



## University Council

**Paper no:** 2023-04-20-03

**Paper title:** Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 November 2022 by videoconference

**Present:**

Ferguson, Iain (Chair)	Holford, Karen
Carter, Caroline	Hynes, Alice
Chen Davison, Lesley	Rowlands, Simon
Day, Colin	Saggu, Jaz
Greening, Connie	Stokes, Claire
Hart, Ian	Wainwright, James
Hill, James ( <i>via telephone</i> )	Watkins, Peter
Hubble, Jane	

**Apologies:** Atkinson, Helen

**Attending:**

- Aspinall, Philip, Chief Operating Officer
- Douglas, Gregor, University Secretary
- Ellis, Gareth, Energy & Environment Manager (*for item 6, Appendix D*)
- Morris, Julie, Governance Officer
- Nickson, Alicen, Director of Research & Innovation (*for item 7c*)
- Odedra, Hiran, EDI Manager (*for item 6, Appendix A*)
- Perkins, Helen, Director of HR (*for items 6, Appendix A, B and C*)
- Pollard, Simon, Chair of CU H&S Committee (*for item 4*)
- Radcliffe, Fran, Head of Student Support and Wellbeing (*for item 7c*)
- Sibbald, Ian, Director of Finance (*for item 6, Appendix C*)
- Tyrrel, Sean, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education (*for item 7c*)

### 1. Introduction

The Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

### 2. Disclosure of interest

There were no disclosures recorded.

### 3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

**Received:** Paper 2022-11-25-03 being the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2022.

**Resolved:** Subject to minor correction as follows, the minutes were approved:

"6.1 Quarterly report from the Board of Energy and Environment Council noted the BEE report and welcomed the energy campaign. ~~Council would be interested to see what the University was doing in terms of energy security.~~ Given continuing geopolitical risks to energy supplies, Council would welcome an update on early steps to reduce wastage and enhance energy security."

## **Matters arising**

There was one matter arising relating to the airport incident. [Minute 4(a) refers].

### **4. Health & Safety (H&S) update**

*Simon Pollard joined for this item*

Received: Oral report from the Chair of Cranfield University H&S Committee.

Noted: The Council lead on H&S introduced this item and reported that the Chair of the Cranfield H&S Committee had briefed her ahead of Council meeting. The Chair of the H&S Committee was invited to update Council members on the following items:

- (a) *Air Accident reporting* – since the AAIB (Air Accidents Investigation Board) report was brought to the attention of Council in October 2022, the Airport Accountable Manager, the Director of Finance, and the Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor (CEVC) had undertaken a review of the internal communication process and Council could be assured that in the event of any future incidents, the CEVC would be notified immediately, and Council members would be alerted as appropriate.
- (b) *Mandatory qualifications for H&S* – Council had enquired about the mandatory qualifications for staff who were accountable or who had H&S roles. The Chair of H&S Committee reported that a comprehensive list was being prepared and this would be reported to Council in the next quarterly report.
- (c) *Hydrogen* – the Hydrogen Safety Group had met to consider the developing inventory of hydrogen activities at Cranfield. Dialogue around the necessary uplift in safety culture, regulatory compliance, on the ground vigilance and impact on resources was ongoing. The final inventory of activities would require University Executive approval; legislative requirements and related impacts on the University would be detailed in the next quarterly report to Council.
- (d) *Head of Health & Safety* – The Head of H&S, Paul Bradley, was leaving Cranfield at the end of year to take up a role at Oxford Brookes. The University had taken the opportunity to review the competencies required for the role at Cranfield and would be launching a recruitment campaign via direct advertising and appropriate agencies.

Resolved: Council thanked the Chair of the H&S Committee for his oral report.

*Simon Pollard withdrew from the meeting.*

### **5. Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor's Report**

Received: Paper 2022-11-25-05 setting out the Chief Executive's report covering the period October to November 2022.

