



Minutes for Council (Business meeting)

Open minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2022 on Microsoft Teams.

Present:

- Ms Maggie Galliers (Independent [Chair]);
- Ms Irene Kirkman (Independent [Deputy Chair]);
- Professor Nick Braisby (Vice-Chancellor);
- Dr Ze'ev Portner (Academic Representative);
- Ms Emma Binnie (PSE Representative);
- Mr Andy Cole (Independent);
- Ms Anna Crabtree (Independent);
- Ms Emily Crawshaw (Student Co-opted Member);
- Ms Annet Gamell (Independent);
- Ms Sadie Groom (Independent);
- Professor Florin Ioras (Senate Representative);
- Mr Anthony Murphy (Independent);
- Dr Susan Rosser (Independent);
- Mr John Smith (Independent);
- Ms Supriya Sobti (Independent);
- Ms Jackie Westaway (Independent);
- Ms Hilary Mullen (Senate Representative);
- Mr Steve Kennett (Independent);
- Ms Charlotte Leighton-Woods (Students' Union President)

In attendance:

- Mr Trevor Gabriele (Chief Financial Officer);
- Mr Ian Harper (Commercial and Business Director);
- Professor Paul Morgan (Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience));
- Ms Anna Buckett (Head of Policy and Strategy);
- Mr Matt Hiely-Rayner (Director of Strategic Planning and Change);
- Dr Emma Tomsett (Secretary)

Welcome / Apologies for Absence

22.173 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted three apologies:

- Professor Rachel Cragg (Pro Vice-Chancellor - Education and Digital)
- Ms Ellie Smith (University Secretary and Clerk to Council)

- Ms Karen Satterford (Co-Opted Member).

22.174 A warm welcome was extended to new Students' Union (SU) President Ms Charlotte Leighton-Woods, who was attending her first meeting.

22.175 The Chair expressed regret that Council was unable to meet in person as originally planned, but concerns about the extreme weather conditions, and the possible impact on travel conditions, had led to the decision to move the meeting online. It was hoped that it might be possible to rearrange the Council annual dinner in the autumn.

22.176 The Chair noted some members had requested more time to review papers ahead of meetings and apologised for the numbering of the papers on BoardEffect being changed by the addition of a late paper. The Chair welcomed the greater use of tables, graphs and other diagrams in the meeting papers.

22.177 The Chair noted there were serious matters to discuss, but also matters to celebrate.

Declaration of conflicts of interest

22.178 Academic staff members of Council declared an interest in the ongoing 2022-2023 pay negotiations between the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the five HE trade unions (TUs).

22.179 The Chair advised Council that she had been appointed as Chair of the National Housing Federation (NHF) from 1 September 2022, noting that there were some complementary elements between the work undertaken by the NHF and BNU.

Minutes of the previous meeting

22.180 The Open Minutes of the Council meeting held on 31 May 2022 were approved as an accurate record subject to the amendment of one member's title.

Action: Secretary Dr Emma Tomsett

22.181 The Reserved Minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2022 were approved as an accurate record without amendment.

Matters arising / Status of Actions

22.182 Council noted the updates to the actions as outlined on the action sheet.

22.183 It was agreed that the Secretary Dr Emma Tomsett would seek confirmation from University Secretary and Clerk to Council Ms Ellie Smith that action 22.159 had been completed.

Action: Secretary Dr Emma Tomsett

22.184 It was noted that review meetings with Council members were now underway, and the Chair would provide a report outlining the emerging themes at the end of the current review cycle.

Chair's Action

22.185 It was noted that the Chair had been a co-signatory alongside the Vice-Chancellor to the main Construction Contract for the High Wycombe estate development since Council last met.

