COUNCIL

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of Council held on **Tuesday 20 May 2025** in The Beldam, Eastern Gateway Building.

Present:
Professor Stuart Palmer (SP), Chair
Ms Amanda Rowlatt (AR), Deputy Chair, *independent member*
Ms Sharon Blackman (SB), *independent member*
Ms Janet Dean (JD), *independent member*
Professor Dave Delpy (DD), *independent member*
Mr Mark Garrett (MG), *independent member*
Ms Lucinda Hunt (LH), *independent member*
Professor Andrew Jones (AJ), Vice-Chancellor & President, *ex-officio*
Mr David Kennedy (DK), *independent member*
Mr Chris Maw (CM), *independent member*
Mr Rana Nauman Ishfaq (RNI), *student representative*
Mr Iwan Parry (IP), *student representative*
Mr Chris Stock (CS), *elected staff member*
Ms Anne Waltham (AWa), *independent member*
Professor Jonathan Wastling (JW), *senior staff member*

In attendance:
Dr Manuel Alonso (MA), Chief Operating Officer
Ms Gemma Bailey (GB), Chief People and Culture Officer
Ms Anne Nathan (AN), Chief Finance Officer
Dr Nicola Rogers (NR), Chief of Staff
Dr Rosa Scoble (RS), Director of Strategic Planning
Mr Peter Westaway (PW), Co-opted member of the Audit and Risk Committee – for item 24/89

Officers:
Mr Tristan Foot (TF), University Secretary and General Counsel
Ms Helen Dalrymple (HD), Associate Director of Governance - *minutes*

Apologies:
Dr Vineta Bhalla (VB), *independent member*
Ms Tone Rosingholm (TR), *independent member*
Professor Claire Turner (CT), *senior staff member*
Dr Allison Wiseman (AWi), *elected staff member*

STANDING ITEMS

24/86 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

86/01 The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies had been received from VB, TR, CT and AWi.

86/02 Members were assembled for an Away Day which would start with this formal meeting in order to approve the appointment of new Council members and discuss the Budget for 2025/26.

86/03 It was announced that GB would be leaving Brunel that summer for another role, Council would be sad to see her go and wished her well for the future.

24/87 DECLARATION OF INTEREST(S)

87/01 **NOTED:** PW was one of the proposed new members of Council and would leave the room for that item.

87/02 There were no further declarations of interest.

24/88 APPOINTMENT OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS (CO/4114)

88/01 **APPROVED:** a recommendation from the Governance and Nominations Committee on the appointment of new members to Council.

89/02 On behalf of Council, SP thanked those members who would be leaving at the end of July, they would be missed and it was hoped that they would keep in touch.

89/03 The agency who had run the process this year had been given priorities for recruitment by the University. A strong field had emerged which had been difficult to shortlist. In part this appeared to be due to an increased interest in the HE sector.

89/04 Interviews were held on one day and what could have been a gruelling experience was made tolerable by the calibre of the candidates.

89/05 Council approved the recommendation that the following would start four-year terms as independent members of Council on the 1 August 2025:

- **Nadya Hijaz**i - Managing Director and Global Head of Wholesale Digital Channels at a major bank.
- **Toby Lambert** - Executive Director of Strategy & Population Health at a London NHS Trust.
- **Marc Lombardo** – Experienced finance leader and qualified accountant, had worked for several household-name businesses as CFO.
- **Gillian May** - Chief Executive Officer and Group Principal of an FE College Group and HE provider, due to retire next year and was also a qualified accountant.
- **Keith Smith** – Chief Executive of a FE Colleges Group, extensive DfE experience in policy and strategy roles.
- **Faith Wainwright MBE, FREng DEng (Hons)**– Currently Alumni Strategy Lead at Arup University, had held senior engineering roles on world-renown construction projects and corporate change programmes.

- **Peter Westaway** – Currently co-opted on to the Audit and Risk Committee at Brunel, Economist.

89/05 [redacted]

89/06 **Rana Battachayra** would be asked to join the Audit and Risk Committee as a co-opted member from 1 August 2025. He was Chief Digital and Information Officer at an online bank with strong cyber experience.

24/89 BUDGET PRINCIPLES FOR 2025/26 (PRESENTATION)

89/01 **NOTED:** A presentation on the principles for drafting the Budget for 2025/26.

89/02 Members asked whether it was anticipated that there would be a further drop in international postgraduate student numbers. They heard that this was possible, currently numbers were tracking below last year which was better than others in the sector.

89/03 It was thought that this might improve, there was a reluctance amongst students to commit and pay deposits. The payment date had been delayed which it was hoped would attract more applications, and the International Team were working very hard to increase conversion rates.

89/04 Members asked what the sector norms were; where tariffs and fees were low, numbers were better, though there would probably be a retention issue looking ahead. Some universities had seen a drop in applications of as much as 20%.

89/05 It was confirmed that departments that had not been reviewed under the previous Target Operating Model exercises would be in its third round, due to commence in 2025/26.

89/06 Members were reminded that at the stage the Budget was dynamic and frequently changing. The Budget would change after the next Finance Committee, and then a simplified version would be shared with Council in July. **ACTION: AN**

89/07 Council could see that modelling had improved, it understood that staff would be needed to maintain this, cash flow modelling was in the process of being automated and should be more reliable next year.

89/08 The phasing of the Budget needed some adjustment as cash was forecast to be low at times, conversations were being held with Brunel's bankers on available mitigation. Best- and worst-case scenarios would be shared with the Finance Committee.

89/09 Members asked if the uncertainty on postgraduate numbers had affected the rest of the student intake; some undergraduate numbers were currently better than last year.

89/10 CM made the point that next year's Budget currently had £5M set aside for capital expenditure, roughly the same as 2024/25.

89/11 The business for the Council meeting was concluded and members went into Workshop.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 2pm, Thursday 9 July 2025

Meeting Minutes Approved:



9 July 2025

Professor Stuart Palmer, Chairperson — Date