

**Minutes currently confidential to Council**

**Minutes marked Commercial in confidence or confidential have been redacted from the web version**

**UNIVERSITY OF KENT**

**MEETING OF COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 June 2024**

**Hybrid Meeting at Darwin Boardroom, Canterbury Campus and via MS Teams**

**Present:** The Chair of Council, Mark Preston; The Deputy Chair of Council and Chair of Finance & Resources Committee, Andrew Newell; The Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura; Lay members: Dame Ursula Brennan; Michael Crick; Dr Mark Downs; Graham Razez OBE; Dan Cook; Mayuri Lakhani; Gabriel MacGregor; Paul Pugh; Thomas Hyner; Kim Lowe; Zaid Mahmood, Outgoing President Kent Union; Ben Bradley, Vice President Postgraduate Experience; Professor Richard Reece, Deputy Vice Chancellor Education and Student Experience (ESE); Professor Claire Peppiatt-Wildman, Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor Strategy and Performance (S&P); Dr Balihar Sanghera, Academic Staff Representative; Alex Perkins, Non-Academic Staff Representative.

**In attendance:** Chief Financial Officer (Jane Higham); Martin Atkinson (item 6); Medway Docking Station Project Team: Catherine Richardson, Caroline Dennis, Trevor Pereira and William Draffin (item 7); Frank Richardson, Director of Finance (item 9); Dr William Collier, Director of Education (item 11); Lulu Collins, Incoming President Kent Union; Sarah Megson, Assistant Director, Governance, Lanre Folarin, Head of Secretariat.

**Observer:** Dr Colette Fletcher (Advance HE).

**Apologies for absence:** Lay members: Dr Sam Parrett; Sarah Dance; Josh Brooker, Student Representative; Dr Sinéad Critchley, Director of Governance and Assurance (Secretary to the Council)

**5819 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION**

- a. The Chair welcomed members and acknowledged the attendance of Dr Colette Fletcher (Advance HE) who was observing the meeting in furtherance of the ongoing governance effectiveness review. The importance of the governance review including the need for members to participate was re-emphasized.
- b. The Chair noted apologies and summarized the key items for discussion and approval and acknowledged the end of the tenures of a few Lay Members as well as the Kent Union President. The Chair expressed unreserved appreciation to all of them for their contribution to the Council and the University at large.

It was also noted that the pre-meeting briefing on Kent Union's forward objectives and introduction of the new Kent Union President were beneficial for managing the transition of student representatives.

- c. Disclosure of Interest: The interest of all staff representatives and EG in item 4 (C2023/177 Appointment of VC) and that of Alex Perkins in item 12 (C2023-201 Update on Council Staff Vacancies) were noted. The interest of EG in item 17 (C2023-194 & C2023-195 Remuneration) was also noted.
- d. Council noted Paper **C2023-174**, OfS Correspondence on Reporting Requirements (F3 Notice OfS:0810287), for implementation by EG.

## 5820 MINUTES

Paper **C2023-175**, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2024 were approved, taking cognisance of a comment recommending the contextualization of para. 5796a (page 5, bullet point 5).

## 5821 MATTERS ARISING

- a. The Action Log, Paper **C2023-176** was **noted** and items 5617, 5796a and 5795 were closed as recommended. Items 5800, 5795 and 5796(a)(vi) were noted as agenda items 4, 7, and 15.
- b. Paper **C2023-177** Update on VC Appointment was **noted**. Council was informed that Senate had now selected the 4 staff representatives to join the Joint Committee which is expected to commence work as soon as a meeting date is agreed.
- c. Paper **C2023-178** Update on Governance Effectiveness Review was **noted**.
- d. Council **noted** Paper **C2023-179** Minutes of the meeting of Authorised Individuals regarding the Siemens Proposal held on 13 June 2024, pursuant to Council delegated authority. Council noted the **approval** of the transaction.

## 5822 ACTING VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Acting Vice Chancellor reported that:

- a. **External Updates:**
  - Considering the political climate in Kent, new MPs were being expected following the general election taking place on 4 July. As a result, EG was working with the communications team to engage with any new MP, invite them to visit the campus and showcase the University's economic value assessed at about £1bn.
  - There has been no substantive details from Labour regarding Higher Education funding only comments on the need for a review of the current structure. It was noted that the University is maintaining as much engagement

as possible to ensure it can play a role in delivering the expected new structure.

**b. Internal Updates:**

- The results of this years' finalist students have been released and graduations would hold in July. The new Chancellor would also be installed at a ceremony at Rochester and Council members were invited to join in.
- OfSted had been on campus for the week inspecting and meeting with key teams. **[minute confidential to Council]**.
- Recent funding successes of the University were reported although it was noted that they were yet to be formally announced.

*Action: Acting VC to share the report on the economic impact of the University with Council*

**5823 STRATEGIC PLAN AND CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

**a. Kent 2030 Update - C2023-180**

The Acting Vice Chancellor, Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (S&P) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented the update on Kent 2030.

