, but sought to protect, maintain and enhance areas of strength and success in both education and research, thereby sustaining existing multi-disciplinary activities and the partnerships with external stakeholders. Similarly, Council was pleased to note that the University remained fundamentally committed to the Arts and Humanities disciplines more generally.

14.10 In response to a question about whether other disciplines or departments may experience comparable challenges as a result of changes to undergraduate entry requirements relating to A level tariff, it was reported that the University was engaged in a range of related activities as part of the implementation of the Vision, including to consider the optimum balance of its future student population, evaluate recruitment markets and broader issues of competitiveness, all of which would help to identify and mitigate risks in other areas.

14.11 Process:

Noting that issues had been raised about the adequacy of the review process, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor reminded Council of the process followed and the background to the Institutional Review. It was noted that the Review had been initiated following a letter from staff in the Department to the President & Vice-Chancellor expressing concern about its future prospects and sustainability, and was not a decision of either the Faculty of Arts & Humanities or of UEB.

Further attention was drawn to the following, which were raised during the course of the Senate discussion on 23 June:

- (a) A suggestion that the Review had been limited in time and featured limited consultation was strongly disputed, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor reminded Council members of process followed during the Review Process, including the nature of the Review Group and the extent of communications and consultations with departmental staff and students during and following the Review.
- (b) In response to suggestions that the process contravened the University's research ethics policies, including that students were misled about the purpose of the Review, the Chair of the Senate Research Ethics Committee had confirmed that the Research Ethics Policy (including the relevant Policy Note 7) did not apply to administrative or management processes within the University, such as when the University undertakes reviews of a department or activity, which would fall under the category of 'service evaluation' rather than 'research'.
- (c) Questions were asked about the support the Faculty had or had not provided to the Department to facilitate its success and the related status of four junior posts, which had been approved by the Faculty prior to the vacancy freeze introduced to help manage the impact of the pandemic. Clarification was provided about the nature and extent of efforts to support the Department, noting that efforts to strengthen the leadership team through external appointments had not been actioned.

In response to a further question from Council, it was noted that the Faculty's efforts to support the department and arrest the decline in performance from its historical world leading position extended to performance management and

objective setting, the planning round and regular progress reviews across all areas, with targeted action in key areas including REF preparations, the annual learning and teaching review, and finance and budget. The Department had also received additional marketing support, market data and requests to identify areas of focus to improve student recruitment. The Faculty had also promoted Archaeology programmes via USIC, in international markets, and at Home, and permitted greater flexibility within the Faculty's overall quality/tariff target. However, the Department had not progressed opportunities for growth or development that had been identified. In light of the challenging undergraduate recruitment position and prospects, an option to move to only postgraduate provision was refused by the Department. The Faculty had approved a departmental plan for sustainable undergraduate provision, including a more clear and streamlined offer, which was developed at the request of the Faculty, but the Department had subsequently sought to take action to reinstate those programmes.

- 14.12 Council confirmed that it was appropriately assured about the nature and conduct of the review, and the process followed. Specifically, Council was assured that the necessary and appropriate consultations had taken place with the Senate and with students who may be affected by any constitutional decision.

Members reaffirmed their determination that the University should seek to ensure that its review processes continued to be exemplary. Council decided to seek reassurance that the processes in place for informing it on an ongoing basis about Faculty and Departmental performance remained sound and that they ensured that Council has good visibility on and is alerted to any emerging issues. It was proposed and agreed that this be reassessed through a Council-led task and finish group, with Jonathan Nicholls and Phil Rodrigo, supported by the University Secretary. Council asked that the remit include an appraisal of practice at other similar institutions as well as any lessons learned.

14.13 Next Steps and Duties:

Council considered actions required as a result of any decision, and sought assurance that the resultant duties on the University regarding staff consultation and student protection could be met. It was noted that a decision to support the UEB proposal raised a number of matter consequent on that decision, several of which were reflected in the responses of members of the Senate, for example.:

- How any additional areas of strength would be identified;
- Whether those areas of strength should be located in one other existing department or to the relevant cognate existing other Department on a case by case basis, or located in other Departments and grouped together under an alternative matrix structure; such as an inter-disciplinary institute for archaeological studies,
- Whether any programmes of study would be closed to future cohorts of students, and existing students taught out,
- How students on programmes would be protected so that they can complete their studies and achieve their awards, as set out in the Student Protection plan.

