

**Minutes of the Meeting of Cardiff University Council held on Wednesday 26 November 2025 at 10.00 in rooms 3C/D, Students' Union Building, Park Place, Cardiff.**

Present: Patrick Younge (Chair), Beth Button, Dr Andrew Glanfield, Dr Mario Gualano, Professor Urfan Khaliq, Stephen Mann, Liz McKenzie, Professor Wendy Larner, Dr Ana Oliveira, Dr Juan Pereiro Viterbo, Maria Pollard, Suzanne Rankin, John Shakeshaft, Professor Katherine Shelton, Sean Strong, Craig Watkins, Dr Robert Weaver, Jennifer Wood

Attendees: Professor Rudolf Allemann [Minute 2387], Sally-ann Efstathiou [Minute 2396], Thomas Hay, Victoria Holbrook, Claire Morgan [Minutes 2391], Siân Marshall [Minute taker], Dr Paula Sanderson and Darren Xiberras.

**2375 Welcome and Preliminaries**

All were welcomed to the meeting.

**2376 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Louise Casella, Dr Siân Rees, Professor Damian Walford Davies and Dr Catrin Wood.

**2377 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Council members of their duty to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Noted

2377.1 that Suzanne Rankin declared an interest in Cardiff Health Partners [minute 2385].

**2378 Minutes of previous meeting**

2378.1 The minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 July 2025 (24/677C) were confirmed as a true and accurate record and were approved by the Committee on 26 November 2025, subject to the following amendments:

.1 correction of the paper title in the introductory section of minute 2363;

.2 correction of a typographical error in minute 2366.1.3.

**2379 Matters arising**

Received and considered paper 25/182C, 'Matters Arising'.

Noted

2379.1 [Redacted]

2379.2 [Redacted]

2379.3 that considerable work had been undertaken to ensure that appropriate information governance and cyber security arrangements were in place for Cardiff University Kazakhstan (CUK); that an update would be provided on this at the next meeting; that an interim Provost had been appointed and a Chief Operating Officer for CUK was to commence in post in early January 2026;

Resolved

2379.4 for an update to be provided on the status of the Hubs Advisory Board.

**2380 Items from the Chair**

Received and considered paper 25/178C, 'Chair's Action'.

**2381 Constitution and membership**

Received and noted paper 25/180, 'Constitution and membership'.

**2382 Constitution and Membership of Major Committees of Council**

Received and considered paper 25/03, 'Constitution and membership Audit and Risk Committee', paper 25/71, 'Constitution and membership Finance and Infrastructure Committee', paper 25/26R, 'Constitution and Membership People, Cynefin and Governance Committee. The Chair spoke to this item.

Resolved

2382.1 to approve the Constitution and membership for the Audit and Risk Committee;

2382.2 to approve the Constitution and membership for the Finance and Infrastructure Committee;

2382.3 to approve the Constitution and membership for the People, Cynefin and Governance Committee.

**2383 Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council**

Received and considered paper 25/183C, 'Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council'. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item.

Noted

2383.1 that the new hybiau were successfully in place for the start of term; that further work was to be undertaken in relation to processes and teams;

2383.2 that CUK had officially opened on 03 September 2025; that this was a sector leading initiative and the University had been approached by other institutions to understand how the initiative had been launched within a short timescale;

2383.3 that the University had achieved a record high in the total value of research applications submitted during the period August 2024 to July 2025; that this was very positive news given the potential impact of transformation activity;

2383.4 that the University was experiencing increased demand and rising case complexity for its student health and wellbeing services; that additional resource had been allocated to address the waiting times for counselling; that there remained a waiting list for specialist counselling services; that a new Wellbeing Strategy had been agreed and was being implemented; this included a new assessment and triage team to manage the process environment more effectively with a single point of entry for students; that weekly data was being reviewed by UEB to monitor the situation;

