



Bangor University

COUNCIL MINUTES

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 26th November 2021.

Present:

Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Mr James Avison, Mr Mabon Dafydd, Professor Iwan Davies, Dr Myfanwy Davies, Mr Atul Devani, Mr Eric Hepburn, Dr Griff Jones, Dr Llion Jones, Sir Paul Lambert, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Ms Julie Perkins, Dr Ian Rees, Professor Gareth Roberts, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Dr Lynne Williams, Professor Jean White and Mrs Gwenan Hine (Secretary).

Apologies: Mr Marc Jones and Mr Kailesh Karavadra

In attendance:

Professor Nicky Callow, Professor Andrew Edwards, Mr Rob Eastwood, Mrs Tracy Hibbert, Dr Kevin Mundy, Professor Paul Spencer, Mrs Lorraine Westwood, and Mr Lars Wiegand.

In addition Mr Adrian Vickers, Fusion Partners attended for item 21.21, and Mr Mike Wilson, Head of Planning, attended for item 21.27.

The meeting was held through Zoom.

21.19 BRIEFING ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE STRATEGY

- A. Professor Andrew Edwards provided the Council with a briefing on the newly approved Welsh Language Strategy. It was noted that the Strategy had been out for consultation with students, staff and stakeholders, and had been amended following comments received during that period, prior to being approved by the Executive. In addition Professor Edwards informed members that part of the work undertaken on the Strategy had been to ensure that it dovetailed in with other strategies including the Teaching & Learning, Research & Innovation and Marketing & Recruitment strategies.

The Council were informed that the Strategy consisted of six Objectives, and that in addition a number of KPIs had been developed to measure the effectiveness of the objectives:

- **Ethos:** a truly bilingual university that places the Welsh language at the centre of all aspects of its work;
- **Marketing and Recruitment:** Bangor University is recognized nationally and internationally for its innovation in Welsh and bilingualism, as a first choice for Welsh speaking students, and leading on the depth, breadth and quality of Welsh medium provision;

- Teaching and Learning: a University where all students have the opportunity to study through the medium of Welsh and where students can confidently discuss their subject in both Welsh and English;
 - Research: to be recognized, internationally, as leaders in procuring and conducting world class research on various aspects of the Welsh language and bilingualism;
 - Student Experience: the satisfaction of Welsh speaking students, in all aspects of University life, is at its best in Bangor; and
 - Pontio and the Community: ensure that Bangor is an organisation that provides opportunities for everyone to engage with the Welsh language and contributes to the prosperity of the language in the community.
- C. The Chair of the Welsh Language Strategy Committee, Professor Gareth Roberts, confirmed that the Committee had been consulted on the development of the Strategy, and he welcomed the positive steps which had been undertaken not only in developing the Strategy but more generally in relation to the use of the Welsh Language at the University during recent times. Professor Roberts noted that the Committee looked forward to overseeing the further development and embedding of the Strategy over the coming months.
- D. A discussion ensued, and a number of points were raised:
- The use of the Welsh Language across University teaching, research and administration should be normalised, and in particular further work should be made within those areas of the University where there were currently fewer numbers of Welsh speakers for example in STEM subjects;
 - Raising awareness of the strategy with external stakeholders, including local businesses, was welcomed;
 - Ensuring that the University continued to prioritise providing programmes through the medium of Welsh in key professional courses such as education and nursing, was essential;
 - The introduction of immersive courses for new members of staff in the Welsh language and culture should be considered; and
 - Working collaboratively with researchers in other bilingual and multilingual countries should be explored further.
- D. The Chair, on behalf of the Council thanked Professor Edwards and his team for their hard work in producing the Strategy which provided an ambitious but extremely positive way forward for the University.

21.20 UPDATES

- A. The Vice-Chancellor provided the Council with updates relating to the Higher Education landscape in Wales and the UK. In particular the following matters were noted:

[1] Tertiary Education and Research Bill (Wales)

The Vice-Chancellor referred to the Welsh Government Minister for Education's statement to the Senedd recently in relation to the forthcoming Tertiary Education and Research (TER) Bill (Wales). It was noted that the proposed bill established a new commission for tertiary education and research and dissolved the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, and would bring together Wales's higher and further education, school sixth forms, apprenticeships, adult community learning, as well as research and innovation sectors. The Council were informed that the University was already working across the HE / FE sector with its strategic partnerships with both Grŵp Llandrillo Menai and Coleg Cambria, and that further opportunities to develop in these areas were being explored. In addition the Vice-Chancellor reported that similar legislation was currently being proposed by the UK Government and that in relation to both the Welsh and UK proposals the University would be watching the developments closely, in particular in relation to institutional autonomy. Further updates would be brought to the Council as matters evolved.