Noted: The report was taken as read. The CEVC provided additional commentary on:

- (a) *Ofsted* – whilst the outcome of the monitoring visit was embargoed until publication on the Ofsted website, Cranfield was delighted to report that the quality of its apprenticeship provision had made ‘significant progress’ in two of the themes reviewed, and ‘reasonable’ on the third theme. The CEVC thanked the PVC-Education and colleagues for the tremendous amount of preparatory work undertaken over previous months and for leading the University through a successful inspection visit. Further thanks were extended to Council member Alice Hynes who met with the Ofsted inspectors as part of the monitoring visit.
- (b) *School of Management* – congratulations to David Oglethorpe and colleagues for the success of the Executive MBA programme which had been placed in the top 10 of this year’s Financial Times EMBA rankings; and for the excellence award received for the quality and standard of its apprenticeship provision.
- (c) *Student numbers* – registrations were slightly behind compared to this time in the previous year but there was cautious optimism that the next intake, in January 2023, would bring the student numbers slightly ahead of target. In terms of student fee income, two of the schools were on target.
- (d) *UCU Strike action* – Cranfield would be unlikely to be affected to the same extent as other institutions across the sector. Representatives from each of the Schools, MK:U, the Directors of Education and the Student Academic Support teams had consulted on the scale of potential disruption and contingency actions were in hand. The overall sense was that there would be no impact on Cranfield’s teaching.
- (e) *International students and the UK economy (para 1.4)* – UUK’s response to government on international students coming to the UK prompted discussion on the Cranfield international student community. It was noted that international student numbers varied year on year and whilst it was not considered to be a huge risk it had been included on the risk register.

Resolved: Council thanked the CEVC for her report.

## 6. Report from University Executive

Received: Paper 2022-11-25-06 being a report from University Executive

Noted: 6.1 The CEVC presented the University Executive report.

- (a) An erratum to the final sentence of paragraph 7 was noted: the voluntary annual subscription to Cara should have read ‘£2000’, not £2000k.
- (b) Council commented that paragraph 5 framed the response to the Civitas report as a media management issue. The CEVC reassured members that Cranfield remained heavily focused on global security issues and would continue to

protect its assets and people. While the political context was fluid, Cranfield aimed to work closely with the UK HE sector.

- (c) Commenting on Cranfield's fee setting strategy (paragraph 4), Council encouraged the University to review its fees to at least keep pace with those of its competitors. The CEVC reported that the University Executive had increased its fees substantially last year and had already agreed to take a different approach to setting fees from 24/25.
- (d) In discussion, Council noted that the OfS conditions of registration were becoming increasingly more demanding. The CEVC commented that although the sector was feeling the impact, it was lobbying through UUK.

6.2 Received: Appendix A – EDI Annual Report  
*Helen Perkins and Hiran Odedra joined Council for this item.*

- Noted:
- (a) The Director of HR introduced this item by thanking the EDI Manager for her dedication and contribution to Cranfield over sixteen years. Council noted that the EDI Manager would be leaving the University at the end of December 2022 to take up a new role at Mercedes F1.
  - (b) The EDI Manager provided additional commentary on the key highlights and challenges during the reporting period as set out in the paper. Of note was the broader engagement with the staff networks enabling positive input to the development of family-friendly policies and management; raising awareness of and supporting local and national campaigns encouraging staff engagement in EDI activities. Cranfield's recruitment conversion rates from 'application to offer' were much lower for ethnic minority applicants compared to white applicants.
  - (c) In discussion, the EDI Manager responded to queries on recruitment and retention overall. In terms of the report, Council suggested it might be helpful to receive data sets similar to those embedded in the Academic Report; a breakdown of gender balance by School would indicate if there were subject/School specific issues with recruitment.
  - (d) It was further noted that the EDI Strategy was under review and would be presented to Council in 2023. In the meantime, actions would be ongoing to continue to enhance the University's EDI agenda.

Resolved: Council approved the annual EDI report for publication and thanked the EDI Manager for her report and wished her success in her new role.

*Hiran Odedra withdrew from the meeting; James Hill left the meeting.*

6.3 Received: Appendix B – Amendments to Ordinances  
Noted: The paper set out proposals to amend Ordinance 3.3 regarding membership of the Remuneration Committee; and to Ordinances 22.2 and 22.3 to reflect reflect requirements of the Industry Personnel Security Assurance framework (IPSA).