2383.5 that the Education and Student Experience Committee was responsible for governance oversight of student wellbeing, with assurance provided to Senate; that Council wished to have greater visibility and assurance on the governance, targets and implementation plan to address student wellbeing and specifically in relation to student mental health;

2383.6 [Redacted]; this emphasised the importance of the University's strategy in relation to transnational education (TNE);

2383.7 that actions were in place to address the structural deficit, which included a pause on capital expenditure, further rationalisation of the estate, implementation of the Our Academic Future proposals, and growth via new revenue streams such as TNE and the Institute of Flexible and

Lifelong Learning; that the University had agreed a financial plan in July 2025 to reduce the deficit and work was on track to achieve this;

- 2383.8 that Council did not feel it had sufficient visibility of the plans to address the structural deficit and to return the University to a surplus position, including detailed sensitivity analysis; that it was planned that the TNE and capital investment plans would be brought to Council;
- 2383.9 that work was in progress to review the Academic Delivery Model; that the workload model specified the percentage of time that should be spent by academic staff on teaching, research and good citizenship; that there was scope to take a more radical approach, but this would necessitate some difficult conversations; that other institutions had included targets for external grant funding;
- 2383.10 that the Post-16 education and skills white paper included an expectation for greater specialisation of universities; that UEB had agreed that future academic appointments should be aligned to priority areas for the University and take account of other local priorities such as Cardiff capital region and other regional partners;
- 2383.11 that Cardiff Innovations was in the process of being established; that Council would welcome an opportunity to hear further about the approach from the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise in due course;
- 2383.12 that improving the quality of the student intake was part of the University Strategy; that the tariff had been held for 2025-26 entry, but was not improved.

Resolved

- 2383.13 for further information to be provided on the governance, targets and implementation plan to address student wellbeing and specifically in relation to student mental health;
- 2383.14 for the Post-16 education and skills white paper to be shared with Council;
- 2383.15 for Council to receive further information on the student intake, including the University's tariff relative to the sector.

#### **2384 Transformation Programme Update**

Received a presentation on the Transformation Programme. The Chief Transformation Officer, Dr David Langley, joined the meeting to speak to this item.

Noted

- 2384.1 that a Digital Transformation Programme Board had been established to oversee the initiation of five workstreams led by business owners; that start-up proof of concept funding was provided from the transformation budget;
- 2384.2 that there was merit in considering implementing an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to address the issues of fragmented and manual process that were not embedded within systems; that this would require major investment and there was a need to review existing structures and systems first; that a feasibility study was planned for the student information system and the Continuous Improvement Hub was reviewing processes in order to inform the maturity model;
- 2384.3 that the Finance transformation workstream aimed to address duplication, inconsistencies and manual processes; that the Finance team would be restructured as part of the establishment of a single Finance Service Delivery Model across the University;
- 2384.4 that UEB had oversight of the transformation programme and monitored financial and non-financial progress; that UEB reported regularly to Council on progress; that Council had considered whether to establish a committee to oversee transformation activity, but had

determined that oversight should remain with Council; that there was scope to review this decision and to provide more detail on transformation progress to Council if required;

2384.5 that engagement with staff, students and the Students' Union underpinned the transformation programme; that there were regular communications to the staff community via BLAS and the Senior Staff Forum (comprising Heads of Schools, Deans and School Managers); that consideration was being given to further engagement via School visits and with the Students' Union;

2384.6 that consideration should be given to implementing established systems to monitor and track transformation progress and outcomes such as the OGSM framework or the Hoshin Kanri X matrix strategy deployment.

Resolved

2384.7 for Dr David Langley and Craig Watkins to be put in touch to discuss options for evaluating and learning from monitoring activity;

2384.8 for Mario Gualano and Dr Robert Weaver to share details of the OGSM framework or the Hoshin Kanri X matrix strategy deployment with the Chief Transformation Officer.