[2] Medical School

The Vice-Chancellor reminded members of the Welsh Government's commitment in its programme for government to establish a Medical School in North Wales, which had been confirmed by the Minister of Health during a visit to the University a few weeks previously. Over the last 3 years work had progressed on graduate entry medicine at the University, with 20 students a year admitted to the CN21 North Wales programme each year, with 60 students currently studying across years 1-3. It was noted that decisions on admissions were being made by Cardiff University, and the next steps would involve the signing of a further MOU with Cardiff which would commit both Universities to moving forward from a franchise / franchisee position to one where the University worked alongside Cardiff in its role as a Contingent University. The Council were informed that this was a common next step approach in the setting up of medical schools.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Council that a more detailed update on progress with the Medical School would be brought to the next meeting in February 2022.

[3] Digital First Strategy

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Council that the University's Digital First Strategy was embedded in the Teaching and Learning Strategy, led by Professor Callow. As part of the work on the development of the Teaching and Learning Strategy 8 scaffold projects were running until December 2021. One of the projects was the Flexible

Learning Pathways Project. The expansion and ongoing diversification of national systems of higher education had led to a diverse sector, which was not only reflected in a greater number and variety of higher education institutions, academic programmes, and delivery modes, but also in a wider diversity of learner profiles. This proliferation within an increasingly competitive market had promoted a more market-driven approach to curriculum provision responsive to the demands of students. It was noted that one way to meet those demands was through the provision of flexible learning pathways. The project currently underway aimed to inform Bangor University's approach to flexible education with the knowledge produced used to make recommendations on how to build flexible learning pathways into the university's teaching and learning provision, with a view to strengthening the University's current offer, encouraging lifelong learning, and meeting the diverse needs of both prospective and current students, and potential employers. In addition scoping opportunities to partner with a commercial entity to assist in the process of delivering against the opportunities identified were being taken forward.

Council members welcomed the progress in this area and the opportunities for the University. The Chair noted that the Finance & Strategy Committee, at its recent meeting, had agreed to devote resources to backing this initiative.

Professor White commented on the need to ensure that robust digital security was in place prior to embarking on such a project. The Chief Operating Officer reassured Professor White that whilst cyber security was a constant challenge which the Audit & Risk Committee were also seeing reassurances on, that the University was testing and refining its arrangements, including providing training to staff on managing any such incident. Mr Devani also noted the need to ensure that the University was suitable insured against digital security issues.

- B. The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor for the updates. In addition the Chair informed the Council that she had recently been confirmed as the new Chair of the Chairs of Universities Wales Group (ChuW), and that ChuW would also be provided with an opportunity to comment on the TER Bill over the next few weeks, with a joint submission being presented alongside Universities Wales to the Senedd. The Vice-Chancellor, and members of Council warmly congratulated the Chair on her election as Chair of ChuW, and the positive opportunities that this afforded the University was welcomed.

21.21 ESTATES STRATEGY

- A. The Director of Estates & Campus Services reminded Council that the initial direction of travel in relation to the Strategy was presented to the Executive and to the Council in October 2020. Further updates were presented on the emerging strategy through presentations and updates at the Council meetings over the last year, through consultation with staff and students, as well as external stakeholders. This enabled the University to publish the Estates Strategy document, which would be known as the Estates Vision 2030+. Through understanding the University priorities, ambition and business needs the Estates and Campus Services team were able to capture and set out how the estate needed to respond and develop over the course of the next 10

years, and it was noted that the draft strategy document attempted to capture how the University was looking to develop its estate to meet its business needs.

A detailed presentation was provided by the Director supported by Mr Adrian Vickers, Fusion Partners, which led the Council through each section of the Strategy, providing information on the vision and the programme for each College and for Professional Services, highlighting the programme of work, timelines and key actions.

It was noted that the programme was designed to be achieved over the next 10 years and the University would invest circa £250m over that period. The Director noted that the funding for the programme would be from a mix of external and internal sources. The design of the final Estates Vision 2030+ document would be undertaken by graphic designers, and a Welsh version would be developed in tandem with the English version, once the content was agreed and finalised.

