



NOTES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL COUNCIL

**AWAY DAY MEETING HELD AT
UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
ON 30 MARCH 2023**

Present:	Carmel Booth, President (in the Chair); Dr Paul Johnson, Vice-President; Professor Tim Jones, 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; Vasiliki Samuels, President of the Liverpool Guild of Students; Cilla Ankrah-Lucas; Fiona Cullen; Barry Flynn; Dr Kashmir Gill; Vanessa Griffiths; Helen Miller; Dr Roger Platt; Hans van Mourik Broekman; Dr Diana Walford (from item 3.3); Professor Julia Balogun; Professor Hazel Scott; Professor Thomas Teubner; Kieran O’Sullivan; and Kathryn Manley, Deputy President of the Liverpool Guild of Students.
In Attendance:	Professor Fiona Beveridge, Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Humanities and Social Sciences; Professor Louise Kenny, Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Health and Life Sciences; Professor Wiebe van der Hoek, Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Science and Engineering; and Professor Ronan McGrath, Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure and Partnerships), Science and Engineering (up to item 3.4). Nicola Davies, Chief Financial Officer; Phil Hopwood, Director of Strategic Planning; Emma Leonard, Head of Governance and Deputy Secretary; and Kevan Ryan, University Secretary and General Counsel/Clerk to Council. Christine Bateman, Head of International Development; Natalie Carpenter, Project Support Officer, Strategic Change; Sarah Jackson, Director of Research, Partnerships and Innovation; Anthony Mtitimila, Senior Partnerships and Innovation Manager, Research, Partnerships and Innovation; and Rachel Parkes, Head of Project and Programme Management, Strategic Change.

1. President’s Welcome

The President welcomed those present and gave an overview of the day.

It was noted that other members of the Senior Leadership Team were in attendance, which was standard practice for Council Away Days.

During the lunch break members received a presentation from the University of Liverpool International College Director, Michael Carroll, and Regional Director of Colleges, Leelee Yates, providing a general overview of the work of the College and on some wider Kaplan updates.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Members were asked to disclose any interest that could give rise to conflict in relation to any item on the agenda. No such interests were disclosed.

3. Developing the New Strategic Framework: Strategy 2031

3.1 Introduction to Strategy 2031 Plans

RECEIVED:

- i. A presentation from the Vice-Chancellor covering: Purpose; Strategy 2031 Core Components; Framework and Leads; Timeline and Key Activities – Phase One; International Rankings; and Characteristics of a Global Top 100 University.

REPORTED:

- ii. The purpose of the new strategy would be to:
 - Build on the existing strategy and take the University through its 150th anniversary and into the next decade
 - Provide a high level, enabling framework that sets the direction of travel for the next 5-10 years – it would be flexible to take advantage of unseen future opportunities
 - Identify what is unique about the University, what is/can be genuinely world-leading, and what should be different about the University by 2031
 - Set the ambition, build confidence and ensure an outward-looking approach
 - Be a guide for planning, prioritisation, investment and growth.
- iii. Characteristics of a comprehensive global top 100 university included:
 - Research intensity – scale, breadth, quality
 - Large international student population
 - Strong international outlook and reputation (institution and discipline)
 - Destination of choice for best talent; staff and students
 - Partner of choice for leading organisations and funders around the world
 - Confident, ambitious and comfortable with high performance
 - Culture of strong advocacy – staff, students, alumni.

3.2 Size and Shape

RECEIVED:

- i. A presentation from the Director of Strategic Planning setting out the data and insight being collated to inform the University's discussion and decision making around its size and shape and strategy development and covering: the why, what and how; the comparators being used and how the University compares against them; an assessment of performance in terms of student mix, research reputation, staffing capacity, financial capacity and at subject level; and the big ambition questions being worked through.

REPORTED:

- ii. A key focus of this analysis was to identify what decisions would have the desired impact to improve the University's overall performance. It was being undertaken in order to:
 - Highlight the potential and areas of focus for a refreshed strategy and a trajectory towards celebrating the University's 150th anniversary
 - Set a new ambition
 - Provide a coherent framework for delivery and set financial needs/priority
 - Provide a coherent framework for downstream review
 - Enable Faculties, Schools and Departments as well as the central Professional Services to plan and prioritise
 - Align other enabling plans (capital/digital) around common goals.

- iii. The work was being approached as follows:
 - Understanding performance and reputation – what we are doing well and not so well
 - Starting with an institution level gap analysis of recent performance against comparators in the top 50-100 and 100-150 of the QS
 - Using a broad range of metrics for comparison of volume (SNs, RI, £, staff) and quality/productivity (tariff, employability, citations, outputs)
 - Then looking at subject/discipline level
 - Understanding demand and potential
 - Where do we have potential to grow and where should we grow or not grow
 - Using analysis of market size and our share by level, subject and geography.

- iv. The questions the University was currently asking in response to this analysis included:
 - Size: How big overall do we want to be for student numbers, research income and surpluses?
 - Subject quality: Should more than 40% of our subjects be ranked in the top 100?
 - Research: Should we build on and around areas that are already successful, build excellence elsewhere or a mixed economy?
 - Education: Is our teaching portfolio aligned to future needs and how tightly do we follow demand versus our traditional offer?
 - Finance: Should our planned surpluses be higher than the current 4%?
 - External: How do we balance politics (civic duty to UK 18 year olds) versus geopolitics, which markets we are in and the £s?

3.3 Introducing the Strategic Pillars: Education and Student Experience; Research and Impact; Civic and Innovation; and Global Engagement and Partnerships

RECEIVED:

- i. Presentations from the four pillar leads covering their initial views on strengths, opportunities, challenges and emerging themes.

