MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL COUNCIL **MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ON 9 FEBRUARY 2021**	

Present:	Mrs Carmel Booth, President (in the Chair); Dr Paul Johnson, Vice-President; Professor Dame Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor; Professor Gavin Brown, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education; Professor Anthony Hollander, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact; Dr Carol Costello, Director of People and Services; Mr Adnan Hussain, President of the Guild of Students; Ms Cilla Ankrah-Lucas; Ms Fiona Cullen; Mr Ed Fishwick; Dr Kashmir Gill; Ms Vanessa Griffiths; Mr Norman Molyneux; Dr Roger Platt; Mr Hans van Mourik Broekman; Dr Diana Walford; Professor Julia Balogun; Professor Thomas Teubner; and Mr Kieran O'Sullivan.
Apologies:	Mrs Helen Miller; and Professor Hazel Scott.
In Attendance:	Ms Nicola Davies, Director of Finance; Mr Kevan Ryan, Clerk to Council; and Mrs Emma Leonard, Governance Manager, Secretary to Council.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

COMMITTEE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

1. **Disclosures of Interest**

   Members were asked to disclose any interest that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item on the agenda. Disclosures are noted under relevant minute headings.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

2.1 <u>Unreserved Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 November 2020</u>

   AGREED:

   i.   The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020 should be approved as an accurate record.

2.2 <u>Matters Arising on the Minutes</u>

2.2.1 *Prevent (Minute 15 Refers)*

   REPORTED:

   i.   Discussions were taking place between the Director of Student Administration and Support and Organisational Development colleagues regarding a way forward for enhancing Prevent training provision and a further update would be provided in due course.

3.   **Report on Action Taken by the President**

RECEIVED:

i.   A report on action taken by the President on Council's behalf since the last business meeting.

REPORTED:

ii.   The President had taken Chair's action as follows:

Investment of University Cash Balances (approved 1.12.20)
Redacted due to commercial interest.

Council Appointments to Committees (approved 1.12.20)
To approve on behalf of the Nominations Committee and Council the appointment of Dr Kashmir Gill as a member of the Enterprise Board for the period from 1 December 2020 to 31 July 2023.

Term-time Accommodation Rebate
To approve a proposal that students should be offered a rebate on term-time accommodation (subject to certain criteria), as many would be away from halls for an extended period in December and January. This had then been extended to 14 February 2021 in line with government guidance about remote learning.

ULPF Consultation with the University on Investment Matters (approved 15.1.21)
To approve the recommendation of the Planning and Resources Committee to approve the proposal from the ULPF Trustee Board to allocate 5% of the ULPF equity portfolio away from global equities to infrastructure.

Update to Appendix E of the Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline (approved 27 January 2021)
To approve the recommendation made via Chair's action on behalf of Senate to agree that Appendix E of the Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline should be updated to reflect the current role titles within the University and allow for role holders with specified responsibilities to nominate someone else to undertake the role where appropriate (providing increased capacity). The point at which Heads of Department would be notified of disciplinary action within accommodation had been moved to Stage One. (NB there was already a separate process in place for students on clinical programmes.) These were minor amendments to ensure the procedure remained fit for purpose.

AGREED:

iii.   The action taken by the President on Council's behalf as outlined in 3ii above should be endorsed.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL/DISCUSSION/NOTE

4.   President's Communications

RECEIVED:

i.   An oral report from the President of Council.

REPORTED:

ii.   Halpin had recently been appointed to undertake an external effectiveness review of Council. A Steering Group comprising the President of Council, the Clerk to Council, the Secretary to Council, Dr Roger Platt and the President of the Liverpool Guild of Students would oversee the process from a University perspective. The review would involve a desk based review of documentation, a questionnaire, interviews, and observations of key Committee meetings. It was hoped that the review would be concluded by the summer.

iii.   As agreed following the review of the Strategic Risk Register at the Council Away Day held in October 2020, a strategic risk had now been developed around the University's ability to deliver Strategy 2026 given the high demand and tempo of changes currently being experienced as a consequence of the pandemic. The next formal review of Strategic Risk would be undertaken by Council at its meeting in May 2021.

iv.   Preparations were underway for Council's Away Day scheduled for Tuesday 13 April 2021. The session would be future-focussed and interactive.

v.   Feedback on the move to SharePoint for the sharing of Council documentation was welcome and should be provided to the Secretary in the first instance.