B. A number of questions were posed following the presentation, and in particular the following comments were made:

- Further clarity on the execution of each of the projects outlined would be helpful in due course, to provide confidence on the levels of funding available at each phase;
- The oversight of the Capital Programmes Scrutiny Board would be essential in moving the vision forward, focussing on the sequencing of funding, and ensuring robust governance oversight of the programme;
- The £250m mentioned by the Director included the £120m current backlog maintenance;
- Ensuring effective and efficient active travel links between all areas of the campus was essential;
- In relation to the proposed location of the Medical School it was important to ensure that clinical skills laboratories were developed as resources which could also be used by external partners;
- Nonbinary inclusion matters, including safety of staff and students in shared areas should be considered for all projects outlined.

Members discussed the point raised by Professor White, and Mr Avison confirmed that this matter was not currently an issue that they were aware of. In addition the Director of Estates & Campus Services confirmed that gender neutral toilets were included in current developments around the estate.

- It would be important to ensure that the catering provision across the whole campus was considered in relation to the proposals for Colleges and Professional Services;

- Ensuring that spaces were available for students to study and work collaboratively was something that students were asking for on campus, as well as having additional spaces available to the local community in order to bring Bangor into the University.

In addition to the comments above members were reassured by the Director on the processes for disposal of assets, and also for providing further comments on the plans as the projects move forward. Further information on the ownership of the Old Post Office was also provided, following a question from Mrs Lea-Wilson. Mr Devani requested that as an MSParc Board member that he be kept informed on issues relating to the company which arose out of the Estates Vision 2030+ programme.

Dr Williams in her capacity as Head of the School of Medical and Health Sciences confirmed, in response to a question from Professor White, that facilities within the School were already shared with external partners and that this would continue as the plans for the Medical School's location were taken forward. In addition Mr Wiegand and Dr Williams noted Professor White's suggestion that further discussion with 203 Welsh Field Hospital might be advantageous.

- C. Following discussion and consideration the Council welcomed and supported the strategic direction provided by Mr Wiegand. The Estates Vision 2030+ document was **approved**.

21.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- A. Members were reminded that they should declare any personal, financial or beneficial interest in any matter under consideration at this meeting prior to that matter being considered.
- B. There were no declarations of interest made in relation to the particular matters on the agenda.

21.23 MINUTES

- A. The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2021 were **confirmed**.
- B. An action log was provided noting progress on all outstanding Council actions. Council noted the progress reports and completed actions. The Secretary confirmed that the matters raised by members during the discussion minute 21.21 above would be included in the action log for the next meeting of the Council.
- C. In relation to Minute 21.4 D. (Report on Pontio) it was confirmed that a full report on Pontio had been presented to and discussed at the recent meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee. Minute 21.34 C. below refers.
- D. In relation to Minute 21.0 (Student Surveys) Professor Turnbull provided the Council with an update on the current position. It was noted that in relation to the NSS (National

Student Survey) results substantial activity had taken place across the summer and autumn, with a plan in place for engagement across the academic year. A number of actions had already been completed, and others were ongoing. It was noted that performance against the actions was being monitored by the Student Experience Strategy Group. In addition in relation to the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) a number of actions had been identified and were similar to those already identified for the NSS. These matters were being taken forward, with discussions taking place with Deans and Heads in relation to performance and low scoring areas, with action plans being put in place were relevant. Finally in relation to the Postgraduate Research Experience Study (PRES) the Doctoral School were working with lower scoring Schools to develop action plans which would be overseen at College level.

21.24 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

- A. The Chair advised members that a decision had been made recently to replace the current board management software with a new software package called Admincontrol. It was noted that the product was already used in a number of UK universities and by health boards in Wales. Training would be provided for Council members, and it was hoped that the system would be in place by the end of January 2022.
- B. The Chair reported that she had recently completed a Professional Development Review with the Vice-Chancellor, and in addition a pilot programme of 360-degree appraisals for both the Chair and the Vice-Chancellor was currently underway. A report on both the PDR and the 360-degree appraisals would be provided to the next meeting of the Nominations & Governance Committee.

21.25 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

A. The Executive's Objectives 2021/22

- [1] The Vice-Chancellor presented members with an update on the Executive's Objectives for 2021/22. It was noted that following the overview presented to the Council at the September meeting, a more detailed paper had been provided with short updates on each objective, in addition to noting the key responsibilities for members of the Executive.

