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## UNIVERSITY OF KENT

### MEETING OF COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2023

Hybrid meeting: Darwin Boardroom & MS Teams

**Present:** The Chair of Council, Mark Preston; The Deputy Chair of Council and Chair of Finance & Resources Committee, Andrew Newell; The Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Karen Cox; Lay members Dame Ursula Brennan; Michael Crick; Dr Mark Downs; Mayuri Lakhani; Kim Lowe; Gabriel MacGregor; Dr Sam Parrett; Graham Razey; Thomas Hyner; Ben Bradley, Vice President Postgraduate Experience; Zaid Mahmood, President Kent Union; Josh Brooker, Student Representative; Alex Perkins, Non-Academic Staff Representative; Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura, Deputy Vice Chancellor Strategy and Performance (S&P); Professor Richard Reece, Deputy Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience (ESE); Dr Balihar Sanghera, Academic Staff Representative

**In attendance:** Chief Financial Officer (Jane Higham); Financial Sustainability Director (Peter Pentecost); Caroline Pover, EY-P; Sarah Seed, Neil Smyth and Kate Ciborowski, Mills & Reeve; Martin Atkinson, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development; Director of Governance and Assurance (Secretary to the Council) (Dr Sinéad Critchley), Assistant Director (Governance) (Sarah Megson) and Head of Secretariat (Lanre Folarin)

**Apologies for absence:** Lay members Dan Cook; Sarah Dance; Paul Pugh; Xian Chan; Chris Barron, Non-Academic Staff Representative; Professor Shane Weller, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation (R&I).

#### 5687 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

- a. The Chair welcomed the professional advisors, most of whom attended the meeting in person, and commended their support to the University. The Chair also explained the changes made to the agenda.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

The reporting order was changed slightly to allow the finance reports to be taken first to allow EY-P experts attend to other commitments.

- b. The ongoing suspension of Order 3 (xiv), i.e., suspension of the 7day timeline for circulation of papers was **noted**.
- c. Academic and professional services staff on the Council declared their interest in the Pension Update and this was **noted** by Council.

- d. Council **noted** and acknowledged the resignation of Dr. Will Norman, former Academic Staff Representative, due to pressures of other academic commitments and expressed gratitude for his contributions to the Council.

Through discussions, Council **agreed** that a more flexible workload allocation model should be instituted to support staff participation in Council affairs and afford them necessary flexibility to balance their different commitments, while prioritizing Council meetings/responsibilities.

- e. Council was reminded of their Trustee duties and the expectation that same would remain central to all deliberations during the meeting. Likewise, Council was reminded that though the journey to delivering the intended goal of refinancing and transformation may not be straight-forward, progress was being recorded.
- f. **Report of Council Redundancy Review Committee**  
The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented a Paper **C2023-045** on the deliberations of the Redundancy Review Committee on 5 December 2023, particularly as pertaining to the launch of the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) and this was **noted** by Council.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

**5688 MINUTES**

**Paper C2023-046**, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023 were approved.

**5689 MATTERS ARISING**

The Action Log, **Paper C2023-047** was noted and items 5679, 5680 and 5667 were closed as recommended.

**5690 VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Vice Chancellor presented updates on the following which were **noted** by Council.

**a. Internal Context**

- The University held its Carol Service on 11 December 2023 at Canterbury Cathedral and the service which featured the University Chamber Choir and Kent Gospel Choir was successful and well attended by staff and students.

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- There have been several activities within the university to commemorate the Christmas celebrations.
- The University (Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology) had obtained funding of £8.3 million under the Research Capacity Building: Expanding Excellence in England (E3) Fund.

### b. External Context

The University continues to support staff and students affected by the ongoing Palestine-Israel conflict.

### c. OfS Update

- The VC presented an update, Papers **C2023/048a**, **C2023/048b** and **C2023/048c** and these were noted by Council.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

## 5691 TRUSTEES' DUTIES

Council noted Paper **C2023-049**

**[minute confidential to Council]**

## 5692 LENDER UPDATE

The Chief Financial Officer and the Vice Chancellor updated Council on the status of negotiations.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

*Caroline Pover was excused from the meeting by 4pm.*

## 5693 REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### a. CFO's Report

**[minute confidential to Council]**

- b. Paper **C2023/050** and Paper **C2023/051** were noted.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

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**5694 Paper C2023/052** Kent 2030 Project Budget - for approval

**[minute confidential to Council]**

Council noted and **approved** the additional budget.

*Mayuri Lakhani was excused from the meeting at 3:00pm*

**5695 PENSION RESTRUCTURE/UPDATES**

Paper **C2023-056** was noted.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

**5696** Papers **C2023-058** and **C2023-059** were presented and noted by Council.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

**ITEMS BELOW THE LINE**

**5697 TRUSTEE'S DUTIES**

Council noted the legal advice on Trustees duties provided by Mills and Reeves as per previously circulated papers C2022/119, C2020-025 (uploaded to Diligent Reading Room) and the further advice on Directors' and Officers' insurance liability as per papers **C2023-060a** and **C2023-060b**.

Council noted and considered these advices throughout its deliberations of the agenda items.

**5698 MINUTES OF COUNCIL SUB GROUP MEETING OF 23 NOVEMBER 2023 - C2023-061**

Council **noted** the minutes of the Council sub-group.

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### 5699 RECOMMENDATIONS OF LAY NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE - C2023/062

Council **noted** and **approved** the recommendations of the Lay Nominations Committee regarding Council sub-committee membership as contained in Paper C2023-062.

### 5700 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, the Chair thanked all Council members for their time.

**[minute confidential to Council]**

### 5701 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Council noted the following dates for forthcoming meetings in the academic session 2023/24:

- Wednesday 17 January 2024, 10am-1pm
- Tuesday 30 January 2024, 2-5pm
- Week commencing 26 February 2024, date tbc (if needed)
- Friday, 22 March 2024, 2-5pm (Medway campus)
- Friday, 17 May 2024, 2-5pm
- Friday, 28 June 2024, 2-5pm

#### Notes

##### 1. Papers

Copies are available on the Council eboard portal (Diligent Boards) or on request from the Secretary. Approved Minutes and many of the papers are published on the University SharePoint site at <https://livekentac.sharepoint.com/sites/council>.

##### 2. Queries

Any queries should be addressed to Dr Sinead Critchley, Director of Governance and Assurance (Secretary to Council), (email: [S.Critchley-2002@kent.ac.uk](mailto:S.Critchley-2002@kent.ac.uk)).