Council was informed and **noted** that Kent 2030 had made significant progress since the start of the calendar year and was tracking as amber, despite significant sector challenges. **[minute confidential to Council]**.

The report provided updates on the overall programme activities and delivery status, the refreshed strategic narrative of Kent 2030 (highlighting the key stages of transformation and regeneration), funding initiatives, programme realisation and programme level risks and mitigations.

Through discussions, Council noted that:

- The TOM implementation timelines need to be clarified for staff to avoid them unnecessarily building up anxiety. EG had committed to continued engagement with staff through networks like the JSNCC and clearer timelines would be shared once known but this is not expected to impact professional services staff negatively.
- On the alignment of the TOM with the budget, the budget relies on the achievement of a reasonable level of cost savings from the K2030 workstreams and there is little flexibility. Also, things are continuously being reviewed in line with the sector financial challenges whilst managing the ancillary transitions.
- The Risk Assessment Report highlighted some staff challenges **[minute confidential to Council]**. A recommended approach being to determine the University's key priority and align staff with same to drive focused delivery.
- **[minute confidential to Council]**
- **[minute confidential to Council]**

- **[minute confidential to Council]**
- It was mentioned that there might be need to further explore more strategic international partnerships.
- It was concerning to note that a number of the deliverables were tracking red despite the existence of risk mitigants. On whether there was cause for concern in this regard, it was clarified that the risk schedule provided to Council covered only the main risks but the full risk schedule reflects the risk mitigants as having a positive trajectory and impact on the risks, with majority of the risks identified not being fundamental. It was stated that this would be better demonstrated in subsequent reports and a lot of programme level work was being undertaken. On the financial delivery of Kent 2030, it was explained that work was ongoing to develop new funding streams.
- Whilst managing the difficult decisions the University is having to make at this time, maintaining staff trust and collaboration remain crucial and would require more timely information sharing. Also, there should be continued effort to ensure that staff have a better understanding of the situation and how it is being tackled, noting that there are divergent views on which areas should benefit from the short-term financial measures.
- There is need to revisit what the long-term vision of financial sustainability would look like by 2026 and communicate practical expectations based on the 2 stage transformation plan, as well as any additional work to be undertaken.

**Actions:** *Explore International Partnerships  
(Acting VC to present this item in the Autumn)*

**b. Kent 2030 People - C2023-181**

The Chair of People Committee and the Director of Human Resources presented a report on people impact element of Kent 2030. Council was intimated of the steps being taken to monitor the people impact and associated risk of Kent 2030 with renewed understanding.

Council was informed that the report had first been presented to the People Committee which was assured by the depth of coverage (of the challenges and business risks vis a vis Lender obligations), improvement in communication, staff consultation and prioritisation of staff wellbeing. The report had also been presented to the Audit Committee. **[minute confidential to Council]**.

Through discussions, Council noted that:

- There was need to improve staff retention to avoid losing all the good talents and it could be worth introducing a staff reward system in addition to encouraging managers to appreciate and recognise staff. It was confirmed that the Staff Award Scheme will be revived and improved.
- Staff forums and the upcoming staff conference should be used to emphasise the positive messaging of Kent 2030.
- On the standardisation of the time academics may devote to research and scholarly activities, the dynamics of ongoing consultation and engagement was clarified, noting that this has proved a very challenging workstream to resolve. It was

recognised that research is very important and should be encouraged, however, it was also noted that finances influence much of what can be achieved.

## 5824 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) recommended the following papers for approval.

### a. **Medway Docking Station Business Case**

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (R&I) presented and Council received Paper **C2023-182** Medway Docking Station Business case.

Council was updated on the progress so far and informed that the project development phase was complete with Planning and Scheduled Monument Consent received, as well as the grant of £13.4M of funding by three main funders. Additionally, it was noted that there was a shortfall of about £650,000, excluding the cost of the tech fit out estimated at c.£3.5m. The steps taken to meet this referenced shortfall were explained, which include the submission of more funding bids. A detailed financial modelling of the operational income and expenditure sheet anticipated over a 5 year period was also provided.

Council was requested for Conditional Approval to:

- Appoint Baxall to deliver the works to the Police Section House and complete the redesign work on the studio building.
- Allow time to secure the additional £650K required from Wolfson Foundation and other sources.
- Agree to a further gateway in January 2025 to approve the appointment of Baxall to deliver the construction of the studio building.

And approval of the disbursement of the sum of c. £8.5m to progress the project.

Through discussions, Council noted that:

- **[minute confidential to Council]**

Following careful deliberations, Council **approved** the disbursement of the sum of c. £8.5m and **granted** Conditional Approval to progress the project as requested, subject to the conditions recommended by FRC at its meetings of 14 June 2024 and 20 June 2024.

**Action:** DVC (R&I) to *provide progress update by October.*  
*Re-present full business case by January 2025.*

### b. **Paris Centre - C2023-183**

The Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (S&P) presented paper **C2023-183** and Council **approved**.