5.   Vice-Chancellor's Communications

5.1   <u>Oral Report</u>

RECEIVED:

i.   An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor.

REPORTED:

ii.   The UK government had decided to opt out of Erasmus as part of the Brexit deal but a new UK scheme, the Turing Scheme, would be introduced which would enable students to study and work abroad from September 2021. Although the loss of Erasmus was regretted, the flexibility in the new Scheme would give many more students the opportunity to participate, particularly mature learners, and those with part-time jobs or caring responsibilities, and it would also provide funding for study in many countries beyond Europe, which previously was only possible for those students who could fund it themselves. The University was preparing to bid to the Turing Scheme and investigating how it would operate and what it would cover with current partners.

5.2 <u>Summary of External Engagements</u>

REPORTED:

i. Since the last meeting of Council, the Vice-Chancellor had met with, hosted or attended meetings regarding the following:

2 December	APPUG Council and Meeting: Reform of the University Admissions System
3 December	AHRC Council
4 December	Russell Group Formal Board (with Ben Elger, OIA, and Minister Donelan)
7 December	British Council Taiwan-UK Virtual Higher Education Delegation
10 December	Coronavirus Update with UUK
14 December	UUK USS Valuation VC Discussion
15 December	Liverpool Responds – Brexit Event
16 December	'Reflecting on 2020' Psychology Event
17 December	UUK Advisory Group on Development of Charter for Portfolio Review
	UUK International/British Council Quarterly Meeting
18 December	Russell Group VC Update
	LCR Combined Authority Meeting
13 January	GSCU Leadership Advisory Board
19 January	XJTLU-UoL Board
	Global Burden of Animal Diseases Webinar
20 January	UGA Conference
21 January	LCR LEP Board
	LCC Education Improvement Board
22 January	Coronavirus Update with UUK
	Russell Group VC Update
	LCR Combined Authority Meeting
26 January	UUK USS Valuation VC Discussion
28 January	Irish Universities Association National Consent Framework
29 January	EUA Council
	UUK Board
2 February	WonkHE Roundtable
3 February	China Embassy – UK Education New Year Reception
4 February	BC/UUKi India-UK Joint Taskforce on Education Co-operation
5 February	Russell Group Board.

6. **Liverpool Guild of Students Update**

RECEIVED:

i. An oral update from the President of the Liverpool Guild of Students.

REPORTED:

ii. Society activity and membership numbers remained impressively strong. Society leaders had recently received bystander intervention training.

iii. A quiet online study space via Zoom had been launched.

iv.   Nominations were now open for the 2021 Guild Officer elections.

v.   Progress was being made with the work on renaming the former Gladstone Hall of Residence and an exciting way of involving both students and staff in the process was being developed.

vi.   The Guild had joined with other students unions to write to MPs etc. regarding their concerns around the Government's lack of support for institutions and students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.   Quarter 1 Performance Report

[The Interim Director of Strategic Planning, Mr Phil Hopwood, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i.   A report providing details of performance during Quarter 1 against relevant KPIs.

REPORTED:

ii.   Trends and performance against KPIs were shown in the new format of a scorecard which had been updated following comments received during the last committee cycle. As the first report in the dashboard style format and against the revised success measures from the refreshed Strategy 2026, it should be noted that some indicators within the scorecard were in a period of baseline setting. For future reporting, full commentary would accompany the scorecard focussing both on the indicators for which new data was generated within the quarter and providing updates against other indicators where activities or external factors assure or impact on end of year performance and/or strategy delivery. External comparators would be provided where these were available on a timely basis.

iii.   The greatest challenge was seen in the financial KPIs due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, predominantly on international tuition fee income. It was expected that this challenge and uncertainty in the level of financial pressure would continue for the short to medium term. Beyond the finances, the lagged nature of some of the KPIs meant that the possible impact on other metrics, such as student satisfaction, had yet to flow through. Anticipating these downstream impacts, actions to mitigate the identified threats to wider performance had been implemented and additional careful monitoring would continue to be reported.

iv.   Of particular note in the Environment Scan was the UUK report recommending that offers are made to students after they receive their grades. This followed UCAS proposals on the recruitment process. Also, following the removal of A Level exams in Wales in summer 2021, there was a question regarding what would happen with English A Levels.