University Matters

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council

22.186 Council noted the Vice-Chancellor's report. The Vice-Chancellor Professor Nick Braisby apologised for Council not receiving his report as early as he had planned. The Vice-Chancellor drew Council's attention to the following points:

- the University had achieved a very striking success in its National Student Survey (NSS) 2022 results, having increased overall satisfaction substantially from 2021, although not yet back to the level achieved in 2020;
- ongoing sector discontent regarding payment negotiations between UCEA and the TUs. Two unions had indicated they would ballot their members regarding industrial action; it was not known yet if this would impact BNU, but the University would monitor this;
- BNU was reviewing how it could 'green its campuses';
- BNU had been approached by Buckinghamshire Council regarding renting the restored Engine Shed in High Wycombe. BNU had formally expressed interest in the tenancy, and understood it was the Council's preferred tenant. Renting this space to create gallery/exhibition space, a new location for the business innovation hub and on-site commercial developments would release space on campus that would be dedicated to teaching and enable further growth. It would also give the University a visible presence at the centre of High Wycombe. BNU had commissioned a company to engage in discussions/negotiations on its behalf and to determine whether the Engine Shed could be secured on commercial terms that would be acceptable to the University;
- BNU had submitted a three-year bid for Office for Students (OfS) capital funding to develop general teaching space and specialised teaching space for computing, health and social care and engineering, as bids are only permitted for high-cost courses. BNU will receive the OfS decision in September. The Vice-Chancellor remarked that it had been unreasonable of the OfS to only allow providers five weeks to submit their bids;
- the recent staff survey results had been benchmarked against Great Places to Work outcomes. These benchmarks are high which meant that BNU missed almost all benchmarks. The Vice-Chancellor and executive team would be holding open meetings with staff regarding the results;
- the University had offered the posts of Heads of the Schools of Business and Law and Aviation and Security to two candidates. It believed the candidate for the Head of School of Business and Law had been secured;
- Thirteen candidates had applied for the Head of School for the Missenden Abbey International Hotel School and the University was hopeful of achieving a successful outcome;
- a new round of academic promotions had been completed and the University believed the process followed had been much improved from previous rounds;
- BNU had been nominated for a prestigious Green Gown Award for its Bucks New Usage scheme, which encourages students to recycle homeware items;
- BNU had recently become a founding member of the Nature Positive Universities scheme;
- in 2011, BNU's former Newlands Park campus was sold with a hypothetical overage capped at £1,000,000. Despite having previously been advised to waive such overage on the grounds that it would

not transpire, the Vice-Chancellor was pleased to report that BNU would now receive the payment of £1,000,000;

- BNU had done exceptionally well in the 2022 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), being ranked first in the UK for satisfaction, with overall satisfaction at 96%;
- BNU was currently fractionally below on Accepts for Full-time Undergraduate students compared to this time last year, which the University believed is due to a change to the UCAS decline-by-default date. BNU remained optimistic about recruitment for 2022-2023.

22.187 The Chair congratulated all staff on the excellent NSS results.

22.188 Council members raised several queries on the report's update regarding the Student Connect project. In response to those queries, the Vice-Chancellor advised

- the new student records system (SRS) would have been installed by this time if the original system had been delivered by the supplier as initially assured;
- BNU was going out to tender for a new system, but was not excluding current supplier Thesis (previously Unit 4) from the tendering process;
- he was confident that BNU had achieved a better support arrangement for its existing SRS, QLS, as it was now cloud-based and more resilient
- he anticipated a better experience as BNU was considering highly-regarded extant products from suppliers TechnologyOne and Ellucian.

22.189 The Vice-Chancellor assured Council that BNU had undertaken an extensive review of the Student Connect project and its implications.

22.190 Council members commented that it was disappointing that, in the staff survey, 41% of staff were not proud to work at the University. Council also asked whether it would be helpful to engage an employee engagement programme to do more regular surveys as it had been several years since the last major survey in 2018, and the current recommendation was to survey staff every three months.

22.191 The Vice-Chancellor agreed the result for the question about whether staff were proud to work at BNU was disappointing, but noted that the results for this question varied by team/area. Also, the figure of 41% includes staff who chose to answer "don't know/can't say". The survey provider has commented that the University has a large proportion of responses in this category, rather than a large number of negative responses, and therefore felt there were grounds for optimism in improving staff sentiment further.