The Vice-Chancellor reminded the Council how far the University had travelled over the course of the last 3 years, to a position where it had a sense of common purpose, relationships with staff, students and external stakeholders had improved, and the relationship with the Council was on a positive footing. In addition the establishment of the Joint Engagement Forum, to provide communication between senior independent members of the Council, and representatives of the three Campus Trades Unions had been a welcome step forward.

The Council was reminded that in 2019 detailed 30- and 100-day plans had been put in place by the Executive, as well as 5-year goals to drive forward the transformational agenda. Despite the pandemic progress had been made against the goals, and the Vice-Chancellor provided members with a detailed update on the progress made against each goal.

- [2] The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor for the comprehensive update provided and extended her thanks to the Executive team for their commitment during a hugely challenging period. Members of Council acknowledged their thanks to the Vice-Chancellor for leading on the University's Strategy 2030, and for his update on the five-year goals. It was noted that KPIs were available to measure against a number of the goals outlined, however further work in this area was needed, and new systems were currently being procured, for example the human resources and payroll system currently being implemented.

In response to a question from Professor White the Chief Operating Officer confirmed that Council received the Annual Equality Report at its April meeting, and that this would be shared with Professor White.

It was noted that Council would appreciate being kept informed on progress in relation to these areas.

B. Report from the Executive

The Vice-Chancellor presented the report from the Executive Committee which was **noted**.

21.26 STUDENTS UNION UPDATE

- A. Mr Avison presented the Students' Union Relationship Agreement provided in the papers under agendum 6, and it was noted that the Agreement had recently been approved by the University Executive. In addition members were informed that, following review, no changes had been made this year to the Student Charter. The Council **noted** the Agreement presented, and the situation in relation to the Student Charter.
- B. The Council were briefed on the Partnership Approach and Annual Dialogue paper by Mr Avison. It was noted that the Students' Union had a long-standing partnership approach with the University, working together to encourage student contribution to the design and delivery of teaching and influencing strategic change across the University. It was noted that the report was a summary of the partnership approach and annual dialogue between the Students' Union and the University based on 2020-21. The Council noted that included as an appendix to the report were the Student Experience Reports produced by Students' Union which had been written following consultation with students, through Surveys and Focus Groups, and were based on the most topical and relevant issues affecting students at Bangor University during the last academic year. It was noted that the actions had been completed.

The Students' Union was thanked by members of Council for the continued positive working relationship with the University, and for putting forward the Student Experience Reports. It was noted that work had already been taken forward to address issues being raised, and discussions would continue with the Students' Union, overseen from the University by Professor Turnbull. In response to a question received in advance from Mr Marc Jones, Mr Avison confirmed that the Union continued to work with the Development and Alumni Office to provide clubs and societies with information to share with current students on maintaining links with the University, as alumni. In addition work was ongoing to develop a Sabbatical Officer alumni list in order to keep in contact with those who had served as Sabbatical Officers across the years.

In response to a question from the Chair Mr Avison confirmed that the Students' Union had taken part in a consultation event on the Estates Strategy, and that he was also a member of the Estates Strategy Group which had been involved in taking the Estates Vision 2030+ forward. In addition Mr Avison had discussed the Strategy with the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Estates and Campus Services on several occasions. Mr Avison confirmed that the Students' Union were happy with the proposals.

C. Mr Avison and Mr Dafydd presented their reports to the Council, and in particular the following items were highlighted:

- Thanks was extended to the Executive for a live Q&A which had been held a few weeks previously, where no major concerns had been raised by students during the event;
- The Students' Union was currently recruiting for 10 student staff roles which would provide students with valuable skills and experience, and develop their employability alongside paid employment;
- The Students' Union were in discussion with the student nightclub Academi around student safety and it was confirmed that Academi were using drinks toppers to guard against drink spiking. In addition the Union had held a few campaigns and awareness raising events to coincide with a larger national campaign, including a recent march in the city had been supported by around 100 students;
- 27 Welsh course representatives were in place for the academic year across all schools and colleges and a recent meeting had been held where the representatives reported on matters that had arisen. It was noted that December 7 was Welsh Rights Day and UMCB were eager to raise awareness of the day at the University;
- The Union's sports teams have been raising money by growing moustaches and participating in challenges for the men's mental health campaign 'Movember', and a large group from Y Cymric sports' teams were also running a sponsored 5k.
- The UMCB President had been providing support to students at Cardiff University in their attempts to create a similar post within their union.