AGREED:

v.   The Quarter 1 Performance Report should be approved, noting that the production of a scorecard was a positive step providing useful insight that would stimulate debate and action, and that further improvements would continue to be made for future reporting.

vi.   Further consideration should be given to the optimum level of detail for Council to receive regarding student recruitment and admissions.

8.   2020/21 Financial Forecast 1

[The Assistant Director of Finance, Mr Paul Fallon, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i.   The 2020/21 Financial Forecast 1 report setting out the likely year end position for the University for the current financial year.

REPORTED:

Paragraphs ii – vii redacted due to commercial interest.

NOTED:

viii.   Forecast 2 was currently being prepared, with improvements on Forecast 1 expected.

AGREED:

ix.   The 2020/21 Financial Forecast 1 Report should be approved.

9.   Five Year Plan for Submission to the OfS

[The Assistant Director of Finance, Mr Paul Fallon, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i.   A copy of the University's updated five year plan, which presented an internal format five year plan and commentary, commentary for submission to the OfS in the OfS format, and the financial tables for submission to the OfS in the OfS format.

REPORTED:

ii.   The internal five year plan matched the OfS submission in terms of underlying numbers and assumptions, but because the OfS format was prescriptive and not very user-friendly an internal reporting format was used to enable review and approval.

iii.   Although four scenarios had been modelled, as 2020/21 had progressed it had become increasingly apparent that the realistic scenario (which had been refined over recent months) was appropriate for submission. The pessimistic and worst-case scenarios were considered increasingly unlikely given a vaccination programme was now underway and a faster recovery looked more likely.

iv.   The plan for submission included 2019/20 actuals and 2020/21 Forecast 1 position, with the outer years being the realistic scenario.

Paragraphs v – vii redacted due to commercial interest.

viii. The University's cash position remained above the treasury minimum of £60m, and no covenants would be breached during the period.

ix. There was a risk to 2020/21 in terms of accommodation fee income following the recent lockdown, as some students may choose to break their contracts and not return, and increased pressure would be faced to extend the refund period.

NOTED:

x. The five year plan assumed that overseas numbers stabilise, reflecting portfolio development, investment in the international recruitment team, and partnerships with agents.

xi. The new Liverpool Online partnership with Kaplan Open Learning presented exciting opportunities for growth.

AGREED:

xii. The five year plan and realistic scenario should be approved for submission to the Office for Students.

10. **Liverpool University Press Annual Report 2020**

[The Chief Executive of the Liverpool University Press, Mr Anthony Cond, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i. The Annual Report of the Liverpool University Press (LUP) for 2020.

REPORTED:

ii. Over the past 12 months, LUP had faced several challenges, including: the disruption to supply and distribution chains for print; the logistical and wellbeing challenges of a move to all staff working from home; the pressures on authors that delayed proofs and impacted research and writing; the rapid acceleration of a switch to digital; and budgetary upheaval for the core university library market. However, the report was a testament to the creativity, agility and resilience of the Team.

iii. This year LUP had broken £2.5 million turnover for the first time in its history. It had published more titles than ever before: 163 new books and 87 journal issues.

iv. LUP had progressed within the Association of University Presses (AUPresses) benchmarking structure from Group 2 to Group 3, with peers now including New York University, Michigan, Cornell and Stanford (Group 1 being the smallest, with a very small number in Group 4, the largest). The average institutional support provided to an AUPresses Group 3 category press during the year was $813,539; meanwhile, LUP had operated without any subsidy and paid a commercial rent to the University.

v. Despite considerable disruption, LUP had made excellent progress on a strategic plan written immediately before the pandemic. Although, perhaps inevitably, the

pandemic arising in a year of exceptional investment had created the first financial loss in many years, it had also highlighted that LUP had the right foundations, the right strategy and the right team to tackle a difficult few years ahead.