22.192 The University had not carried out a full staff survey since 2018 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but had done several pulse surveys on specific issues instead which tied in with the three-month recommendation.

22.193 The Vice-Chancellor assured Council that the University had budgeted for the 3.18% increase in academic pay offered by the UCEA and would not experience any difficulty meeting this.

22.194 The Chair noted that Council had been asked to approve the extended budget for the High Wycombe estates development, but the overall results of the vote had not been circulated. It would be helpful if the University Secretary and Clerk to Council could circulate the overall results to assure Council that there had been a clear majority in favour of the extended budget.

Action: University Secretary and Clerk to Council Ms Ellie Smith

- 22.195 The Chair also recommended that Council listened to the Vice-Chancellor's recent *Let's Talk BNU* podcast featuring his reflections on Pride.

Office for Students Investigation

- 22.196 This item was considered as Reserved Business. See the Reserved Minutes.

Office for Students Reportable Events

- 22.197 Council noted the OfS Conditions of Registration Tracker, Reportable Events Procedure and Tracker and the agreed process by which Council was assured on academic quality and standards.
- 22.198 The Vice-Chancellor informed Council that Conditions B1, B2 and B4 had been changed to 'Under Review' due to the item considered under Reserved Business, but BNU remained compliant with all other conditions.
- 22.199 Chair of Audit Committee Ms Supriya Sobti advised Council that the Committee had only reviewed some of the ongoing conditions of registration and had asked for a wider outline of which committees reviewed which conditions. Deputy Chair of Council Ms Irene Kirkman agreed it would be helpful for each Council committee to understand which condition it was reviewing.
- 22.200 There was a broad discussion about whether Audit Committee should be responsible for academic quality in addition to academic risk, or another committee of Council. The Chair reminded members that Council had agreed the process by which Council was assured on academic quality and standards at its away day following the decision to end the annual joint meeting of Senate and Council.
- 22.201 Council queried when and how frequently Council should see the BNU's institutional risk register. It was agreed that the University Secretary and Clerk to Council or Secretary would clarify when Council reviewed the institutional risk register.

Action: Ellie Smith / Dr Emma Tomsett

- 22.202 Ms Sobti queried what the threshold was for a reportable event. The Vice-Chancellor advised Council that the OfS definition of a reportable event was detailed in paragraph 7 of the Reportable Events Procedure while Appendix 1 of the procedure provided an illustrative list of what the OfS deemed reportable events. The OfS was unwilling to provide any further guidance on what was, or was not, a reportable event; the OfS expected providers to use their own judgement to determine if an event was reportable. The OfS would also penalise providers for over or under reporting events.

UKVI Student Route Compliance Inspection: Update

- 22.203 Council considered the update on the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Student Route Compliance Inspection.

22.204 Academic Representative Dr Ze'ev Portner commented that he had recently read that there was a six-week delay to the issuing of UK visas and asked if this would impact BNU's ability to recruit international students. The Vice-Chancellor advised Council that until the UKVI indicated the outcome of the inspection, the University could not issue any more Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) so no applicant could reach the point where a visa needed to be issued.

22.205 BNU was seeking advice from legal firm Penningtons about what could be done to encourage UKVI to provide the outcome of the inspection sooner rather than later.

22.206 The Chair was pleased to note that the allocation of CAS requested for 2022-2023 did not include plans to recruit any further students to MKNCC closed cohorts. The Chair also welcomed the increased focus on attendance and the Attendance Monitoring System.

Key Performance Indicators

22.207 Council considered an annual update on the Impact 2022 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Director of Strategic Planning and Change Mr Matt Hiely-Rayner advised Council that the papers had been prepared before the NSS 2022 results were known.

