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LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING: WEDNESDAY 8th July 2020

PRESENT: Revd Canon Peter Winn (in the Chair), Mrs Jane Beever, Dr John Bennett, Sr Dr Mary Charles-Murray SND, Cllr Jane Corbett, Revd Canon Chris Fallon, Dr P Haughan, Very Revd Dr S Jones, Dr Joan McClelland, Fr Chris McCoy, Sr Maureen McKnight SND, Dr Arthur Naylor, Revd Canon Professor Kenneth Newport, Mr John Norbury, Fr Michael O'Dowd, Professor Gerald Pillay, Mr H Rashid, Mr Ultan Russell, Mrs Maggie Swinson, Dr C Wakefield, HH Judge Graham Wood QC (21 members)

By invitation:

Ms Laura Gittins (Clerk to Council)
Mr Derrick Dykins (Company Secretary)
Mr Harry Pearce (Students' Union President Designate)

No Conflicts of Interest were reported.

The Chair welcomed Mr Harry Pearce, who, as the Student President Designate, was invited to attend.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Mr Charles Mills, Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, and Dr Simon Hulme.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2019 were **APPROVED** as a correct record.

3. **Matter Arising from those minutes**

There were no matters arising that were not included elsewhere on the agenda.

4. **Vice Chancellor's Notes to Council**

Members had received the Vice Chancellor's Notes to Council for information. Professor Pillay drew members attention to the detailed annexes which were provided to reassure Council that the University's planning to manage the pandemic, particularly from an academic governance viewpoint, is going well. He noted that the likely delivery structure in September will be a hybrid of online and face-to-face sessions but that the University will be led by advice from the government. More should be known about the easing of lockdown in early August which would then inform the University's approach. The Vice Chancellor also highlighted a change to how the term structure would be structured with staggered 8-week terms. This had been designed to avoid Saturday and late evening work patterns that many HEIs have already adopted to manage socially distanced timetables. Alongside this, discussions with the unions had taken place to better nuance the

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workload model and give the University greater flexibility to cope with the demands of the new structure. The Vice Chancellor also noted that the University was keeping pace with changes in deadlines for its REF submission.

5. Secretary's Business

- (i) Members had received for information the Calendar of Meetings and Events for the next academic year.
- (ii) Members had received the formal outcome of the recent assessment on Prevent by the OfS which concluded that the University is demonstrating due regard to the Prevent duty and is not at higher risk of non-compliance with the Prevent duty in the future.

6. Senate

- (i) Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2020 and 24th June 2020 which were presented by Professor Pillay in his capacity as Chair of Senate. There were a number of documents approved at Senate which were presented to Council for information. **The Academic Decision-Making document** explains the measures that the University has taken to ensure that academic governance has been managed in a practical and fair manner under the current pandemic. The structural changes to the **Academic Calendar** were discussed in the Vice Chancellor's notes; Senate had agreed to adopt the calendar to assist with the scenarios the University is planning for in September. It will be monitored over the coming year and may be adopted permanently if successful.
- (ii) Members had received the Student Data Equality and Diversity Report which was provided for information. Mrs Swinson said she was supportive of measures where the University's cultural influence can support students in learning to challenge inequality. Such measures could be developed creatively, particularly to help the University community to understand its cultural privileges. Cllr Corbett said that it was important to take positive action and ensure the measures had real meaning rather than being seen as a requirement. Fr Chris Fallon noted that on a visit to universities in El Salvador he discovered that all students are required to do a social analysis and a practical project to raise awareness of what is happening in society; this could be introduced at the University either via induction or the wider curriculum. Dr Haughan said that a structure for induction week had already been agreed and one of the first tasks for students is to undertake research related to a particular current topic, which could be related to such social awareness issues.
- (iii) Members had received the revised Equality & Diversity Policy and Objectives.

Members **APPROVED** the revised Equality & Diversity Policy and Objectives

7. Council Standing Committee on Research Ethics

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Members had received the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2019, and the Annual Report on Research Ethics which were provided for information and presented by the Chair, Judge Wood. He noted that Dr Jeyaraj and his team had worked diligently in this area throughout the year.

8. Finance & General Purposes Committee

(i) Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee 12th March 2020 and 10th June 2020

Members had received the minutes of the meetings held on 12th March 2020 and 10th June 2020 which were presented by Mr Norbury as Chair. He noted that the financial outcome is commendable under the current circumstances with a likely surplus of at least 2%. He cautioned that FRS102 (relating to pension fund liabilities) may change this position. Mr Norbury noted that the programme of capital expenditure on the University estate had largely been suspended due to the pandemic, with only necessary maintenance work being undertaken. Fr Chris McCoy said that the surplus put the University in a strong position compared to other HEIs, particularly those locally. Ms Beecroft's management of the university's finances was praised.

(ii) Covid-19: University Position on Budgeting

Members had received the University's Budget proposal for 2020-21 which detailed the budgeting approach during the current pandemic. Mr Norbury noted that the University would usually be able to be give a more precise exact budget at this time of the year but given the uncertainties created by C-19, this was not possible. It was noted that student numbers were looking very encouraging prior to the pandemic with applications significantly increased from the same period last year. The budget outlines three scenarios: online delivery only; face-to-face; or a hybrid of the two.

Members **APPROVED** the budgeting approach.