AGREED:

vi.   The LUP Team, under Mr Cond's excellent leadership, should be congratulated on the ongoing success of this fantastic asset to the University.

11.   Statutory Pay Gap Report 2020

[The Director of Human Resources, Mr Keith Watkinson, and the Diversity and Equality Officer, Mr Darren Mooney, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i.   The latest Statutory Pay Gap Report, together with a presentation from the Director of Human Resources and Diversity and Equality Officer summarising the key findings of the report.

REPORTED:

ii.   The Statutory Pay Gap Report outlined the results of the University's Gender, Ethnicity, People of Colour, Disability, and Sexuality Pay Gap calculations based on the March 2020 snapshot.

iii.   The key results were as follows:

<u>Gender Pay Gap</u>

- Mean: 21.17% (↓0.84)
- Mean Bonus: 68.4% (↓10.7)
- Median: 16.18% (↑0.69)
- Median Bonus: 82.9% (↔)

<u>Other Pay Gaps</u>

- BAME Mean: -13.2% (↑0.83)
- POC Mean: -2.3% (↑6.54)
- Disability Mean: 15% (↑3.8)
- LGB+ Mean: 6.6% (↑1.14)
- BAME Median: -14.6% (↑2.23)
- POC Median: -4.9% (↑4.36)
- Disability Median: 9.7% (↑0.1)
- LGB+ Median: 3.2% (↑0.34)

iv.   The gender bonus gap in favour of male staff related to Clinical Excellence Awards rather than other bonus pay offered by the University. The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences had made changes to the University processes here, increasing transparency and support and encouraging more women to be put forward to receive these. Owing to COVID-19, the 2020 Clinical Excellence Award round had been cancelled, so further improvements in reducing the bonus gap were anticipated in future years, although there was further work to be done nationally in this area. The University's own annual review process for 2020 had also been cancelled.

v.   The results of the gender pay gap would be publicly published on the University website and submitted to a Government Portal in line with statutory requirements.

AGREED:

vi.   The Statutory Pay Gap Report 2020 should be approved.

12.   Diversity and Equality Annual Report 2019/20

[The Director of Human Resources, Mr Keith Watkinson, and the Diversity and Equality Officer, Mr Darren Mooney, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i.   The Diversity and Equality Annual Report 2019/20, together with a presentation from the Director of Human Resources and Diversity and Equality Officer summarising the key findings of the report.

REPORTED:

ii.   The Annual Diversity and Equality Report provided an overview of key activities, outcomes, and KPIs relating to the priority areas set out in the Equality Framework and Action Plan and the University's work to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty.

iii.   Feedback received from committees last year had been taken into account and the report was now more streamlined, with further work to be undertaken particularly around performance indicators. It included sections on: response to COVID-19; Bullying and Harassment; Racism in HE; Achieving Gender Equality; Disability and the Physical Estate; Researcher Development; Staff Profile; Staff Engagement; Student Access and Participation; Student Recruitment; and Staff and Student KPIs. The report was complemented by the Annual Diversity and Equality Infographics Report and the Annual Dignity at Work and Study Report. The report would be publicly published on the University's website to meet reporting obligations.

iv.   In response to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report 'Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged', and the global Black Lives Matter movement the University had taken the following steps:

- Signed the joint National Union of Students and Universities UK Closing the Gap pledge on degree attainment differentials
- Committed to join the AdvanceHE Race Equality Charter in early 2021
- Committed to rename Gladstone Hall of Residence due to the Gladstone family's links to slavery
- Adopted and published a Race Equality and Anti-Racism Action Plan
- Committed to introduce a Report and Support reporting tool for the 2020/21 academic year.

v.   Work had continued throughout 2019/20 on the implementation of the Athena SWAN Charter. AdvanceHE had changed the Athena SWAN institutional award length from four years to five years and, with the disruption caused by COVID-19, the decision had been taken to delay the institutional award renewal until November 2021.