D. In response to a question from Professor White, Mr Avison and Mr Dafydd confirmed that no particular issues had been raised with them in relation to the safety of nonbinary students in shared spaces. Student Councillors representing the LGBTQ+ and Transgender student community had also not raised any issues, and newly appointed LGBTQ+ course reps would also be in a position to feed any concerns back in future.

- E. The Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked both Mr Avison and Mr Dafydd for their reports.

21.27 REPORT ON LEAGUE TABLES

- A. The Head of Planning presented his report on League Tables, which provided the Council with a briefing on the primary domestic and international league tables in operation across the UK and global HE sectors, their alignment to the University's Strategy 2030, the University's latest performance in league tables, and its approach to addressing league table performance.

It was noted that League Tables commanded a high-profile presence in the media and were an important element of the University's brand proposition, being used by prospective students, their families and teachers/advisors in schools/FE colleges. In the case of overseas students it was noted that some governments would only fund students to attend courses at higher ranking universities.

The Council were advised however of the need to recognise the limitations of driving university strategy by league tables, and rather to adopt an approach where successful strategy outcomes align to improved performance in respected rankings that align to the University's mission, vision, and values. Further challenge comes from some inherent short-term volatility in league table methodologies, making alignment to longer term strategic vision problematic. Relatively small absolute changes in metrics could give rise to more prominent changes in relative performance, particularly where data is tightly grouped around a narrow range of values, or where data changes frequently.

Members were informed that there were a number of approaches to addressing league table performance and the University needed to identify an approach that was achievable given its size, which is consistent with the portfolio of strategic initiatives which were being taken forward. The Council were provided with an update on progress against some of the original intended actions provided during the previous briefing in 2019, and it was noted that some of the intended actions had been delayed through changes in senior management and the impact of the pandemic.

- B. Members of Council thanked the Head of Planning for a very useful update which provided reassurance on a number of matters. Following questions the Chief Marketing Officer / Vice-President International confirmed that student reliance on League Tables varied whether the student was a UK or international student.

21.28 STUDENT RECRUITMENT

- A. Professor Andrew Edwards provided the Council with an update on the current student recruitment position and noted that there remained a lot of uncertainty in the student recruitment market at the moment, with significant variations in the data from week to week.

It was noted that undergraduate Home / EU applications (excluding HEIW funded students) were up 14% compared to the same point last year with significant increases particularly in the areas of Psychology, Ocean Sciences and Zoology. In relation to undergraduate Home/EU (HEIW funded students only) applications were down 30% compared to this point last year, but it was reported that this was expected due to the University losing some of the HEIW commissioned nursing places. Undergraduate overseas applications were up by 22% compared to the same point last year, postgraduate taught Home / EU applications were 9% lower than at the same point last year but showing a significant increase over 2 years. Finally, postgraduate taught overseas applications were lower than at the same point last year. Professor Edwards noted that it was still relatively early to draw any firm conclusions in relation to recruitment trends within the overseas market, and that in the last few years applications improved later in the cycle.

Mrs Westwood informed Council that the recent open days had been a success with over 1000 prospective students visiting the campus over the three days. It was noted that the University was also running virtual events in addition to the on-campus events. Council was also advised that in relation to trends across the board the UCAS deadline, which pre-pandemic had been mid-January had now moved to the end of January and it was likely that schools were setting later deadlines for students to do their applications.

- C. The Council welcomed the overall positive news in relation to student recruitment and noted, with thanks, the hard work and dedication of staff across the institution.
- D. Mrs Lorraine Westwood provided the Council with a brief update on the UK Recruitment and Marketing Strategy, and it was noted that the draft strategy was currently coming to the end of the consultation phase with staff. Comments would be incorporated into a final version which would be presented to the Executive, and an update provided to Council at its meeting in February.

21.29 RESEARCH INTEGRITY STATEMENT

- A. Professor Spencer informed the Council that scrutiny of university research projects was increasing, with both stakeholders and funders requesting information on the research governance and integrity processes within universities. It was essential for the University to have robust processes in place to ensure appropriate oversight and governance of research, and two recent appointments of an Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Governance, and a Senior Research Governance & Policy Officer were seen as key to ensure that the University's research governance processes were developed and strengthened.
- B. Members welcomed further clarity and investment in this area and following consideration and discussion the Council **approved** the Research Integrity Statement.