**[minute confidential to Council].**

*Dan Cook and Zaid Mahmood left the meeting at 16:00hrs*

**5825 FINANCE PAPERS**

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) presented the following papers for approval.

**a. 2024/25 Budget and Forecasts – C2023-184**

**[minute confidential to Council].**

Through discussions, Council noted that:

- Providing a historical account of student numbers would make for a better understanding of the current state of affairs. Nonetheless, Council noted with appreciation, the transparency of the report.
- **[minute confidential to Council]**

*Ben Bradley and Lulu Collins left at 16:33hrs.*

**b. [minute confidential to Council]**

**i. [minute confidential to Council].**

**ii. [minute confidential to Council].**

**iii. [minutes confidential to Council]**

**iv. [minute confidential to Council]**

**a) [minute confidential to Council];**

**b) [minute confidential to Council].**

**Action: [minute confidential to Council]**

**5826 RECOMMENDATION FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE: ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022/23 AND EG MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented Paper **C2023-185a** Risk Assessment Validation Report for approval. **[minute confidential to Council].**

Through discussions, Council noted that:

- Work was still ongoing to establish an appropriate risk framework for the University which would effectively track both University-wide risk as well as Kent

2030 risks without conflicting. However, in the interim, Council acknowledged the report as having highlighted the expected areas of risk with no unexpected high risk items flagged.

- It was also noted that further work needs to be done to sufficiently outline the University's risk appetite.

Council **approved** the Risk Assessment Validation Report

**5827 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT**

The CFO presented and Council **noted** Paper **C2023/185b** and acknowledged the Additional background papers uploaded to the Diligent Reading Room (Risk Universe & Full Risk Assessment Report).

**5828 STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN 2024-2027**

The DVC (ESE) presented and Council noted and **approved** paper **C2023-189** taking cognisance of the trustees' responsibilities. It was confirmed that the student officers had been shown the plan.

**5829 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**a. Update on Council Staff Vacancies**

The Assistant Director of Governance presented and Council **noted** Paper **C2023-201**. It was confirmed that in view of the number of nominations received, elections would be conducted in order to fill the 3 staff vacancies (1 academic & research and 2 professional services). It was also noted that the Lay Nominations Committee would oversee the recruitment of new Lay Members to Council.

*Dan Cook rejoined the meeting at 17:00hrs*

**5830 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted Paper **C2023-187** and **approved** the following dates for forthcoming meetings in the academic session 2024/25 holding at the Darwin Boardroom unless otherwise Indicated:

- Friday 4 October 2024 (2-5pm)
- Tuesday 26 November 2024 (2-5pm)
- Friday 13 December 2024 (2-3:30pm) *on Teams for Accounts & Going Concern status only*
- Thursday 23 January 2025 (Strategy Day; 10am-4pm) at *Darwin Conference Suite*
- Friday 21 March 2025 (2-5pm)
- Friday 16 May 2025 (2-5pm)
- Friday 27 June 2025 (2-5pm)

**ITEMS BELOW THE LINE**

## REPORTS TO NOTE OR APPROVE

The following reports were presented to Council to note or approve.

### 5831 KENT UNION'S FINANCIAL POSITION

- a. Council **noted** paper **C2023-188**. Financial Statements from 1 August to 30 April 2024 as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee.
- b. Council noted and **approved** paper **C2023-189**. Budget for 2024/25 as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee.

### 5832 REPORT ON STUDENT RETENTION

Council noted paper **C2023-190** and acknowledged the additional reports on Student Recruitment and KPI League tables provided in the Diligent Reading Room.

### 5833 TRUSTEES' DUTIES: CONSIDERATION OF REASONABLE PROSPECT

Throughout the course of the meeting, Council **noted** Paper **C2023-191** [minute confidential to Council].

## MINUTES AND REPORTS OF COMMITTEES TO NOTE AND/OR TO APPROVE

### 5834 JOINT COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Council **approved** paper **C2023-192** Report of the meeting held on 29 May 2024 and **noted** paper **C2023-193** Minutes of the same meeting.

### 5835 MINUTES OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE OF 31 MAY 2024

Council noted papers **C2023-194** and **C2023-195**.

### 5836 MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE COMMITTEE MEETING OF 31 MAY 2024

Council noted Paper **C2023-196**.

### 5837 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING OF 11 JUNE 2024

Council noted Paper **C2023-197**.

### 5838 REPORT OF THE SENATE MEETING OF 12 JUNE 2024

Council noted Paper **C2023-198**.

### 5839 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 14 JUNE 2024 AND EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF 20 JUNE 2024

Council noted Papers **C2023-199** and **C2023-199a**.

### 5840 Council **noted** the Forward Programme 2024/25, Paper **C2023-200**.

**Notes**

**1. Papers**

Copies are available on the Council e-board 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 Lanre Folarin, (Deputy Secretary to Council), (email: [L.Folarin@kent.ac.uk](mailto:L.Folarin@kent.ac.uk)).

CONFIDENTIAL