22.208 Mr Hiely-Rayner highlighted the following points to Council:

- of the nine KPIs, five were rated Green and two were rated Amber;
- The KPI for the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) remained silver as the TEF exercise had not been repeated during Impact 2022 so could not be updated;
- The Satisfaction KPI had been updated to Green following the latest NSS results;
- The improvement in the NSS 2022 results compared to the large fall against the target in the 2021 NSS was outstanding, and BNU was now one of the leading providers when satisfaction was averaged across all questions;
- BNU's performance in the NSS was good compared to all of BNU's competitors and would have an impact in the Sunday Times and Good University Guide league tables;
- it should be anticipated that other providers might recover to their 2020 satisfaction levels in 2023 so BNU could not be complacent;
- BNU had achieved its Impact 2022 target of recruiting 7,000 - 7,500 core students: in March 2022 BNU had 7,125FTE students. The sector had also grown as a whole, and while BNU was one of the fastest growing institutions. with growth of 16.8% between March 2021 and March 2022, the institution did not appear to be an outlier.

22.209 The Chair commended Mr Hiely-Rayner for his use of tables, graphs, RAG-ratings and charts, which she would like to see in more Council papers. The longitudinal data provided was also extremely helpful.

22.210 The Chair commented that Council was pleased by the KPI performance and looked forward to developing the KPIs for the Thrive 28 strategy.

Access and Participation Plan: Variation for OfS

22.211 Head of Policy and Strategy Ms Anna Buckett introduced the variation to BNU's Access and Participation Plan (APP) which the OfS required all providers to submit by 31 July 2022. The variation included more robust targets around the awarding gap for Asian students; continuation rates for ethnic

minority students; and additional actions around the Curriculum 23 change programme and working with local schools.

22.212 The Chair noted the excellent work done to support Care Leavers and asked how this work could be applied to address the attainment gaps for White Young Male and Asian students. Ms Buckett agreed more work was needed to address the gap for White Young Male students, especially from more deprived areas.

22.213 The Vice-Chancellor congratulated Ms Buckett for her excellent work on the variation but advised Council that the OfS's response to APPs had been varied: some APPs had been heavily scrutinised before approval and others approved quickly. The University could not therefore anticipate how the OfS would respond to its variation. Ms Buckett agreed that feedback from, and discussion with, the OfS would be likely before the OfS approved the variation.

22.214 Council approved the variation: the amended APP, the APP summary and the APP investment and targets schedule.

NSS 2022 Results

22.215 Council considered a report on the NSS 2022 Results. Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) Professor Morgan thanked Council for its support and encouragement on NSS 2022.

22.216 Professor Morgan noted that achieving a successful outcome had to be a cross-institutional team effort. Student feedback needed to be responded to quickly and in a joined-up manner.

22.217 Professor Morgan and Dean of Students Ms Emma Binnie presented a slide deck outlining the results, drawing Council's attention to the following highlights:

- BNU's performance was above benchmark for all 10 NSS themes apart from Learning Resources (which had still seen an increase of more than 10% from the 2021 results);
- BNU had risen by 92 places to 15th in the UK for overall satisfaction (which had increased by 10% from 2021 for all taught students) for full-time students;
- BNU was now in the top 30 of all UK universities for overall satisfaction for all students;
- BNU was now 5th in the UK for average student satisfaction (average for all questions) for full-time students;
- the SU was ranked 2nd in the UK;
- Results for assessment and feedback, learning community and student voice were significantly above benchmark;
- 79% satisfaction amongst registered (partner) students was the highest result ever achieved by BNU's partners;
- areas identified for future action included Policing, Criminology, Law and Business. All Schools had recently presented their NSS priorities to the UET;
- all teams would receive data analysis/training;
- the intention was to continue meeting individually with every partner to share practice and drive continuous improvement.

22.218 The Vice-Chancellor commended Professor Morgan and Ms Binnie for their excellent performance since assuming their new posts. The Vice-Chancellor was very pleased that in some areas BNU had

outperformed the University of West London, University of St Andrews and Aberystwyth University, who were always ranked amongst the highest for satisfaction.

22.219 Senate representative Ms Hilary Mullen commented staff were delighted by the results and may well now feel much more positive about being proud to work at BNU.

22.220 Academic representative Dr Portner commented that the Law team looked forward to working with Professor Morgan to improve their results.

22.221 Council was very gratified by the results, and particularly welcomed comparisons with other providers, of which they would appreciate more. Council noted that the improved results followed early planning for the NSS completion period and increased participation rates. Council welcomed the clear identification of action points.