(iii) Revised Treasury Management Policy

Members had received the Revised Treasury Management Policy which has been amended slightly to take account of developments throughout the year. Mr Norbury said the document was a good illustration of the quality and depth of the Finance Team and was very comprehensive.

Members **APPROVED** the revised Treasury Management Policy.

9. Audit and Risk Management

(i) Minutes of Audit Committee 28th January 2020 and 17th June 2020

Members had received the minutes of the meetings held on 28th January 2020 and 17th June 2020 which were presented by the Chair, Dr Naylor. Dr Naylor said that the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) had published a new Code of Practice which will be a helpful reference point when Council conducts its review of the effectiveness of Audit Committee in the coming year. He noted that risk had been discussed at length, particularly the processes for identifying and managing risks and the Committee had found

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the University's approach very reassuring. He said that he had attended a KPMG webinar where issues around *going concern* were highlighted; he said that the University's approach in this area particularly around its scenario planning suggested that the University is not being complacent but is well placed to adjust to these scenarios and remain viable. With regard to the internal audit strategy, this was still under review in relation to changing risks but would include: student applications conversion rates; Health & Safety; and – given the increase in working from home - cybersecurity.

(ii) Reserved Items

Members had been sent a confidential addendum separately for discussion. Mr Rashid and Mr Pearce were asked to leave the meeting for these items.

The first item concerned KPMG and RSM contracts which are due to finish this year. Dr Naylor explained that the University had the option to extend both contracts by one year and the Committee felt that, given the pandemic, a one-year extension would be appropriate.

Members **APPROVED** the extension of KPMG and RSM contracts for a further year.

The second item concerned the Students' Union. Details for this item are in a separate confidential minute available as an addendum to these minutes.

Members **APPROVED** the three recommendations stipulated in the original confidential addendum.

10. **Staffing Committee**

(i) Minutes of the meetings held on 5th March 2020 and 3rd June 2020

Members had received for information the minutes of the meetings held on 5th March 2020 and 3rd June 2020 which were presented by Mrs Swinson, who also presented her report to Council.

(ii) Update on Covid-19

Members had received the Update on C-19 which included recent developments. Dr McClelland said that she had heard very positive feedback informally on the University's handling of C-19, particularly compared to other universities. Mr Pearce said that the student body had been very positive both about the University's measures and the manner in which it had been communicating these. He noted that he was aware other universities had not maintained the same level of communication.

(iii) Staff Data Equality and Diversity Report

Members had received the Staff Data Equality and Diversity Report for information. It was noted that the gender split had been discussed in detail and members were satisfied that it was the employment of students, who are largely female, which is skewing statistics in this area. Cllr Corbett noted that students were receiving the minimum wage rather than the living wage. It was agreed that this would be reviewed.

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(iv) Parental Bereavement Leave Policy

Members had received the Parental Bereavement Leave Policy which was a new policy.

Members **APPROVED** the Parental Bereavement Leave Policy with the request that “died” be considered instead of “passed away” throughout the Policy.

11. **Council Standing Committee on Health & Safety**

Members had received the minutes of the meetings of the Council Standing Committee on Health & Safety held on 3rd March 2020 and 10th June 2020. Fr Chris Fallon who is now Chair of the Committee thanked Ms Gittins for the comprehensive briefing she gave prior to the meeting. It was noted that the membership of Health & Safety Consultative Committee needs to be updated due to the move to a School structure. It was noted that there were four senior level C-19 working groups all of which have a health & safety focus around the agreed scenarios. The internal auditors will do a full audit of the measures taken after the summer. It was noted that training opportunities for University staff was also available for Council members; those wishing to avail themselves can do so by contacting Ms Gittens. Currently, Plas Caerdeon is closed, but members will be allowed to visit the Centre once restrictions are lifted. Sr Maureen McKnight said that the risk assessments were very thorough and commended Dr Haughan’s hard work in this area.

12. **Nominations Committee**

The minutes of the Nominations Committee held on 13th May 2020 (UC 772) were provided for information. Canon Winn as the Chair presented the minutes and noted recent changes to the membership of the Audit Committee. He also thanked outgoing members for their service to the University: Mr Haris Rashid, Dr John Bennett, Sr Mary Charles-Murray, Sr Maureen McKnight and Dr Joan McClelland.

13. **Students’ Union (SU)**

Members had received the President’s Report from the SU. Mr Rashid thank Dr Haughan, Ms Gittins, Mr Dykins, Ms Catherine Barrett and Ms Claire Talbot for their support throughout the year. He noted the cooperation he had received from the University, particularly around issues with the shuttle-bus timetable. Despite it being a challenging year for the SU, they had received positive feedback particularly from non-resident students. The Vice President for Welfare had spear-headed a number of campaigns during the year, including those relating to black history, gay pride and mental health awareness. Lockdown had produced challenges, but a great deal of effort had been put into supporting students via social media and the use of surveys.

He noted that the remit of the three Sabbatical Officers roles had been amended to give greater clarity. In recognition of the importance of sports amongst the student body, they had now created a role in this area for one of the three officers. All three appointees were being briefed and would be supported over the coming months. Cllr Corbett noted the SU had listened to students and acted upon their requests. Mr Russell commended the two current officers for doing their jobs diligently under difficult circumstances.