vi.   Significant activity had taken place during the reporting period to enhance the accessibility of the campus. An Inclusive Design Guide had been developed by a National Register of Access Consultant on behalf of the University to ensure best practice and consistency on accessibility building standards applied to all project work and a new four year accessibility improvement strategy had been adopted.

vii.   In June 2020, the University had retained its HR Excellence in Research Award, recognising its commitment to the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Work had also begun on the Prosper Project, a £4.4m externally funded collaborative research project to enhance the career development of post-doctoral staff.

viii.   While recognising the deeply challenging educational context for schools and colleges caused by COVID-19, the University had continued to deliver outreach and engagement activities for under-represented student groups. Using digital platforms, projects such as Fast Trackers, Liverpool Scholars and Looked After Children mentoring had all been adapted, with 2020 being a record year of entry.

ix.   A review was underway around the University's governance arrangements in relation to reporting on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion activity.

AGREED:

x.   The Diversity and Equality Annual Report 2019/20 should be approved.

13.   Project RISE – Report of Phase 1

[The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Georgina Endfield, and the Director of Research, Partnerships and Innovation, Ms Sarah Jackson, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i.   A report on the 'Listening' phase of Project RISE.

REPORTED:

ii.   In September 2020, the University had launched Project RISE (Research in an Inclusive and Sustainable Environment) to hold a conversation to better understand how the response to changes in the research environment stimulated and accelerated by COVID-19 could be co-created. Over 830 colleagues had participated in the 'Listening' phase, including academics, Professional Services and the University Staff Networks.

iii.   Colleagues had been impacted by COVID-19 in a range of different ways:

- Increased parental and caring responsibilities, particularly home schooling, which frequently had a gendered impact
- Increased time spent on development of hybrid teaching, recognised as a crucial priority, but this had impacted on overall time for research
- Impact on research process – including inability to undertake international fieldwork, shutdown of large national facilities, lack of face-to-face contact with research participants

- Specific impact on PhD students, particularly for those early in their programme, limited opportunities for cohort building and impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

These impacts were combining to reduce overall research activity which would affect research performance in the coming years. This included research grant application rates where the total number of applications submitted during 2020 had seen a very minor increase on 2019 (1.7%) and an increase (7.1%) in total value of applications. However, this masked a marked gender gap – applications from male colleagues in 2020 had increased by 11.6% compared to 2019, while those submitted by women had decreased by 19.1% over the same period.

iv. Proposed short-term responses included:

- Update to the PDR process to capture effects of COVID-19 on recent performance as context for the longer-term review of progress against policy principles
- Further communication on longer-term intentions on flexible/hybrid working to aid planning and ease stress
- Wellbeing support – consider effective practice examples including building on the Staff Survey Action Plan and existing specific programmes of wellbeing activity, e.g. PGR wellbeing ambassador programme, potential to build network of staff wellbeing champions.

v. Longer term, there was a real appetite, particularly from early career researchers, for significant, structural changes to the research environment to facilitate more sustainable and inclusive working practices. Two significant ideas had been proposed:

- Excellence – inclusive team working as a driver for more effective research for example through incentivising and rewarding the success of teams, leadership role expectations of all Principal Investigators (PIs) and Professional Services managers, including team development and identifying and validating the contributions of each team member
- Equality – a research culture that encourages inclusive and collegiate behaviours, for example where promotions criteria, annual performance review and recruitment processes include an assessment of the contribution made by the individual to improving EDI.

The nature of the changes desired were long term and complex and the ideas needed further work, with the aim of developing a portfolio of both formal and informal solutions to achieving greater excellence through greater equality. Other proposals to support longer term change in the research environment included:

- new approaches to increase BAME PGR recruitment
- buddying system for post-doctoral research students and enhanced mentoring across research systems
- improved local awareness of University policies and obligations, e.g. parental leave, reasonable adjustments for disabled colleagues.

vi. Building on these outcomes, in the 'Consider' phase the proposed set of ideas would be taken to:

- Develop these further ensuring they serve to both:
  - Maximise the potential of our community (equality)
  - Maximise all talents for better research outcomes (excellence)
- Engage with a broad constituency across the University, including PGR students, a range of Professional Services colleagues (research professionals, librarians, technicians) and senior PIs
- Dovetail with existing and ongoing change initiatives where there is potential for synergy
- Collaborate with national funders and partners on the development of new models for the research environment.