BNU Strategy: Thrive 2028

22.222 Council considered the final draft of the new Thrive 28 strategy for approval. The Vice-Chancellor advised that consultations within BNU had been positive and had led to one significant change to the strategy: inclusivity had been added as a theme. Other changes to the previous drafts seen by Council were minor.

22.223 The Chair noted that KPIs and a dashboard for Thrive 28 would follow in the autumn.

22.224 Council held a robust discussion of the strategy. Council members expressed some concern regarding the lack of KPIs and targets / measures / goals, which Council had had sight of when it approved the Impact 2022 strategy.

22.225 Council members also asked how Thrive 28 would be operationalised and if it had been evaluated financially. Deputy Chair of Council Ms Irene Kirkman commented that she expected that the financial forecast to 2026-2027 would be modified to align with / reflect Thrive 28.

22.226 The Vice-Chancellor advised Council that BNU needed some time to develop measures as some were novel and complex, but it had already committed to working with Goal Atlas to convert Thrive 28's broad strategic statements into deliverables, which would then drive BNU's planning rounds. This would also help BNU identify units/directorates which were not performing well enough on a particular target and launch projects to address underperformance.

22.227 The strategy must work within the University's existing financial envelope; the challenge for the University Executive Team (UET) was to ensure Thrive 28 was delivered within the budget BNU already had. BNU would not borrow to deliver Thrive 28: it had identified significant capital sums for investment. This financial envelope for Thrive 28 was from the University's surplus.

22.228 Chief Finance Officer Mr Trevor Gabriele assured Council that when BNU set the long-term financial forecast it had tried to reflect the strategy. On the assumption that the financial forecast was delivered, it would produce up to £50 million investment in the University's strategic themes.

- 22.229 Independent Member Mr Anthony Murphy noted that sustainability would become increasingly important to students and suggested it could be helpful to establish a UET-Council Sustainability Task and Finish Group.
- 22.230 Independent Member Ms Jackie Westaway asked if there should be some reference to competition for recruitment in the strategy given BNU operates in a marketplace. The Vice-Chancellor agreed that some items on the competitive environment should be added.
- 22.231 The Vice-Chancellor advised Council that the Thrive targets would be for 2028.
- 22.232 The Chair noted that the budget and the strategy needed to be aligned, that many items in Thrive 28 were already built into the budget, and that Council would need to approve the targets for the strategy, but asked if Council was happy to approve the text presented to it.
- 22.233 Council approved the text of the Thrive 28 strategy presented at the meeting subject to minor amendments in wording to address the comments concerning the University's competitive environment.

Budget for 2022-2023 and four-year forecast

- 22.234 Chief Finance Officer Mr Gabriele presented the 2022-2023 budget and Financial Forecast to 2026-2027 to Council. Mr Gabriele advised Council that
- the budget had been reviewed in depth by Resources Committee at its last meeting;
 - the budget reflected the strong performance in 2021-2022, after which BNU would have £7.5-£8 million surplus;
 - work continued on staff balance, with 73 new posts recommended, mostly academic but some professional services employee (PSE) posts to address capacity issues for certain professional services;
 - growth assumptions were modest: BNU wanted to grow its core of Home students, supplemented by Overseas students;
 - it had settled on a figure of £5 million as a surplus, which would leave BNU with £20-£30 million cash to invest.
- 22.235 Chair of Resources Committee Ms Anna Crabtree confirmed that Resources Committee had reviewed the budget in detail. The Committee had reviewed staff costs, inflation, student recruitment and continuity and partnership income. The Committee had agreed the £5 million surplus was sufficient buffer for the budget and had been content to recommend the budget to Council for approval.
- 22.236 SU President Ms Charlotte Leighton-Woods commented that it was unclear where any extra funding requested by the SU would come from. Mr Gabriele confirmed that BNU had gone through a planning round with the SU and approved an extra £100,000 in their 2022-23 block grant. The SU could bring business cases for any other funding requests to UET.
- 22.237 Independent Member Mr John Smith asked if there were figures available for the breakdown between PSE and academic staff from other providers that BNU could benchmark itself against. Mr Gabriele commented that this comparison / benchmarking could be considered when developing KPIs. It was noted that BNU could also review data from Tribal.

