

Council**MEETING HELD: Thursday 22 May 2025, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM BST, Derby Suite****Present:**

Carmel Booth, President (Chair); Hans van Mourik Broekman, Vice-President; Professor Tim Jones, Vice-Chancellor; Professor Richard Black, Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Rowan Bradbury, President of the Liverpool Guild of Students; Cilla Ankrah-Lucas; Dr Alison Campbell; Dr Mark Carawan; Fiona Cullen; Barry Flynn; (via Teams until 10.30am); Matthew Reed; Dr Diana Walford (via Teams); Professor Julia Balogun; Professor Thomas Teubner; Kieran O'Sullivan; Professor Hazel Scott; and Othman Ibrahim, Vice-President of the Liverpool Guild of Students.

Apologies:

Professor Gavin Brown, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education; Lucy Everest, Chief Operating Officer; Dr Kashmir Gill; Vanessa Griffiths; and Mark Proctor.

In attendance:

Nicola Davies, Chief Financial Officer; Professor Anthony Hollander, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Impact; Kevan Ryan, Clerk to Council/University Secretary and General Counsel; Mike Edge, Governance, Compliance & Regulatory Manager, and Ryan Roach; Governance Clerical Officer.

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. No such interests were disclosed.

2. Student Voice Update – Careers Coach

[University Careers Coach, Millie Jones, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- a. A presentation providing an overview of the role of a Career Coach, including day-to-day responsibilities, how the service supports students and the wider University, as well as a reflection of experience as a student at the University.

AGREED:

- b. This was a welcome presentation and provided Council with a real sense of the integral role of the Careers Coach service at the University. Council wished to record its thanks to Millie for the excellent presentation.

3. Minutes**3.1. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12 February 2025****AGREED:**

- a. The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February should be approved as an accurate record.

3.2. Minutes of the Special Meeting Held on 10 April 2025

AGREED:

- a. The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April should be approved as an accurate record.

3.3. Notes of the Away Day Held on 10 April 2025

AGREED:

- a. The notes of the Away Day held on 10 April should be approved as an accurate record.

4. Report on Action Taken by the President of behalf of Council

RECEIVED:

- a. A report on action taken by the President on Council's behalf.

REPORTED:

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

Membership of the Research Integrity and Governance Committee (approved 5 March 2025)

To approve the appointment of Dr Charlie Crerar as a member of Research Integrity and Governance Committee for the period to 31 July 2027.

Investment Fund Reallocation (approved 31 March 2025)

Paragraph redacted due to commercial interest.

Guild Articles of Association and Code of Practice (approved 10 April 2025)

To approve a recommendation from the Senate that a number of proposed changes to the Guild Articles of Association and Code of Practice should be approved. This is in keeping with the University's Ordinances which state that the Articles of Association and Code of Practice relating to the Guild of Students are to be reviewed every five years by the Trustees of the Guild and approved by Council on the recommendation of the Senate.

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Ordinances (approved 10 April 2025)

To approve recommendations made by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Senate via Chair's action regarding a range of ordinance proposals in respect of the following:

- The creation of new programme ordinances for a new school for pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences
- The inclusion of new awards under the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, and a slight revision to the abbreviation for an award
- Changes to programme ordinances to reflect revisions in nomenclature.

- c. The Pensions Sub-Group had taken Chair's action as follows:

ULPF Pensions Increases

Members received a paper reporting the statutory pension increases, effective from April 2025, that will be applied to the pensions paid by the: University of Liverpool Pension Fund (ULPF);

Federated Superannuation System for Universities (FSSU); and NHS Severance Pensions (NHS).

The paper also proposed:

- A recommendation from the ULPF Trustee to provide a discretionary one-off consolidated increase of 1.7% to pensions built up before 6 April 1997 in excess of the GMP
- Granting a discretionary one-off consolidated pension increase of 1.7% to the University's Ex-Gratia pensioners.

The Pensions Sub-Group supported this proposal in February 2025 without any amendments.

ULPF Employer Contribution Reduction

Chair's action was taken on behalf of the University's Pensions Sub-Group on 25 March 2025 to approve the new schedule of contributions that reduces the employer contribution to nil for a period of three years and reduces the employee contribution by 1% (not time limited).