Dr David Langley left the meeting

### **2385 Academic Purpose Function and Leadership Model**

Received and considered paper 25/121, 'Academic Purpose Function and Leadership Model'. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item

Noted

2385.1 that the new Framework for Academic Purpose, Function and Leadership had been approved by UEB and shared with Senate;

2385.2 that the framework both reduced and made consistent academic leadership roles and their responsibilities; that the framework clarified role responsibilities so that each role holder could focus on the key strategic activities outlined in the University strategy;

2385.3 that the framework required a small increase in resources; that this was provided by existing staff members taking on leadership roles and receiving a salary supplement;

2385.4 the view that the framework appeared to create duplication.

Resolved

2385.5 to approve that Ordinance 9 – Academic Bodies be updated to reflect the changes, to be undertaken via Chair's Action, on the recommendation of Senate;

2385.6 for the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor to respond to the question on whether the new framework created duplication.

### **2386 University Success Measures**

Received and considered paper 25/152CR, 'University Success Measures'. The Vice-Chancellor led this item with Professor Rudolf Allemann (Pro Vice-Chancellor International) also joining the meeting to speak to this item.

Noted

2386.1 that a project had been in place for 10 months to improve the University's league table performance; that an improvement of five places had been achieved in the 2026 QS World

University Rankings and of two places in the Times Good University Guide 2026; that the trajectory was positive, but it would take time for improvements to be made given that the data used to inform league table rankings extended across a period of a number of years for some metrics;

- 2386.2 that league table rankings were important as they were used by students to choose which universities to apply to; that improving rankings could improve international student applications, for example;
- 2386.3 that attendance at international conferences was impacted by budget constraints, but optimising staff conference attendance was a priority;
- 2386.4 Council's thanks to Professor Rudolf Allemann's for his leadership and efforts across the range of portfolios he had led during his time as Pro Vice-Chancellor.

Resolved

- 2386.5 for the previous presentation to Council on league tables to be recirculated.

Beth Button and Professor Rudolf Allemann left the meeting

### **2387 Cardiff Health Partners**

Received a presentation on Cardiff Health Partners. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to this item. Professor Kerry Hood joined the meeting for this item.

Noted

- 2387.1 that Cardiff Health Partners had been established as a strategic partnership between Cardiff University, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, and Velindre University NHS Trust to capitalise on the unique context and environment in Cardiff and Wales and to leverage external investment to deliver significant impact; that the partnership was based on an existing Academic Health Sciences model successfully employed in other areas of the UK, including Edinburgh and Belfast;
- 2387.2 that the Vice-Chancellor would be representing Cardiff Health Partners at an upcoming Life Sciences panel;
- 2387.3 that the thematic priorities included Next-generation cancer care, Brain Therapies and Precision medicine capabilities; that this was based on existing areas of strength for the University and the partner organisations;
- 2387.4 that the initiative was in the early stages of development, but had the potential to attract significant funding to the University; that the costs and risks to the University were minimal at this stage;
- 2387.5 that Council was keen to understand the cost to the University and the likely return on investment; that a business case would be brought back to Council in due course, which would include details on the financials, governance and risks.

Suzanne Rankin and Professor Kerry Hood left the meeting.