21.30 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

- A. The Council received and considered the draft Financial Statements for the year to 31 July 2021, which were considered recently at meetings of the Finance and Strategy Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee, where no material concerns were raised by members, or by the auditors KPMG.

The Interim Director of Finance noted that a final version of the Annual Report would be prepared for the University Court in February 2022 and would incorporate the financial statements. Some final activities and checks would be required following the meeting of Council but were not expected to result in any substantive change to the final version which the Council were being presented with. The Interim Director confirmed that the final version would be brought to the next meeting of the Council in February 2022.

The Interim Director noted that the recommendation to Council was that the Financial Statements were approved, and authority to sign the financial statements on behalf of Council be delegated to the Chair of Council, Chair of Finance Committee and Vice-Chancellor.

- B. After full consideration, it was **resolved**:
- [1] That the Accounts for 2020/21 be approved and signed by the Chair of Council, the Vice-Chancellor and the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee in due course and lodged with HEFCW by the end of February.
- [2] That the Letter of Representation to the Auditors be signed by the Chair of Council.

21.31 ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE

- A. The Council were updated on the 19/20 Degree Outcome Statement, and it was noted in particular that:
- In order to mitigate the impact of the Covid pandemic on teaching and assessment, in 2019/20, the University had developed a set of Force Majeure Regulations to cover the award of degrees and the progression from one academic year to the next, providing a “safety net” for students due to the impact of the pandemic on their studies, and ensuring that appropriate academic standards were maintained.
 - Across the University 119 students achieved a higher degree class than they would have achieved from their overall average, having taken into account the requirements of the Regulations. It was noted that this equated to 6% of the total number of students and represented an appropriate balance in mitigating the impact of the pandemic while ensuring appropriate academic standards were maintained.
 - As part of its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, Professor Callow

reported that the University undertook routine analysis of degree attainment for a range of demographic characteristics, driving down and eliminating attainment gaps where they were identified. The data indicated that across the review period (since 2015/16), the data for all demographic characteristics mirrored the overall University dataset, showing an increase in the proportion of students achieving a good degree.

- B. Following consideration the Council **noted** the 19/20 Degree Outcome Statement.
- C. Professor Callow presented a paper on Academic Governance and the Council noted the information received over the past year to provide further assurance. These included receiving reports from the Senate, Key Performance Indicators relating to education, student experience and research, the full NSS results and regular updates from the Students' Union including receiving the Relationship Agreement.

Professor Callow noted that, in summary, quality assurance processes to mitigate the risk posed to students' learning by the pandemic were introduced immediately prior to the 2020/21 academic year and ensured that students would be able to meet programme learning outcomes through their studies in 2020/21, enabling final year students to graduate from their chosen programme. More widely 2020/21 had seen the University further develop and embed its distinct approach to QA, which involved developing a graduated, risk-based approach to oversight, working across academic and professional services and with students to respond to QA risks and using core QA processes such as annual review to inform enhancement. Further 2020/21 was a period of rapid expansion in academic driven enhancement activity, taking deliberate steps to continually improve our teaching and learning practice and consequently the transformative learning experience of our students.

- D. Following discussion the Council **noted** the Quality Assurance Annual Report, 2021.
- E. In the light of the information provided in A. and C. above, the Council **agreed** the five annual assurance statements for submission to HEFCW.

21.32 PREVENT ANNUAL REPORT

- A. Mr Eric Hepburn, Prevent Lead Governor provided the Council with an update on the progress made in relation to the implementation and embedding of the requirements of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent duty. The Council noted that this remained high on the agenda for relevant Strategy and Task Groups, Committees, and individual Officers and noted the policies and procedures in place and actions taken to raise awareness over the past year. It was noted that the University has made no formal referrals to the multi-agency Channel process during the academic year 2020/21, or the start of the 2021/22 year. Mr Hepburn confirmed that as Lead Governor he was being kept informed on all aspects of the Prevent agenda by the Head of Governance Services.

- B. It was noted that Prevent training was currently available both as a longer briefing from the University's Department for Education linked Prevent Coordinator, and also through a short introductory e-module. Following a request from Mr Hepburn the Council **agreed** to request that the People & Culture Committee discusses the point further at its next meeting, with a view to confirming that for key members of staff the longer Prevent briefing should be mandatory.