AGREED:

- d. The action taken by the President on Council's behalf as outlined in 4b above should be endorsed.
- e. The action taken by the University's Pensions Sub-Group as outlined in 4c above should be endorsed.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL/DISCUSSION/NOTE

5. President's Communications

RECEIVED:

- a. An oral report from the President of Council.
- b. The Committee of University Chairs (CUC) was to commission a major review of its Higher Education Code of Governance. The Review would consider the variety of governance practices and arrangements that exist in the sector and ways to ensure they are robust, transparent, and able to respond effectively to the growing demands and pressures being placed on the sector. The President would continue to report back to Council on this.
- c. This would present an important opportunity for universities to demonstrate their value and how they can adapt to ever changing requirements.

6. Clerk to Council's Communications

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- a. An oral report from the Clerk to Council.
- b. New OfS regulatory requirements around Freedom of Speech and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct were expected to come into force 1 August 2025.
- c. The University would look to commence another governance effectiveness review of Council in the near future, following on from the Halpin Review. Senate had recently been subject to an externally led effectiveness review which had confirmed that the overall academic governance and oversight of quality and standards for teaching and learning are effective and meet the needs of the University Council.
- d. Following the High Court's rejection of a Group Litigation Order, filed on behalf of current and former students of University College London over breach of contract claims, it was believed

that a number of test cases may be heard early next year. Depending on the outcome of these cases, it could also affect the other 17 other universities, including Liverpool, who had received notification of potential claims.

- e. The University was progressing its application for a possession order for the whole campus in response to the encampment on Abercromby Square.

7. Vice-Chancellor's Communications

RECEIVED:

- a. A report from the Vice-Chancellor on University, sector wide and political news, covering:

University updates: Retirements; QS Rankings by Subject; Educate North Awards; CEO Magazine Global MBA Rankings; DfE performance of the University of Liverpool Maths School; Enhanced collaboration with India; Voluntary Leavers Scheme; Hybrid working and Trade Union ballot results; UK Supreme Court ruling on legal definitions of sex with the Equality Act; and the Abercromby Square occupation.

Sector and political updates: Comprehensive Spending Review; Engagement with Government; UK-Ireland Summit; Wirral and Cheshire Stakeholder Event; Sector News.

8. Liverpool Guild of Students Update

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- a. An oral update from the President of the Liverpool Guild of Students on the Guild's work. The Guild awards 2024 had recently taken place and a number of SLT and Council members had attended.
- b. Council members were encouraged to attend key events where possible, including staff & student awards, as well as graduation ceremonies. It would be helpful to coordinate lay member attendance where possible at these events.

9. Recovery Plan Update

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- a. A presentation providing an update on progress against the University's recovery plan, and actions for 2025-26.
- b. The VLS scheme was progressing well, and the University would continue to closely monitor acceptance rates over the coming months to better understand the financial impact. This scheme had been managed well through effective communications.
- c. The University would retain the Cost Oversight Group throughout the next academic year.
- d. *Sentence redacted due to commercial interest.*
- e. Actions for 2025-26 would continue around generating savings, regrowing both XJTLU articulation and OSI PGT numbers, exploring further TNE opportunities, and identifying ways for the University to diversify its income and become more commercial.
- f. The 2025-26 budget would be presented to Council in July. The University had taken a realistic approach to this budget, including setting more conservative student numbers which were considered realistic and achievable.

10. India Update

[Professor Tariq Ali, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement & Partnerships, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED:

- a. An oral update on progress to establish a University of Liverpool campus in India, in August 2026.

REPORTED:

- b. The University had now received approval from the University Grants Commission India to open a campus in Bengaluru, India, and expected to make formal announcements next week. The announcements would be supported by a range of high-profile events in India.
- c. The University continued to make good progress on the Heads of Terms.
- d. It was still the intention to open the campus in August 2026.

AGREED:

- e. This was excellent news and Council wish to record its thanks to Professor Ali and all involved in this significant milestone.

11. Place & Innovation

This item was deferred.

12. University Health and Safety Update

[University Safety Adviser, Steve Dunkley, attended for this item.]