### **2388 Risk Register**

Received and considered paper 25/04C, 'Strategic Risk Register'. The Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary, Dr Paula Sanderson, spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2388.1 that the new risk register was aligned to the University Strategy and University Success Measures (USMs); that all risks had been reviewed to determine whether they remained strategic risks and if they had either been brought within tolerance or had materialised; that further work would be required to input the risks to the 4Risk system and ensure that they were fully described; that risk was being embedded within the service delivery plan;
- 2388.2 that a workshop to review the lessons learned from the Gillies Report was planned with UEB;
- 2388.3 that the revised register was welcomed; that the register provided evidence of positive culture in relation to risk management;
- 2388.4 that the Audit and Risk Committee had reviewed the report and had noted that progress had been made, but that there was a need to review the risk tolerance and category definitions as part of the next steps; that the Committee had undertaken deep dives of specific risk areas in order to receive assurance that risk management arrangements were effective;
- 2388.5 that the report did not provide evidence that sufficient action was being taken to bring the risks within tolerance; that a session was planned with UEB to review the risk appetite and tolerance in January 2026 and the outputs from this would be shared with Council;
- 2388.6 that work was being undertaken separately to develop an internal controls framework to provide greater assurance on the University's control environment; it was acknowledged that this work was taking longer than originally anticipated;
- 2388.7 that the purpose of the colour coding was unclear in this iteration of the report.
- Resolved
- 2388.8 to approve the Strategic Risk Register on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee;
- 2388.9 for the following amendments to be incorporated within the next iteration of the risk register:
- .1 the wording of the financial sustainability risk to reflect that the risk related to the current period, rather than a future point in time;
  - .2 the use of colour coding, including in relation to the Staff Safety risk;
- 2388.10 for an update on risk appetite and tolerance to be provided to Council in February 2026.

### **2389 Annual Quality Report**

Received and considered paper 25/80RR, 'Annual Quality Report'. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience, Claire Morgan spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2389.1 that the report provided assurance on academic standards and the quality of the student experience to Senate and Council;
- 2389.2 that the External Examiners continued to confirm that the standards of award met the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and were aligned to standards at other institutions;
- 2389.3 that the quality of education and student experience residual risk score had decreased primarily as a result of the improved NSS outcomes which provided evidence that the education and student experience programme enhancements and the actions taken by schools were having a positive impact; that the implementation of the Academic Moderation and Feedback Policy was anticipated to lead to further NSS improvements;

- 2389.4 that the ethnicity awarding gap was narrowing; that the student success and student transition initiatives were expected to further improve degree outcomes and retention;
- 2389.5 that a Dean for Academic Quality had been appointed;
- 2389.6 that there had been a reduction in good honours at Cardiff University and across the sector in an effort to prevent grade inflation; that progression rates had been identified as an area for improvement, particularly in the College of Physical Science and Engineering; that these targeted improvements would impact student outcomes; that there remained a need to ensure staff used the full range of marks to ensure student outcomes were reflective of student performance.
- Resolved
- 2389.7 to approve the Annual Quality Report 2024/25 which provides assurances on academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

Claire Morgan left the meeting.

### **2390 Students' Union President's Report**

Received and considered paper 25/185, 'Students' Union President's Report'. The Students' Union President, Maria Pollard, spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2390.1 that the Students' Union had achieved its highest freshers engagement of all time;
- 2390.2 that engagement this term included providing feedback on timetabling, hybiau and student protest guidance, as well as lobbying Cardiff Council in relation to parking permits;
- 2390.3 that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) had been successfully held;
- 2390.4 that a restructuring of the Sabbatical Officer Team for 2026-27 had been approved; that the Vice President Undergraduate Students role would be introduced and the Vice President Heath Park role replaced by two part-time Heath Park Students' Officers;
- 2390.5 that the vote to confirm the Students' Union's ongoing affiliation to the National Union of Students (NUS) did not pass; that a referendum would be held on this matter; that students had expressed concerns about the NUS approach to Gaza; that the Students' Union could lose access to training opportunities should it decide to not to continue its NUS affiliation;
- 2390.6 that a review of the student complaints process for students reporting sexual violence had been discussed with the Chief Operating Officer.

Resolved

- 2390.7 for the AGM motions to be shared with Council.