22.238 Mr Gabriele also remarked that if BNU's financial trajectory was met the University's Capital Projects Group would consider what other opportunities this allowed for investment.

22.239 Mr Gabriele advised Council that the budget was predicated on the same volume of partner students as the previous budget, but the income retained by BNU was increasing due to improved retention and a shift in balance between a lower-fee partner and a higher-fee contract. As BNU grew its core activity, there should be a decline in its partner provision, but this needed to be worked through in greater detail.

22.240 Mr Gabriele also advised Council that the budget was predicated on 350 new Overseas students in 2022-23. Offers had been made to 200 students already, but final recruitment was dependent on the CAS allowance for the year. BNU would monitor international recruitment and if a reduction would have any negative impact on the surplus.

22.241 Council approved the Budget and the Financial Forecast to 2026-2027.

Graduate Outcomes Update

22.242 Council considered an update on the Impact 2022 graduate outcomes KPI, which was rated Amber as BNU had not met benchmark. Director of Strategic Planning and Change Mr Hiely-Rayner advised Council that the University was very close to its target, and that the government used the results from the graduate outcomes survey as a measure of value-for-money. Mr Hiely-Rayner also informed Council that

- the survey was conducted 15 months after graduation and response rates tended to be low, so its reliability was limited, but it was still important;
- the sector had only received a metric for graduate outcomes in 2022, but it would be important for the next TEF, where it would be used as a main metric;
- the sector had metrics for 2017-18 and 2018-19, and BNU had used its own metric for 2019-20;
- in 2017-18, 72.5% of BNU graduates were in a job that was classified as professional, managerial, or technical, or were in further education or were doing another activity that was regarded as a positive outcome;
- 2018-19 outcomes saw a slight decline from the 2017-18 performance, which could have been due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- the 2019-20 outcomes saw a slight improvement although not to 2017-18 levels. BNU had not yet seen sector data.
- Strategic Planning and Change monitored whether any subjects are causing concern, of which there were some.

22.243 The Chair asked how BNU would address the gap between its own and its sub-contractual partners' graduate outcomes. Mr Hiely-Rayner advised that BNU's partners outperformed their benchmarks, but their benchmarks were low: some of the risk of this metric would be based on absolute numbers. The metric that would be used in the TEF would be used in School Enhancement Reviews (SERs) and action plans would be requested.

22.244 Mr Hiely-Rayner also advised Council that outcomes for self-employed students were regarded differently: being a self-employed taxi driver was not seen as a positive outcome; being a self-employed musician was seen as a positive outcome.

Degree Outcomes Statement

22.245 Council considered the Degree Outcomes Statement 2021-2022. The Vice-Chancellor drew Council's attention to the following points:

- the Statement helped BNU meet the OfS Ongoing Conditions of Registration B4 and B5;
- it was an annual statement;
- there had been a slight decline in the attainment of good honours (First Class and Second Class (Upper Division) Honours) in 2020-2021 compared to 2019-20, which the University believed was partly due to the lifting of the *No Detriment Policy* and more significantly due to partner institutions not delivering good honours;
- BNU would be launching a new degree algorithm in autumn 2022 which would impact the 2023 Statement. While BNU needed to be careful to avoid grade inflation, BNU currently had the lowest rate for the attainment of good honours amongst all UK Universities.

22.246 Council approved the Degree Outcomes Statement 2021-2022.

Students' Union President's Report

22.247 Council received a verbal update from the SU President Ms Leighton-Woods. Ms Leighton-Woods reported that the SU had been delighted by the NSS results. The SU's current priorities were:

- developing its new strategic plan that would be launched in September;
- supporting students through the cost-of-living crisis;
- expanding the reach of the Big Deal, particularly to Asian students;
- increasing its support for Overseas students to ensure they thrived at BNU;
- enhancing students' sense of safety, inclusion and equality on BNU's campuses;
- delivering a broad and diverse co-curricula offer that appealed to all students and helped them develop life and employment skills;
- becoming the top ranked SU in the UK in NSS 2023.