Council recognised that these were operational matters and so properly under the remit of the UEB Implementation Group to consider, dependant on the Council decision. Council sought and were given assurance that the appropriate staff and student consultations would take place as required in relation to these further matters.

- 14.14 It was noted that the findings of the Institutional Review Group had not put forward a merger option because the Review had not identified suitable cognate departments or strengths that could accommodate all retained archaeology teaching and research. However, UEB's proposal included a commitment for the Implementation Group to reconsider all elements of strength that might be retained, how these might be organised

or located, and review possible options for co-location, as well as considering supporting strategic investment. That work would be conducted including extensive further consultation with department staff, those in other cognate disciplines, HoDs and departmental executive teams, and with students. These discussions would seek to identify the optimum outcome that would protect and strengthen the strengths in the discipline of archaeology in Sheffield, and those with which retained elements could be co-located, in a sustainable way for the long-term. In doing so, the Implementation Group would reflect on the success of action elsewhere in the sector to ensure that retained elements of strengths were supported and able to thrive and that these activities and the relevant colleagues did not become isolated or at risk of decline.

- 14.15 Clarification was provided that the areas of strength previously identified by the Review Group were founded on established collaborations with colleagues in other disciplines, upon which to build. Furthermore, in considering additional areas of strength and models or framework for retained elements, the Implementation Group would reflect on the necessary synergies and complementary activities in other cognate disciplines to optimise the future model for archaeology teaching and research.
- 14.16 In response to a question about the extent of support for students and the application of the University's Student Protection Plan, it was confirmed that all current undergraduate students or those due to commence in 2021 would have their programmes taught out in full. The University would consult with all affected students and the Students' Union to ensure that all students received the support necessary to complete their studies as planned, whilst ensuring that the University complied with particular regulatory requirements. If it was decided to discontinue programmes or close certain programmes to future admissions, students would also have the option to transfer to an alternative course or provider if they wished. All postgraduate taught and research students would be similarly supported. Further clarification was provided about the mitigation of risks to delivering teach out and sustaining the student experience for archaeology students. It was also noted that the staff in the Department of Archaeology, like the wider University, shared the same deep commitment to students and the student experience and every effort would be made to ensure that all students were supported to complete their programmes.
- 14.17 In response to a question about the approach to stakeholder communications, it was reported that detailed and tailored stakeholder communications would be developed on 12 and 13 July to report the Council decision. Dedicated meetings and follow-up messages had been scheduled with staff in the Department of Archaeology, students in all categories, including those on Foundation Programmes in the Department for Lifelong Learning, with a series of email correspondence planned for groups including Heads of Department, Professional Services Directors, the Students' Union, Trade Unions and media.
- 14.18 Council recognised the importance of transparency around performance reviews, conducted in a systematic, rigorous way as part of a broader culture which sought continuous improvements to enhance and optimise performance through a holistic assessment of key elements including academic and financial sustainability. Council considered the level of autonomy afforded to departments and noted that the model had delivered great success, but relied on strong leadership, particularly in overcoming underperformance to achieve success and sustainability. Further consideration would be given to ensuring that Council was sufficiently sighted about areas of concern or underperformance, and the measures being taken to provide support and to realise potential, thereby contributing to the achievement of the University's strategic objectives. See 14.12 above.
- 14.19 Following a lengthy discussion and having considered the matter carefully, including the advice of the Senate, Council agreed that the UEB proposal was persuasive, based on the breadth and volume of evidence provided. The combination of internal and external

pressures and factors meant that the current structure, that of a stand-alone academic and administrative unit, had become unsustainable. Council was satisfied that there appeared to be no realistic prospects for the current constitutional arrangements to succeed in the current market, without significant risk of adverse consequences for either existing areas of strength in archaeology and for provision elsewhere in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities and the University as a whole.