### **2391 Finance Report Q1 Forecast**

Received and considered paper 25/160C, 'Finance Report Q1 Forecast'. The Chief Financial Officer, Darren Xiberras, spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2391.1 [Redacted]; that this represented a better position at this point in the year than in previous years;

- 2391.2 that the University consistently underspent on non-pay costs and this presented an opportunity to improve the forecast position through cost control; that risks to the budget included January start student numbers and CUK numbers;
- 2391.3 that home undergraduate student number targets had been revised down as part of Our Academic Future; that the revised numbers had not been reflected in the accommodation reserved through private providers to meet the first year accommodation guarantee; that accommodation requirements would be included in the Integrated Planning Process to ensure this issue did not reoccur;
- 2391.4 that the lower residences occupancy would provide an opportunity to refurbish some of the residential estate; that this was to be reviewed by UEB.

### **2392 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to Council**

Received and considered paper 25/116CR, 'Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report to Council'. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Dr Robert Weaver spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2392.1 that the report highlighted a range of positive aspects, including:
- .1 Management's willingness and commitment to improving governance;
  - .2 the impact and value added provided by the internal audit reports received during the year, including root cause analysis of any control weaknesses;
  - .3 progress with the recommendations from external audit;
  - .4 a significant improvement in the relationship with Internal Audit and evidence of a collaborative approach taken by Management;
- 2392.2 that notwithstanding the positives, the report identified the need to improve and embed internal controls, including greater automation of controls, and for Management to address internal audit recommendations in a more timely manner;
- 2392.3 that the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee was to meet with the Chair of Council to discuss the governance of Cardiff University Kazakhstan;
- 2392.4 that work was being undertaken to ensure effective governance and compliance with the legal and regulatory framework in Kazakhstan is in place; that separate governance structures were being put in place for CUK as a separate entity; that further information would be provided to Council in the Spring as part of a paper on UEB's plans for TNE; that this would include confirmation as to how assurance would be provided to Council in relation to Kazakhstan.

Dr Juan Pereiro Viterbo left the meeting.

### **2393 Letter of Representation**

Received and considered paper 25/186C, 'Letter of Representation'. The Chief Financial Officer, Darren Xiberras, spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2393.1 that a final version of the letter would be provided once the external audit was completed.

Resolved

- 2393.2 to approve the Letter of Representation set out and to delegate authority to the Chair to approve the final version.

**2394 Annual Report and Financial Statements**

Received and considered paper 25/162CR, 'Annual Report and Financial Statements'. The Chief Financial Officer, Darren Xiberras, spoke to this item.

Noted

- 2394.1 that the external audit was substantially complete; that KPMG second partner review would confirm whether any further changes would be required;
- 2394.2 that owing to changes in the holiday pay accrual, the underlying operating deficit had been revised following consideration of the previous version by the joint meeting of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee; that the Chief Financial Officer had undertaken to implement a revised process for the provision of information to support the holiday pay accrual in order to ensure the delays experienced do not reoccur in future;
- 2394.3 that the University had received notification of the living wage rate for 2026; that implementation of the new rate took a number of months;
- 2394.4 that UCEA conducted collective pay negotiations on behalf of the sector, including Cardiff University; that consultation was ongoing with institutions on the timetable for implementing pay scale changes; that there was merit in the University considering whether to participate in collective negotiations in future given the challenges facing the sector.

Resolved

- 2394.5 to approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements as set out, and to delegate authority to Chair of Council to approve the final version following discussion with the Chair of Finance and Infrastructure Committee and the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee.

**2395 Report from Redundancy Committee to Council**

Received and considered paper 24/652C, 'Redundancy Committee Report to Council'. The Director of People and Culture, Sally-ann Efstathiou joined the meeting to speak to this item

Noted

- 2395.1 that a consultation was to be undertaken for [PART-REDACTED] staff impacted by changes to the Skilled Worker visa salary thresholds; that UCEA, Universities UK and the Russell Group were lobbying the UK Government in relation to the changes; that redeployment support was being provided to affected staff.