22.248 Council looked forward to working with Ms Leighton-Woods.

Minutes from University Committees

22.249 This had been declared a starred item that would not be discussed unless the Secretary had received any comments on it from Council members prior to the meeting. No comments had been sent to the Secretary so the minutes of the following university committees were received without discussion:

- Senate (8 June 2022)
- Education Committee (11 May 2022)
- Research and Enterprise Committee (30 May 2022).

OIA Annual Statement

22.250 This had also been declared a starred item that would not be discussed unless the Secretary had received any comments on it from Council members prior to the meeting. No comments had been sent to the Secretary so the OIA Annual Statement 2021 was noted without discussion.

Use of the University Seal and Coat of Arms

22.251 This had been declared another starred item that would not be discussed unless the Secretary had received any comments on it from Council members prior to the meeting. No comments had been sent to the Secretary so the report was noted without discussion.

Audit Committee

22.252 Council received the summary of the work of Audit Committee since the previous two meetings of Council, including the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022.

22.253 The Chair of Audit Committee, Ms Sobti, advised Council that the Committee had received only Limited Assurance on BNU's environmental sustainability. Further consideration was needed regarding how sustainability was managed in BNU and reported between the University and Council. The Committee had considered whether BNU's internal auditors should also review academic quality and standards. The Committee had also requested a list of which compliance statements / policies should be reviewed by which committees.

22.254 The Chair of Council noted that BNU now had a Head of Sustainability who would be taking the sustainability agenda forward.

22.255 Independent member Mr Smith asked, in relation to minute 22.67 in the Open Minutes of the meeting on 7 June, which Conditions of Registration would be reviewed as part of the Internal Audit Plan in the coming year. Ms Sobti advised this information would be shared once it had been supplied by the internal auditors.

Student Experience Committee

22.256 Council received the summary of the work of Student Experience Committee (SEC) since the previous two meetings of Council, including the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2022. In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, SEC member Ms Annet Gamell reported the following to Council:

- the Committee had met twice since the last meetings of Council: on 13 June and then at an extraordinary meeting on 11 July to explore more aspects of the SU's Big Deal (the minutes of which were not yet available);
- SEC had considered lots of success factors in the Big Deal during the June meeting, but they had been soft factors and social events; the Committee had asked the SU for further data;
- the SU had provided further data on 11 July which had enabled SEC to approve the SU's Block Grant for 2022-23 with a £100,000 uplift;
- the Committee had asked the SU and Strategic Planning and Change to do further analysis of Big Deal data, which would deliver an expanded analysis and a more detailed action plan, for the Committee's consideration in the autumn;

- the Committee had expressed serious governance concerns about the SU's actions to appoint a fourth sabbatical officer / trustee and had asked the SU to review its current position of having two methods (referenda and extraordinary general meetings) to achieve an outcome as the use of the latter to address the former appeared undemocratic. The minutes of the meeting of 13 June had been slightly amended after the meeting on 11 July to reflect these concerns. They would be approved again at the next meeting of SEC and then reported again to Council;
- the Committee had reviewed its Terms of Reference and membership;
- SEC had welcomed the new SU sabbatical team and thanked the outgoing team;
- the Committee had challenged the SU to enhance all activities in relation to the Big Deal and evidence it, and the SU was to be congratulated on meeting this challenge.

22.257 The Chair thanked the Committee for holding the additional meeting to review the Big Deal data and analysis.

Governance Committee

22.258 Council received the summary of the work of Governance Committee since the previous two meetings of Council, including the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022. The Chair of Governance Committee, Ms Irene Kirkman, advised Council that at its July meeting the Committee had:

- approved an amendment to the SU Constitution to enable it to appoint a fourth sabbatical trustee / officer, and had asked the SU to review the effectiveness of this additional post in one year;
- received an analysis of the updated Council skills matrix, which would inform recruitment planning;
- approved the constitution of the Missenden Abbey Board, of which a Council member would be Chair.