Resolved: Council approved the amendments to Ordinance 3.3, 22.2 and 22.3 respectively and suggested adding a link to IPSA and circulating an appropriate communication to staff to raise awareness.

6.4 Received: Appendix C – Prevent Duty Annual Report (and Safeguarding)

*Fran Radcliffe joined Council for this item*

Noted: (a) The Prevent / Safeguarding Lead presented the annual report which provided assurance to Council that the University was meeting its statutory obligations with regard to its Prevent Duty. This year the report had been retitled and included information on safeguarding, reflecting developments in the operating environment and regulatory interest.

(b) During the reporting period one student case had been escalated to the Prevent Lead for external referral. The external agencies deemed there to be no issues requiring referral to the government's Channel programme.

(c) The Head of Student Support and Wellbeing reported that the HE sector had seen a spike in the number of safeguarding matters being reported. Cranfield had seen a higher number of students accessing a range of support, including mental health and wellbeing services. In discussion, it was noted that the increase in cases could be symptomatic of the global pandemic, and potentially as a result of students being encouraged to seek support at an earlier stage.

Resolved: Council authorised the signing of the declaration to OfS as set out in the paper. The declaration

would be submitted along with the data return to OfS.

*Helen and Fran withdrew from the meeting*

6.4 Received: Appendix D – Annual Environment Report  
*Gareth Ellis joined Council for this item*

Noted: (a) The Energy and Environment Manager presented the annual report and summarised the University's progress against the environmental targets as set by Council 2020.

(b) Council suggested that, whilst the energy and water consumption trends were encouraging, it would be interesting to know what was needed to effect a step-change. In discussion, it was noted that there were several projects in the pipeline which would enable efficiencies across the campus, and that funding had been obtained to enable these projects to proceed. However, in general, resources had to be prioritised accordingly. In terms of driving behavioural changes, several campaigns had been led by the energy and environment team throughout the year culminating in a week of 'green' activities which included workshops focused on energy savings, the carbon footprint and the sustainable development goals. The number of Energy champions now on board had shown commitment to work together on Cranfield's sustainable future.

(c) The Energy and Environment Manager confirmed that although Cranfield was not yet certified, it was shadowing and was aligned with the Science Based Targets.

Resolved: Council thanked the Energy and Environment Committee (formerly the Board for Energy and Environment) for their report.

*Gareth withdrew from the meeting*

## **7. Reports from Council Committees**

### **7.1 Finance**

*Ian Sibbald joined Council for this item*

#### **7.1.1 Statutory Accounts to 31 July 2022**

Received: Paper 2022-11-25-07a being the statutory accounts to 31 July 2022

Noted: (a) The Director of Finance reported that, since the Council meeting in October 2022, discussions between the University, PwC, LGPS, actuaries and lawyers had been ongoing. The latest update from PwC had been that they believed they had identified a process through which they could obtain sufficient comfort to issue a clean audit. However, this would only be confirmed once detailed testing had been performed on the latest data

which had been made available to them from the actuaries. Three HE institutions had been tested thus far and Cranfield was next on the schedule. The Director of Finance anticipated a decision to be announced early in the New Year.

- (b) The Director of Finance presented three possible scenarios to enable completion and sign off of the group financial accounts:
- i) if the audit concluded with no adjustments and a clean audit report, the accounts could be signed;
  - ii) if the audit concluded with no adjustments to the numbers, but with additional wording on pensions and a clean audit report, the accounts could be signed, subject to the Chairs of Finance Committee and Audit Committee being satisfied with the final wording; and
  - iii) if the audit concluded with a change to the LGPS numbers and a clean audit report, or the audit concluded with a qualified audit report, the University would bring the financial statements back to Council for approval.
- (c) The Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer had briefed the bond holders on the situation and understood that there would be no immediate reaction. In discussion it had transpired that the bond holders were aware of similar situations elsewhere.