AGREED:

vii.   The following proposals should be approved:

- The immediate implementation of the eight interventions detailed as short-term responses to the impact of COVID-19
- The ideas for further development and implementation in the second 'Consider' phase of the RISE project. This would be designed by the RISE Project Group and this phase would start after the Easter break given the need to focus on REF.

viii.   It would be beneficial to draw on good practice outside of the public sector, e.g. by approaching pharmaceutical companies.

14. Student Success Framework

[The Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor Kristyan Spellman Miller, and the Senior Policy Adviser, Mr James Coe, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

i.   A copy of the University's new Student Success Framework, which had been developed through extensive consultation across Professional Services, the Faculties and the Liverpool Guild of Students, and the associated Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).

REPORTED:

ii.   The Student Success Framework was the means by which the University would organise and govern its activity related to the success of all its students, undergraduate and postgraduate, taught and research. It also provided a way to drive the ambitions articulated in the Access and Participation Plan, Education Strategy and broader University Strategy, in a way which was data-led, coordinated, and cut across both the student lifecycle and University structures.

iii.   The Framework articulated the basis from which the University would support student academic, personal, and future success, across every level. Each of these strands had an associated Success Board charged with articulating targets against each objective, driving activity to meet those targets, and monitoring progress towards achieving them.

iv. The Framework would act as a live document, so the targets and objectives could be reviewed and refined as necessary to respond to emerging themes and student needs. Oversight of the Framework's implementation would be carried out informally by the Education Advisory Group and formally by the Education Committee, via the Student Success Boards.

v. Following approval of the Framework, the next steps would include to:

- Consider how to fully embed the Framework into the overall institutional Strategy
- Establish targets for each strand, and then regularly monitor performance and implementation of these targets
- In addition to the above, fully embed performance monitoring into the institutional quarterly performance reports.

NOTED:

vi. The Guild had provided input since the beginning of this initiative and was fully supportive of the way in which the Framework placed students front and centre.

vii. Doing the right thing for students and staff in the way described by the Framework would be likely to lead to improved League Table positioning, but that was not the main driver.

AGREED:

viii. The Student Success Framework and associated EQIA should be approved, noting its uniqueness, that it provided a valuable branding opportunity and that it would be a useful way of demonstrating how the University offers Value for Money.

ix. An update on the implementation of the Student Success Framework should be submitted to Council in due course.

15. **Compliance with the CUC Higher Education Code of Governance**

RECEIVED:

i. A paper providing a detailed mapping exercise of the University's current compliance against the elements of the revised Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance, published in September 2020, and suggesting actions which could be taken to further enhance compliance.

REPORTED:

ii. Compliance with the Code was voluntary, but adoption of it was a valuable source of assurance to stakeholders who needed to have confidence in the governance arrangements of HEIs, such as the OfS, student community and wider society.

iii. The revised Code was shorter and more simple to use. Much of the process advice had been removed and there was a stronger emphasis on principles which could be applied in every institution. The Code remained an 'Apply or Explain' one, with institutions able to consider the different elements and apply what they think is useful for them and explain why other elements may not be appropriate.

The Code would be accompanied by a set of CUC guidance notes that would focus on process and practice and provide examples and templates for institutions to develop and adopt as they choose.

iv. The Code identified the six primary elements that embody the core values and assist in delivering the objectives it outlines and provide the basis for good governance in the UK HE sector, namely: accountability; sustainability; reputation; equality, inclusivity and diversity; effectiveness; and engagement.

v. Overall, the majority (45/49) of the points within the various elements had been assessed as green, with those points highlighted as amber (4/49) having plans in place to enhance compliance.

vi. Professor Ella Ritchie in her 2017 Council effectiveness review report had concluded that: 'On the basis of the evidence available to the reviewer the conclusion is that the University of Liverpool has a strong and effective governing body that meets the 2014 Code of Governance and adds value to the University'. The upcoming Council Effectiveness Review would provide an external assessment of the University's compliance against the new Code, but it was evident from the mapping exercise that compliance remained strong and the actions identified, which were for the most part already included on the Governance Team's Enhancement Plan, would serve to strengthen compliance further. The compliance map was very much a live working document and it would be updated on a regular basis. As part of the Enhancement Plan, the Governance Team would seek to further strengthen compliance across all areas of the Code where this was possible and in response to the CUC guidance as it was published.