RECEIVED and NOTED:

- a. A presentation from the University Safety Adviser, providing an overview of:
- Legal responsibilities of Higher Education Institutions
 - The role of Council, as governing body
 - Key components of a good health and safety culture
 - Changes to the University's health & safety governance arrangements
 - The University's approach to managing significant health & safety risks
 - Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service site audits
 - Emergency arrangements & business continuity
 - Resources & training
 - Latest data on RIDDOR accidents and incidents
 - The Institutional Health and Safety Plan for 2025–28.
- b. Council could take assurance from the range of activity and processes in place. The University's Health and Safety Governance Committee received regular updates on health and safety matters.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

Finance and Resources Committee [No report – March meeting was cancelled]

13. Senate

RECEIVED:

- a. A report on the meeting of the Senate held on 19 March 2025, covering the following items:

For approval:

- Senate Effectiveness Review: Update on Action Plan
- Liverpool Guild of Students Articles of Association and Code of Practice (already approved via Chair's action).

For noting:

- Update on India Opportunity
- Reports from Senate's Strategic Committees:
 - Education Committee – 6 March 2025
 - Research & Impact Committee (RIC) – 5 March 2025
- Senate Reports from other Sub-Committees
 - Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC) – 5 February 2025
 - Postgraduate Research Committee (PGR) – 7 March 2025
- Restructure within the Faculty of Science and Engineering
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Updates
 - Diversity & Equality (Public Sector Equality Duty) Report 2023/24
 - Equality Objectives Progress Report (2023/24).

NOTED:

- b. Whilst the Advance HE Effectiveness Review found that overall academic governance was effective, in total the review made 14 recommendations and some associated suggestions.
- c. Whilst a number of the recommendations were relatively routine and had since been progressed, Senate established a Task & Finish (T&F) Group to further consider the implementation of the more strategic recommendations (reduction in Senate composition, and changes to Education and Research & Impact Committee structures). This paper was focussed on the reduction in Senate's composition.

AGREED:

- d. The proposed reduction in Senate's membership from 87 to 80 as detailed within the report – for implementation at the start of the new academic year (1 August 2025), should be approved. This change would also require updates to the University's ordinances.

14. Audit Committee

RECEIVED:

- a. A report on the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 9 April 2025, covering the following items:

- i. Internal Audit Progress and Follow Up Report 2024/25 – As at 21 March 2025, there was one action overdue, with four subject to review of further evidence and verification once provided, which was a positive result.
- ii. Risk Management
- iii. External Audit Update
- iv. Annual Overview of University Statutory Reporting Requirements
- v. Internal Audit & Assurance Procurement Update.

NOTED:

- b. Audit Committee received an update on the University's procurement process for appointing a potential new Internal Audit and Assurance Partner. It was anticipated that a recommendation would be presented to Audit Committee at its next meeting, scheduled for 17 June 2025, prior to submission to Council.

15. Health and Safety Governance Committee (HSGC)

RECEIVED:

- a. A report on the meeting of the Health and Safety Governance Committee held on 7 May 2025, covering the following items:

For noting:

- Local Management of Health and Safety: Department of Earth, Ocean and Ecological Sciences
- Safety Adviser's Report
- Health and Safety Aspects of Hybrid Working
- Property and Campus Services (PCS) Annual Compliance Report
- Institutional Health, Safety and Wellbeing Plan
- Improving Contractor Safety Management
- Modifications to the University's Code of Practice on Fire Safety
- Workload and Stress (including the effects of VLS and the recruitment freeze)
- PwC ULCCO SP Health and Safety Internal Audit Report
- Update from Science and Engineering Compliance Steering Group
- Update on the new Office for Students Condition of Registration E6 Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

AGREED:

- b. The new Terms of Reference for the Health and Safety Committee to be effective from the start of the new academic year 2025/26, including the change of name of the Committee from Health and Safety Governance Committee to Health and Safety Committee, should be approved.
- c. The changes made to the University's Health and Safety Policy, which would be effective from 1 August 2025, should be approved. The updates included reflecting the changes in the committee governance structure with the move to one consolidated committee.

16. Thank you

This was the final meeting for Kieran O'Sullivan, who has been the Professional Services representative

on Council since 2018. The Committee wished to record its sincere thanks to Mr O'Sullivan for his significant contributions to Council over the years.

17. Date of Next Meeting

NOTED:

- a. The next meeting would be held at 1.30pm on Wednesday 9 July 2025.