Resolved: Recognising that this had been a challenging time, Council thanked the Director of Finance for his persistence in seeking a resolution to the matter. Council noted that Audit Committee would follow up on lessons learned with the external auditors in the New Year.

#### 7.1.2 Management Accounts to 31 July 2022

Received: Paper 2022-11-25-07b being the management accounts to 31 July 2022

Noted: The Director of Finance reported that the Q1 statistics were being collated. It was anticipated that income would be slightly worse than budget but hopefully still in a positive position. There remained concern around the cost of utilities and inflationary pressures.

Resolved: Council thanked the Director of Finance for his report and looked forward to receiving the high level headlines at the briefing scheduled in February 2023.

*Ian withdrew from the meeting*

## 7.2 Audit

### 7.2.1 Annual academic and skills report to Council 2021-2022

*Sean Tyrrel and Alicen Nickson joined for this item*

Received: Paper 2022-11-25-07b setting out the annual academic assurance report.

Noted: (a) The Chair of Audit Committee reported that Audit Committee had received the draft report at its meeting in October 2022. The report had been developed year-on-year and included information on quality and standards, student experience and outcomes, academic risks, and action plans. 'Skills' had been added to the report title, recognising the material on Cranfield's apprenticeship provision. Audit Committee commended the report for submission to Council.

(b) The PVC-Education and the Director of Research & Innovation presented the report to Council, summarising areas of interest and responding to questions:

- *Ofsted monitoring visit* – academic and professional services colleagues across the University had made significant contributions towards Ofsted preparedness. The inspection had taken place, with positive results. University Executive would receive a full de-brief early in 2023 which would inform planning for the full monitoring visit in 18 to 24 months time;
- *Academic misconduct* – there had been a significant increase in the number of academic misconduct cases, as was the case across the sector, in the context of increases in illegal essay-mill organisations. Each one had been investigated in accordance with the University's regulations and appropriate penalties imposed. Education Committee would be conducting a full and detailed review of the cases with a view to enhancing regulation and student communications as appropriate;
- *Bullying and harassment* – the number of cases reported was increasing year on year. It was noted that Council wished to receive commentary on this in future reports;
- *Research culture* – the Postgraduate Research Education Survey (PRES) results in this area remained low which was disappointing given the broad range of engagement, networking, and training opportunities available to researchers. The Research and Innovation Office would address research culture in consultation with the Cranfield Students' Association.
- *Action Plan 2022-23* – the timelines for completion on most actions had been set as July 2023, ie. the end of the academic year. Many of the actions would include reviews to process, recommended changes, and then time to embed.

Resolved: Council endorsed the Annual Academic and Skills Report for publication and thanked the PVC-Education and the Director of Research & Innovation for their contribution.

*Sean and Alicen withdrew from the meeting*

#### 7.2.2 Audit Committee Annual Report to Council

Received: Paper 2022-11-25-07d being the Annual Report from Audit Committee 2021-2022.

*[Post meeting note: The paper refers to the report as being a draft; this was an error and will be corrected before submission to the OfS]*

Noted: The Chair of Audit Committee presented the annual report from Audit Committee, noting the earlier discussion on the financial statements.

Resolved: Council approved the annual report subject to any amendments being required arising from final discussion of the financial statements. Any amendments to the Audit Report would be approved by the Chairs of Audit Committee and Finance Committee.

### 7.3 **Remuneration Committee**

Received: Oral report from the Chair of Remuneration Committee

Noted: The Chair of Remuneration Committee summarised the Committee's activities over the calendar year, noting that three meetings had been held and each had been supported by the Director of Human Resources. Whilst the Committee's focus was on remuneration, it had been useful to receive briefings on the wider people issues facing the HE sector, other sectors and locally.

Resolved: Council thanked the Chair of Remuneration Committee.

## 9. **Any other business**

9.1 Council was due to meet for a briefing in February 2023. The Pro-Chancellor would be unable to attend but the Chief Executive and Vice-Chancellor would take the lead.

9.2 Council visits – dates for visits to MK:U, Shrivenham and COTEC had been scheduled. Invitations would be circulated to all members shortly.

Julie Morris  
Governance Officer  
16 December 2022