AGREED:

vii. The outcomes of the initial mapping exercise should be approved as a fair and accurate reflection.

viii. The actions to be taken to further enhance compliance and associated timeframes should be approved.

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REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

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16. Education Committee

RECEIVED and **NOTED**:

i. A report on the meeting of the Education Committee held on 13 January 2021, covering:

- Student Success Framework (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 14 above)
- Diversity and Equality Annual Report 2019/20 (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 12 above)
- Update to Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline Appendix I – Non-Academic Misconduct Offences and Indicative Sanctions (dealt with via the Senate report – see minute 21 below)
- Results of Taught Student Pulse Surveys and OfS 2019 PGT Survey
- Supporting Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Q1 Performance Report.

17. Health and Safety Governance Committee

RECEIVED and **NOTED**:

i. A report on the meeting of the Health and Safety Governance Committee held on 19 January 2021, covering:

- Wellbeing Annual Report 2019/20
- Progress with HASMAP – High Level of Compliance
- Wood Park Farm Incident
- COVID-19 Pandemic: Management of University Operations
  - Overview of the University's Testing Regime
  - Delivery of Library Services
  - Supporting Student Health and Wellbeing.

18. Planning and Resources Committee

[Disclosures of interest were noted from Dr C Costello and Ms N Davies as members of the ULPF Ltd Board, and from Lay Member, Mr E Fishwick, as an employee of Blackrock Investment Management.]

RECEIVED:

i. A report on the meeting of the Planning and Resources Committee held on 12 January 2021, covering the following items:

- Quarter 1 Performance Report (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 7 above)
- Forecast 1 Report (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 8 above)
- Updated Five Year Plan, including the recommendation to submit the realistic scenario to the Office for Students, subject to an adjustment (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 9 above)
- Diversity and Equality Annual Report 2019/20 (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 12 above)
- Statutory Pay Gap Report 2020 (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 11 above)
- Pension Increases – April 2021
- University of Liverpool Pension Fund Trustees Ltd (ULPF) – Consultation with the University on Investment Matters (owing to timescales, this matter was subsequently dealt with via Chair's action on behalf of Council – see minute 3 above)
- Endowments Proposal 2020/21
- Revised Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership 2020/21
- Athena SWAN Annual Report
- Capital Mandates
  - Capital Investment Plan 2020/21 – Major Projects
  - Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Requirements Philosophy – Business Case
  - Leahurst AVMA Improvements – Business Case

        o   Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Priority Improvement Works
- Investments Sub-Committee Proposal.

AGREED:

ii.   The following recommendations regarding pension increases should be approved:

- A recommendation from the ULPF Trustee Directors to provide a discretionary one off consolidated increase of 0.5% to pensions built up before 6 April 1997 in excess of the Guaranteed Minimum Pension
- Granting a discretionary one off consolidated pension increase of 0.5% to the Ex-Gratia pensioners paid directly by the University.

iii.   In relation to the usage of endowments, the proposal that all accumulated income balances should be released to cover expenditure that was already included in plan and which aligned with endowment terms, in order to improve the University cash position by £23m, should be approved. The proposal that expenditure should be identified where possible to enable the release of expendable endowment capital, up to a total of £28.7m, noting that c£13m was already earmarked for the HILL project, should be approved. This category of endowment should be used for activity with a longer term benefit, and would be revisited when the financial position would be slightly clearer.