- B. The Council **approved** the Annual Report for submission to HEFCW.

21.33 REPORT FROM THE SENATE

- A. A report from the September and November 2021 meetings of the Senate (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) was received.

- B. The Vice-Chancellor drew the Council's attention to the following item:

The International Holocaust Association Remembrance Alliance [IHRA] Definition of Anti-Semitism

It was noted that the Executive had recently reaffirmed its decision initially made in October 2020 to adopt the overarching IHRA definition of anti-Semitism but had raised reservations in relation to the 11 contemporary examples and had not adopted these. The approach had been discussed at the Senate which, following discussion, had endorsed the Executive's decision to adopt the IHRA definition, but not adopting the contemporary examples.

21.34 FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE

- A. The Report of the meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee held on the 12 November 2021 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**.

- B. In relation to minute 2122.20 (monitoring of the 2020/21 Fee & Access Plan) it was noted that a detailed report had been made available to members of the Committee ahead of Council in order that the assurance statement could be signed at Council. The Chair of the Committee confirmed that no concerns had been raised by Committee members.

- C. In relation to minute 2122.21 (Pontio Report) it was noted that at a recent joint meeting with the Audit & Risk Committee the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Estates and Campus Services presented a paper that summarised the Pontio capital project, including the timeline, how costs were escalated, outstanding works on the building, lessons learned, and actions taken to address these, and proposals for future capital programme management in the University.

21.35 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

- A. The Report of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 12 November 2021 (attached as Appendix IV to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**. Members' attention was drawn in particular to the Annual Report of the Committee which was appended to the minutes.
- B. The Council received HEFCW's report on the recent Institutional Assurance Review and it was noted that overall HEFCW had concluded that there were suitable accountability processes within the University to assure the validity of the University's Annual Assurance Return. A number of minor weaknesses in the system had been identified, and these would be incorporated into an action plan and taken forward by the Secretary to the Council.
- C. The Council received a report on the Corporate Risks Classified Residually as Extreme and High, and noted that currently 12 of the 23 risks on the University's Corporate Risk Register were classified residually extreme or high, i.e., following the application of the University's control mechanisms, those which would cause major or critical impact, and likely or almost certainly come to fruition in the next 1-3 years.

21.36 PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE

- A. The Report of the People & Committee meeting held on the 1 October 2021 (attached as Appendix V to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**. Dr Rees, as Chair, noted that this was the first meeting of this Committee, and a number of useful areas were discussed.
- B. Dr Rees also informed the Council that he had recently taken Chair's Action, as allowed by Ordinance, to confirm the title of Emeritus Professor on Professor John Witcombe. The matter would also be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

21.37 HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Report of the meeting of the Health & Safety Committee held on the 29 October 2021 (attached as Appendix VI to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**. It was noted that the meeting had predominantly focused on the management arrangements for the coronavirus, and that the Committee remained assured that the arrangements were supportive and in compliance with expectations. No significant concerns were raised at the Committee. The Council noted the summary 3-month 2020/21 statistical report pertaining to Accidents & Incidents and Staff Sickness Absence appended to the minutes.

21.38 WELSH LANGUAGE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Report of the meeting of the Welsh Language Affairs Committee held on 5th November 2021 (attached as Appendix VII to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**. It was noted that the Chair of Council attended the Committee as an observer, which had proven useful.

21.39 JOINT ENGAGEMENT FORUM

The Report of the meeting of the Joint Engagement Forum held on 27 October 2021 (attached as Appendix VIII to the official copy of the Minutes) was **approved**. The Chair welcomed the continued positive discussions around the Charter, Statue and Ordinances.

21.40 VALEDICTION

The Chair **noted** that Mr Tudur Williams had recently left the University, and arrangements were in place to appoint a successor from amongst the University's non-academic staff on to the Council. The Chair informed Council that she would write on behalf of the Council to thank Tudur for his dedication and support to the University and the Council.

21.41 THANKS

- A. The Chair, on behalf of the Council, extended her thanks to the Translation Unit for their work not only during the meeting, but also in preparing the Welsh language translations for the meeting pack.
- B. In addition the Chair extended her thanks to the Secretary, and the governance team for their continued work to improve the quality and presentation of the papers for the meeting.