3.4 Break Out Group Discussions

Members were split into four groups, with pillar leads rotating around the groups to share additional information on their thinking and presenting the following questions:

- Is there anything else which should be included in our ambitions for the new strategy?
- What would be your top priority for this pillar?
- What additional strengths and opportunities could there be?
- What might the challenges be?

3.5 Conclusions and Next Steps

NOTED:

- i. The next steps were as follows:
 - An update on progress would be provided at the Council meeting scheduled for 24 May 2023, including a focus on values and the cross cutting themes of people and culture and sustainability
 - The draft Strategy 2031 would be available in early June for consultation, focus groups/town hall events
 - Consultation on the final draft would take place at Council's meeting on 11 July 2023
 - The final strategy would be presented for approval in September 2023.

AGREED:

- ii. The proposed high level framework should be endorsed. Council members fully supported an ambitious (but realistic) approach which would raise the University's reputation, confidence, agility and performance and were keen to assist as the substance is developed over upcoming weeks.
- iii. It would be important to learn lessons from the successes and failures arising from Strategy 2026.

ROUTINE ITEMS

4. Quarter 2 and Forecast 2 Performance Report

RECEIVED:

- i. A report providing details of performance during Quarter 2 against relevant KPIs and the 2022/23 Financial Forecast 2 Report.

REPORTED:

Q2 Performance Report

- ii. In terms of performance and activity against the Strategy 2026 KPIs, this quarter was usually light on data so the section set out the level of progress with the activities aimed at improving performance and indicated, where possible, what future performance was likely to be.
- iii. For the QS academic reputation survey the maximum number of contacts had been submitted. These were contacts who had indicated that they would take part in the survey and be favourable towards Liverpool. They would be surveyed before the summer and the impact would be in the QS league table published in summer 2024. Of note, both the QS and THE global tables had proposed adjustments to their methodologies in part to include sustainability measures which reduced the impact of the reputational surveys.
- iv. NSS action plans were in place and delivery had commenced. For the 'timely feedback' element, improvements had been seen in the percentage of assessments being returned within the committed timeline, with several areas approaching 99%. Of note, the NSS methodology had changed for the current survey onwards with the removal of the overall satisfaction question and a move to a four rather than five-point satisfaction scale. This would mean that the results would not be directly comparable with previous surveys and new institutional success measures would need to be agreed.
- v. For Graduate Outcomes, unverified data indicated that a marked improvement of +7% to 81% would be seen in the University's graduates getting 'graduate' employment when the sector data was released in June.
- vi. Research awards in Q2 were circa £42m which meant that the rolling 12-month average was slightly below previous levels but still close to the 2026 target. As a forward indicator, applications were also slightly lower but in line with the previous two years.

Forecast 2

- vii. *Paragraph redacted due to commercial interest.*
- viii. *Paragraph redacted due to commercial interest.*

AGREED:

- ix. The Quarter 2 and Forecast 2 Performance Report should be approved.

5. Strategic Risk Register

RECEIVED:

- i. A report providing the latest version of the strategic risk register, risk map and risk forecast, which had been reviewed and endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team prior to submission to Council.

REPORTED:

- ii. During January and February 2023 a review of each risk on the register had taken place, both to reassess whether each risk was still valid and should be on the register, as well as to review and update the mitigations and exposure.
- iii. Updates had been made in relation to the following risks: S1 Research Impact Quality and Quantity, S2 Student Recruitment, S3 Student Satisfaction and Wellbeing, S4 Reputation, S7 Staff Recruitment, Retention and Wellbeing, S9 Financial Sustainability and E2 Political and Funding Landscape, primarily associated with some mitigations moving to business as usual and the introduction of some new mitigations.
- iv. Despite the mitigations in place, the exposure after mitigation for Cyber Security remained high (scored at 16). The mitigations would have an impact on elements of the risk but could not necessarily reduce the score as the risk environment was constantly changing and because of the consequence a successful cyber-attack would have on key business operations. Given this risk was closely managed by Audit Committee, Council was asked to confirm it was comfortable with the agreed mitigations and therefore the associated level of risk.
- v. The risk forecast was largely stable, with limited changes made to the risk scores at this six-monthly review. In many instances, long term mitigations were still to be fully implemented so their positive impact on either the consequence or likelihood of that risk was not yet quantifiable with enough certainty to reduce the associated score. The risk forecast provided reassurance of the work programmes in train and associated deadlines, including but not limited to: Strategy 2031 development, RISE, CREATE, Student Intake Strategy review, embedding workforce planning, and Brand and Reputation campaign etc.
- vi. The S2 Student Recruitment risk level remained appropriate as, although targets had now increased for this recruitment cycle, numbers were being sought in areas where demand was high.
- vii. The fairly low post mitigation score for S7 Staff Recruitment, Retention and Wellbeing remained appropriate despite the challenging recruitment market in some areas.

- viii. Ordinarily, in addition to reviewing the overall risk register, twice per year Council would receive an in-depth presentation on two of the core strategic risks. Cyber and the student-based risks had originally been scheduled for discussion at the Away Day. However, given the oversight offered to the cyber risk by Audit Committee and the coverage of the content of the student risks within the University strategy review elsewhere on the agenda, these in-depth presentations had been withdrawn with the intention of presenting at a subsequent meeting of Council.

NOTED:

- ix. The strategic risk register would evolve to reflect the key priorities within Strategy 2031.

AGREED:

- x. The updates to the strategic risk register should be approved.
- xi. The risk exposure level for risk E4 Cyber Security should continue to be endorsed.

6. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED:

- i. The next meeting would be held at 2pm on Wednesday 24 May 2023.