19. **Research and Impact Committee**

RECEIVED:

i.   A report on the meeting of the Research and Impact Committee held on 14 January 2021, covering the following items:

- Researcher Development Concordat Action Plan
- Peer Review Policy for External Funding Applications (dealt with via the Senate report – see minute 21 below).

AGREED:

ii.   Following the University's recent signing up to the Revised Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, the 2021 Action Plan should be approved. The Plan was based on the 2020/21 Action Plan for the University's HR Excellence in Research Award, which had been retained since 2011.

20. **Research and Integrity Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20**

RECEIVED:

i.   The annual report on the activity of the Research Integrity and Governance Committee (RIGC), describing the work of the Committee to uphold and develop the robustness of the University's research integrity framework. The report also highlighted significant items reported by the sub-committees of the RIGC, namely: the Sponsorship Committee (which oversees projects sponsored by the Joint Research Office Partners), the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body, the Human Material Oversight Committee, and the Clinical Trials Oversight Committee.

REPORTED:

ii.   Each year the University was required to produce an annual statement on research integrity outlining the efforts undertaken to ensure compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and to embed integrity in research throughout the University's processes. The latest statement could be found on the research integrity webpages.

iii.   The Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact had established a team to review all aspects of the University's approach to promoting research integrity and a number of recommendations from the report were being taken forward. The University had purchased the latest version of the Epigeum modules on research integrity to improve training provision. The Research Integrity and Ethics Team was working with Committee members on a research integrity communication which would be sent to all academic staff from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact. A draft document on best practice for Lone Scholar research had been circulated for comment and would be published when complete. Each of the University's Faculties had also produced annual research integrity reports.

iv.   The University's current Research Misconduct Policy was based on the UK Research Integrity Office Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research, which was considered the current best practice for the handling of allegations of research misconduct. However, it was proving difficult to meet the timescale requirements of the Policy in light of the current resource available. Work was underway to evaluate the time and resource consuming elements of the process, looking for improvements in efficiency where possible and seeking to identify lessons learned from each of the cases.

AGREED:

v.   Dr Roger Platt should be thanked for his excellent leadership of the Committee on Research Ethics.

vi.   Assurance could be taken that the University's focus on research ethics and integrity had not waned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

21.   **Senate**

RECEIVED:

i.   A report on the meeting of the Senate held on 27 January 2021, covering the following items:

*   Student Success Framework (dealt with as a substantive item by Council – see minute 14 above)
*   Update to Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline
*   Peer Review Policy
*   Department of Modern Languages and Cultures: Name Change Proposal
*   Diversity and Equality Presentation.

AGREED:

ii.   The update to the Policy on Student Conduct and Discipline Appendix I – Non-Academic Misconduct Offences and Indicative Sanctions, to define specific offences related to protected characteristics, as recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Committee Working Group, and the associated EQIA, should be approved. Prior to the policy being updated, if a student committed an offence which a Board of Discipline believed to be racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, or arising from discrimination against any protected characteristic, it had been treated as an aggravating factor to a pre-existing offence. Following the roll out of the new reporting tool 'Report and Support', there was evidence that more complaints of this type were being made. In turn, to ensure penalties were more consistently applied it was necessary to clearly define the nature of and sanctions for these offences.

iii.   The revisions to the Peer Review Policy which had been made following a 2020 PwC internal audit of Research Bidding Pre-Award Peer Review should be endorsed. The focus and principles of the Policy remained the same (e.g. improving the quality of applications, supporting researcher career progression and contributing to a supportive environment for researchers), but the revised Policy increased the offer, including more opportunity for Early Career Researcher engagement, a new peer review newsletter and more briefing events to share best practice and hear from successful Principal Investigators. EDI monitoring and unconscious bias training were also being embedded into the Peer Review process.

iv.   The change of name of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures to the Department of Languages, Cultures and Film, with effect from the start of the 2021/22 academic year, should be endorsed.

ROUTINE ITEMS

22.   Use of the University Seal

RECEIVED and **NOTED**:

i.   A summary of uses of the University Seal since the last meeting.

23.   Date of Next Meeting

NOTED:

i.   The next meeting would be an Away Day to be held on Tuesday 13 April 2021.