Membership Update - July 2022

22.259 Council endorsed the following appointment to take effect from 1 August 2022:

- Ms Danielle Ackerman as the student co-opted member, replacing Ms Emily Crawshaw whose term of office would end on 31 July 2022.

Deputy Chair of Council

22.260 Independent Member Mr Andy Cole left the meeting before consideration of this item.

22.261 Council ratified the appointment of Mr Andy Cole as Deputy Chair of Council from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2024, replacing Ms Irene Kirkman whose term of office would end on 31 July 2022, as approved by Governance Committee on 5 July 2022.

22.262 Mr Cole re-joined the meeting at this point. The Chair of Council Ms Galliers congratulated him on his appointment.

22.263 The Chair of Council thanked Ms Kirkman for her outstanding work as Deputy Chair for four years, and for her work overseeing the division of the Remuneration Committee into the Vice-Chancellor Remuneration and Staff Reward Committees. The Chair also thanked Ms Kirkman for her support during her first year as Chair and for all the extra work Ms Kirkman had done outside meetings.

University Council: Calendar of Meetings (2022-2023)

22.264 Council approved the University Council: Calendar of Meetings (2022-2023).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report

22.265 Council noted the report *Being You at BNU: Our revised approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 2022* without comment.

Resources Committee

22.266 Council received the summary of the work of Resources Committee since the previous two meetings of Council, including the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2022. The Committee had also met on 12 July 2022, but the minutes of that meeting were not yet available. The Chair of Resources Committee, Ms Crabtree, informed Council that at this meeting the Committee had, amongst other matters:

- discussed the High Wycombe estate development, including the contract clause that depended on the outcome of two planning applications;
- agreed to recommend the proposed tuition fees for 2023-2024 for non-controlled provision to Council for approval;
- discussed the 2022-2023 Budget and four-year Financial Forecast.

Tuition fees for 2023-204 for non-controlled provision

22.267 Council approved the tuition fees for non-controlled provision as recommended by Resources Committee.

Treasury Management Report

22.268 Council approved the Treasury Management Report as recommended by Resources Committee.

High Wycombe Development Oversight Group (HWDOG)

22.269 Council approved the reserved minutes of the meetings of HWDOG on 8 April, 4 May, 1 June and 16 June 2022.

22.270 Council noted that HWDOG had approved the expanded budget for the High Wycombe estate development. The Chair of Council commented that the expanded budget was not without risk as there was very little contingency. Council agreed that all projects must have a contingency appropriate to the risk.

22.271 Chief Finance Officer Mr Gabriele confirmed to Council that the second planning application for the development could be approved by a planning officer rather than a full planning committee. Construction company Maris had extended the period for planning permission to be received to 14 weeks. If planning permission was not received after this period, further discussions would be needed within the Group.

22.272 The Chair assured Council that a legal-lessons-learned exercise would be performed to de-risk future projects, but Council should be confident that, given the cash balance BNU currently held, the University could comfortably accommodate any slight increases over the agreed budget. The Vice-Chancellor also confirmed that the University would be conducting a full legal lessons-learned exercise, that the legal advice given was not as clear and explicit as it should have been, but that the Group has been assured that any residual risk to the University is very low.

Thanks to departing members

22.273 The Chair formally and warmly thanked Professor Florin Ioras, Ms Honor Fletcher and Ms Emily Crawshaw - whose terms of office would end on 31 July 2022 - for their time spent supporting the work of Council.

22.274 Dr Portner thanked Ms Galliers for her excellent chairing of Council over the past year.

Date of next meeting

22.275 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 11 October 2022. It would be a Strategy meeting held at Missenden Abbey starting at 4.00pm.

22.276 Council was reminded that Graduation 2022 would be held in the week commencing 5 September 2022. Attendance at each ceremony by one Council member would be preferred, alongside a higher number of members attending the investiture of Jay Blades MBE as Chancellor on 9 September.