Therefore, Council overwhelmingly agreed the following (a) to (f), with the President of the Students' Union indicating that they did not support the UEB proposal. It was recognised that this was a difficult decision but one which was necessary in the best interests of the University as a whole, and which would provide the best available opportunity to sustain and enhance archaeology as a discipline at Sheffield:

- (a) to modify the organisation of the Faculties of the University by removing the Department of Archaeology as a separate academic and administrative unit.
- (b) to amend Regulation IX: The Senate para. 2.1.6. to remove Archaeology from the list of separate Departments.
- (c) that UEB would seek to retain key areas of strength in archaeological research and teaching by aligning them with another or other cognate parts of the University.
- (d) to note that the University will use its best endeavours to comply with its contractual obligations to students, and with the published Student Protection Plan, approved by the Office for Students.
- (e) to maintain confidentiality, with any decision under embargo until 5pm on Tuesday 13 July 2021 to permit the implementation of a communications plan.
- (f) to establish a task and finish group, comprising Mr Rodrigo and Mr Nicholls, to review the process followed to (as set out in 14.12 above), supported by the University Secretary.

15. Corporate Risk Register 2020-21

- 15.1 Council received and approved the most recent iteration of the 2020-21 Corporate Risk Register and noted an accompanying report from the UEB Risk Review Group.

16. Report of the Council Nominations Committee

- 16.1 Council received and approved the report, including recommendations relating to Council membership and Council representation on other committees and arrangements for seeking and appointing a Chair of Council and a Treasurer from 1 August 2022.

17. Report of the Senate

- 17.1 Council received and approved the Report. Matters reported in relation to item 14, above, were considered as part of that item.

18. Report of the Audit Committee

- 18.1 Council received and approved the Report. Attention was drawn to the Committee's suggestion that Council might consider the extent to which was able to hear the perspectives of students. The University Secretary would consider opportunities to enhance the current arrangements, whether in general or for specific items of business in future.

19. Report of the Finance Committee

- 19.1 Council received and approved the Report.

20. Report of the Senior Remuneration Committee

20.1 Council received and approved the Report.

21. Office for Students Registrations Conditions Compliance Register

21.1 Council noted the register of compliance with ongoing registration conditions and reportable events.

22. Council Matters

22.1 Council Scheme of Delegation

Council approved proposed amendments and confirmed the Scheme of Delegation for 2020-21.

22.2 Functions of Council (Statement of Primary Responsibilities)

Council noted and confirmed the arrangements in place for Council to fulfil its responsibilities.

22.3 Role Description for Members of Council

Council approved proposed amendments and noted to the contents of the document as a whole. In particular, Council approved the addition of a new Appendix 3, a Code of Conduct, which had been developed in response to the Council Effectiveness Review and the general annual review of the document and which members would be asked to sign upon appointment. It was noted that Code was based on examples of good practice elsewhere and guidance and model terms from the Charity Commission and the Chartered Governance Institute.

22.4 Compliance and Assurance Framework

Council noted the updated framework, which would be kept under review and updated to ensure that the University was able to comply with applicable legal and regulatory requirements and provide assurance to the appropriate body.

22.5 Council Business Plan 2020-21

Council noted the business plan, which would be reviewed to inform the first iteration of the 2021-22 plan.

22.6 Report on Action Taken

Council noted and endorsed action taken by Council since the previous meeting.

23. Returning Officer's Report on the Students' Union Full Time Officers Elections 2021

23.1 Council received and noted the Report.

24. Use of the University Seal

24.1 Council received and noted a summary of the application of the University Seal since the previous Council meeting.

25. Public Availability of Council Papers

25.1 Council approved arrangements for the online publication of Council papers in accordance with the University's Information Classification Scheme.

26. Other Business

26.1 Farewells:

The Chair noted that this was the final meeting of Council for a number of departing members and offered thanks and good wishes to:

- John Brazier, a Senate member elected by the Senate.
- Steve Sly, a Class (3) member of the Senate who was retiring from Council at the end of the year after five years' membership.
- Richard Mayson, Pro-Chancellor, who is retiring from Council after completing nine years in total as a member of Council, the last four years as a Pro-Chancellor.
- Professor Gill Valentine, Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and a Senior Academic officer member of Council for the last five years, was required to stand down under the University's Regulations.
- Gaynor Hague, a Professional Services member elected by and from the professional services staff in grades 1-7, for the last six years, would finish her current term of appointment on 31 July 2021. Nominations for election were currently being sought.