

CONFIRMED

LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL (REFLECTIVE): Thursday 11th October 2018

PRESENT: Revd Canon Peter Winn (in the Chair), Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Mrs Jane Beever, Dr John Bennett, Sr Dr Mary Charles-Murray SND, Mr Feidhelm Doolin, Revd Canon Chris Fallon, Dr Joan McClelland, Fr Chris McCoy, Sr Maureen McKnight SND, Dr Arthur Naylor, Revd Canon Professor Kenneth Newport, Professor Gerald Pillay, Mr Ultan Russell, Mrs Diane Shaw, Mrs Maggie Swinson, Dr Sonja Tiernan, Professor Ian Vandewalle, HH Judge Graham Wood QC (20 members)

By invitation: Ms L Gittins (Clerk to Council), Mr Derrick Dykins (minute secretary) Dr Penny Haughan for item 2

1. The Chair **received apologies of absence** from Mr Mike Gilbertson Dr Simon Hulme, Mr Charles Mills (Vice-Chair) and Mr John Norbury. The Chair welcomed all new members to the meeting and each member introduced themselves briefly.
2. **Widening Participation at Liverpool Hope University**

The Chair introduced Dr Haughan for the first substantive item on the agenda. She advised Council that the University's submission to the Office for Students (OfS) had been successful and that part of the submission had included a section on widening participation, and it was felt that this would be an appropriate meeting for members to hear more about the University's strategy in this area. She handed out copies of the submission and gave a presentation to give more context to the document.

Dr Haughan began by noting that the University had been a proponent for widening participation since its origins almost 175 years ago and it is still enshrined in the University's Corporate Plan. KPIs showed that the University exceeded its benchmarks in terms of disability and low participation neighbourhoods, though Dr Haughan explained the broader categories considered, including socio-economic status, ethnicity, age and care leavers, all of which present different challenges in the areas of access, retention, degree outcomes and progression to employment or further study.

The presentation included details of the Shaping Futures initiative for the Liverpool City region which is run in collaboration with 12 local HEI providers. It has been targeted by the OfS to work with 14-18 year olds from low participation neighbourhoods in the region. She detailed a wide range of activities delivered at schools and workshops to support the University's efforts in widening participation, including library support, mock interviews and interview techniques, finance, study skills, exam preparation, campus visits and academic taster sessions. The Roadshow Bus also goes on tour to promote the University in a wide variety of locations, and the University hosts and promotes a number of high profile events such as British Science Week, The Big Hope 2 Conference, the Children's University and the Hope Challenge which supports local authorities to maintain standards in their schools.

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Other areas include the Network of Hope provision which specifically targets underrepresented groups in Bury, Blackburn and St Helens.

Mr Russell noted that previous meetings had expressed concern over resources for students from Northern Ireland. Dr Haughan said this would continue to be monitored. Dr Haughan noted that many issues presented when certain students were on their course, and that it was critical that the University focussed on the achievement of these groups of students. Judge Wood queried whether the University was in danger of stigmatising certain groups; Dr Haughan said that the University supported all students, but that identification of certain groups of students was limited to staff so they were able to make discreet adjustments where necessary. Dr Bennett noted that the introduction of a Foundation Year was also significant in supporting the University's widening participation agenda.

Members asked for the ratio of home-based versus residential students and were advised that this was approximately 50%, with those staying in Halls more likely to be retained and to succeed. Dr Haughan said that individual student timetables this year had been detailed to include activities for non-teaching sessions to encourage self-directed activity and encourage non-residential students to spend more time on campus.

Dr McClelland asked about students in receipt of Disability Support Allowance and was advised that fewer students were eligible, creating further challenges for the University. Responding to a query from Bishop Paul about the HESA data, Dr Haughan explained that the postcode statistics did not always explain the true narrative. Mrs Swinson asked whether the University had analysed results specifically for BME students; Dr Haughan said that those with Afro-Caribbean heritage tended to do less well academically. It was also noted that pressures on students to work while studying full-time often created further issues with engagement.

3. **University Council: Effectiveness Review**

Members had received a range of documentation which gave background to the Role of the Clerk and Company Secretary, the Nolan principles, the University constitution, and the HE Code of Governance, Minutes and action plan from the last review conducted in 2014 were included. Ms Gittins presented the documentation and noted that the creation of the OfS had markedly changed the significance of the governing body in line with the sector move to viewing students as consumers.

She advised that the review would result in a formal action plan which would then become a standing item on the University Council agenda. Members were then put into five groups and tasked with considering different areas that are likely to be a major focus of the review.

Group 1 were asked to focus on the skills profile of University Council. They acknowledged that certain hard skills such as audit, finance, staffing and health & safety were key elements to the skills mix of the governing body. However, they also felt that the role of the governing body went beyond this, as Council was the guardian of the mission and values of the University. It was also noted that too much focus on technical skills could create a counterproductive tension between the management of the University and University Council. The Group agreed that CVs should be circulated so members had a better grasp of the overall skillset of Council. They also felt it was important that Chairs of sub-committees of Council served on the governing body before

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being appointed. The use of "critical friends" would help give confidence to members in certain roles.

Group 2 considered induction and development activities for members. It was agreed that a more comprehensive programme of induction would be beneficial to new members, and include visits to all campuses and documentation regarding the wider committee structure.

Group 3 reflected whether processes relating to due diligence for decisions which may have a significant reputational or financial risk give adequate assurances. They felt that approximately five primary functions needed to be defined and summarised, and noted that it was important to differentiate between strategic and operational decisions. They agreed that Council represented a number of different stakeholders and queried whether this was understood properly and reported back as stakeholders.

Group 4 looked at compliance with Equality and Diversity legislation. Overall, they felt that the University had a very good track record in this area, both in terms of its staff, student body and policies. They felt it was an important area for Council to keep on top of and to ensure that benchmarks were borne in mind.

Group 5 considered whether the University required a separate effectiveness review of Audit Committee and agreed that it did.

Other general comments referred to finding effective ways of navigating the large quantity of material that was provided for each meeting.

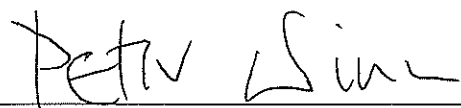
This reflective meeting was the starting point of the review and following this all members would be sent a link to an extensive online survey, the results of which would form the basis of the review. Ms Gittins requested that a small working group from amongst members be formed to drive the review. It was agreed that the Chair of Council, Mrs Swinson and Fr McCoy would represent members. An additional member external to University Council may be requested.

Dates of Future Meetings

- Tuesday 27th November 2018 (AGM)
- Thursday 11th April 2019 4.00 pm
- Tuesday 9th July 2019 4.00 pm
- *Tuesday 1st October 2019 (Reflective)
- *Tuesday 26th November 2019 (AGM)

*To be confirmed

Signed as a true and accurate record, by Revd Canon Peter Winn



Date:

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