Resolved

*Wales Research and Diagnostic Positron Emission Tomography Imaging Centre (PETIC)*

- 2395.2 [Redacted]  
2395.3 [Redacted]  
2395.4 [Redacted]

*School of Earth and Environmental Sciences*

- 2395.5 [Redacted]  
2395.6 [Redacted]  
2395.7 [Redacted]

*Research Service: the Impact and Engagement team*

- 2395.8 [Redacted]

Sally-ann Efstathiou left the meeting.

**2396 CUPF Trustee Incorporation**

Received and considered paper 25/184C, 'CUPF Trustee Incorporation'. The Chief Financial Officer spoke to this item.

Noted

2396.1 that the language used in the amendment to the Fund rules was gendered to ensure consistency with the Trust Deed and Rules, which dated from 1965; that the Trustees had committed to updating the Trust Deed and Rules once the proposed amendments were made.

Resolved

2396.2 to approve the establishment of Cardiff University Pension Fund Trustee Limited and its introduction as the sole trustee of the Cardiff University Pension Fund;

2396.3 to approve the University acting as sole shareholder of Cardiff University Pension Fund Trustee Limited;

2396.4 to approve the University providing the shareholder undertaking to Cardiff University Pension Fund Trustee Limited;

2396.5 to approve the proposed undertaking from the University to Cardiff University Pension Fund Trustee Limited;

2396.6 to approve the two deeds required to be executed in order for the trustee structure of the Cardiff University Pension Fund to transition from individual trustees to a sole corporate trustee structure.

**2397 Any Other Business**

No further business was discussed.

**2398 Amendments to Ordinances**

Received and considered paper 25/31, 'Amendments to Ordinances'.

Resolved

2398.1 to approve the proposed amendments to Ordinance 10;

2398.2 to approve that the terminology used to refer to external members of Council is changed from "lay members" to "independent members".

**2399 Fee and Access Plan Monitoring 2024/25**

Received and considered paper 25/113C, 'Fee and Access Plan Monitoring 2024/25'.

Resolved

2399.1 to confirm the statements relating to the Fee and Access Plan (FAP) in the Annual Assurance Statement:

- .1 no regulated course fees have exceeded the applicable fee limit as set out in the Fee and Access Plan;
- .2 the institution has assurances in relation to the management of the provision of fee information across all recognised sources of the institution's marketing;

- .3 the institution has taken all reasonable steps to comply with the general requirements of the Fee and Access Plan;
- .4 the institution has taken all reasonable steps to maintain previous levels of investment, including maintaining: the splits between investment to support equality of opportunity and promoting higher education, and investment to support the Reaching Wider partnership and student support investment;

2399.2 to approve the report, to meet the requirements of a fifth assurance statement:

- .5 the institution to provide documentation to support Fee and Access Plan sign off.

#### **2400 Value for Money Report**

Received and considered paper 25/113C, 'Value for Money Report'.

Resolved

2400.1 to approve that an appropriate level of assurance around institutional arrangements for delivery of value for money has been provided.

#### **2401 Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2024-25**

Received and considered paper 25/146HC, 'Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2024-25'.

Resolved

2401.1 to approve the internal audit annual opinion and subsequent commentary on the University's arrangements for risk management, governance, internal control and value for money.

#### **2402 Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers**

Received and considered paper 25/125, 'Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers'.

Resolved

2402.1 to approve the report detailing progress made against the Researcher Development Concordat Action Plan since October 2024.

#### **2403 Items Received for Information**

25/126, 'Annual Statement on Research Integrity'  
 25/132R, 'Student View 2025 - University Response and 2024 closure report'  
 25/187C Report from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee  
 25/174C Report from Finance and Infrastructure Committee  
 25/181C Report from Chair of People, Cynefin and Governance Committee  
 25/179 Report from Senate  
 27/157C Staff wellbeing and actions taken in response to feedback in the TU member survey  
 25/14HC Annual Risk Management Report  
 25/175 Sealing Transactions  
 25/159HC Major and Serious Incidents Update (on Director's Desk)  
 25/136 Students' Union Relationship Agreement and Student Charter