The Chair welcomed the Pro Vice-Chancellors for Teaching & Learning and Research & Enterprise and the Director of Estates & Facilities to the meeting.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

Members agreed to take the remainder of the agenda items out of order.

2. MATTERS ARISING

2.1 There were no matters arising.

3. CHAIR’S BUSINESS

3.1 The Chair had no specific items to raise.

4. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

4.1 The Vice-Chancellor briefed members on a range of University news, including:

- Research by Professor Paul Thomas had been a major influence on a new national initiative to help spot early signs of possible involvement in terrorism. Counter Terrorism Policing had launched a new safeguarding website and social media campaign called Act Early designed to help people share their concerns about relatives or friends becoming radicalised by ideologies.

- A collaboration between the University’s Archaeogenetics Research Group and Portugal’s University of Minho had led to one of the largest analyses of its kind focussing on thousands of virus genomes samples from around the world. The Group mapped out the dispersal of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic and
discovered that, whilst the virus had originated in China, Europe had been the main source for spreading the disease globally.

➢ Research from the University’s world-leading ‘Microscopes and Ion Accelerators for Materials Investigations’ facility (MIAMI-2) could help to create spacecraft that were light enough to launch but could withstand radiation to protect their crews. Dr Matheus Tunes, in partnership with Austria’s Montanuniversitaet Leoben (MUL), successfully investigated a new alloy that hardens aluminium without significantly increasing its weight.

➢ Over 500 solar panels were being installed onto the roof of the Technology Building as a major carbon reduction scheme commenced across the Huddersfield campus.

➢ National Care Leavers’ Week provided an opportunity to highlight the outstanding achievements of young people who have had to overcome more challenges in their early lives than many will face in a lifetime. Most care leavers who enter higher education were just as likely to get good degrees, enter employment or go on to postgraduate study as their peers, but they were still under-represented in Higher Education. Only 13% of children who were in care at age 16, would be in Higher Education at 19, compared with 43% of the general population.

➢ Dr Mahmoud Dhimish, a senior lecturer in electronics and control engineering who specialises in renewable energy, had been selected by the new Mendeley 2020 science-wide author database list of standardised citation indicators as one of the top 15 science academics in the UK who have started to publish since 2015.

➢ An innovative look at the history of The Gemini, an iconic gay bar in Huddersfield, from the 1970s and 1980s had resulted in Lizzie Osborne becoming the first Huddersfield student to be awarded the prestigious President’s Medal by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

➢ Product design graduate, Tyra Kozlow, had defeated thousands of entries worldwide to be named as one of the finalists of the 2020 Global Grad Show exhibition with her design for the ‘Sense Glucose Earring’, a non-invasive blood glucose monitor that could revolutionise how patients manage Type 1 diabetes.

➢ The 100th anniversary of the Cottingley Fairies - arguably the most famous hoax of the twentieth century - was to be marked by a forthcoming exhibition at the Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery in Leeds. The collection would be guest curated by the University’s Head of English and Creative Writing, Dr Merrick Burrow, and it would be the first time that many of the artefacts from the hoax will have been on public display.

➢ The University’s Director of the multi award-winning None in Three (Ni3) global research centre, Professor Adele Jones, was to receive an OBE in recognition of her work to improve the lives of vulnerable women and children from around the world throughout her 40-year career.

➢ Academics who deliver the University’s nursing courses had been training volunteers on how to correctly administer the vaccine against Covid-19, along with all aspects of observing the patients afterwards and how to deal with any adverse reactions.

➢ Assisted by Microsoft funding, the University was to move to cloud-based Microsoft Azure in a large-scale project that would make its data centres more secure, resilient, flexible and future-proof.

➢ Huddersfield Business School's Employability and Placement Team had been named as the Best University Placement Service at the National Undergraduate Employability Awards for 2021.
The success of the University’s virtual Inclusion Week with a series of events that celebrated the diversity of the institution, beginning on International Women’s Day with an event entitled ‘Inspirational Women’. Huddersfield’s Delroy Beverley, Managing Director for York NHS and a University Council member, also gave a talk entitled ‘A Debt that Remains Owed’ speaking about the importance of inclusivity.

Mr Rhys Davies joined the meeting.

5. STUDENTS’ UNION (HSU) REPORT

5.1 The HSU President updated Council on highlights from the Students’ Union since the previous meeting, including:

- the outcome of the HSU elections which had resulted in the first all-female Sabbatical team, noting that just over 1,800 votes had been cast (just over half of the previous year’s votes which compared favourably with other institutions);
- an update on performance against the KPIs in the HSU Strategic Plan, noting work undertaken by the team on student engagement levels, including collaboration with Schools to share engagement data on academic societies and a significant increase in the use of the Advice Service; and
- Officer priorities including:
  a continued focus on VFM for students;
  work to promote the Grade Safety Policy and positive discussions with students around fee reimbursement;
  work with academic representatives on Student Voice including the creation of a focus group for PGR students;
  agreed enhancements to flexible social spaces and specific areas for commuter students;
  the creation of an EDI module for new Committee members as well as an EDI elective module to be embedded within the Global Professional Award (GPA);
  input into the Sports Review and the new University Sports and Activity Board (USAB) to encourage more participation in physical and extra-curricular activities.
- sustainability initiatives including participation in the University’s Green Week; and
- involvement in promoting the Mayoral elections and the Census.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the HSU President and his fellow officers for their excellent work during what had been a difficult year.

6. UPDATE ON THE UNIVERSITY’S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

6.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning updated members on the arrangements for moving to a blended delivery model with face-to-face delivery for practical/facilities-based courses from 8 March 2021. It was reported that the track and trace system and test centre were operating as normal to maintain a Covid secure campus. Members noted that the University was still awaiting guidance from the government regarding the extent of on campus activity after Easter but contingency plans were in
place for the options available. The arrangements for summer assessments and grade security policies were also in place.

7. **RACE EQUALITY CHARTER**

7.1 Members received a presentation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning on the Race Equality Charter, particularly:

- a reminder of Council’s responsibility for equality and diversity as outlined in primary element four of the CUC HE Code of Governance;
- the Charter in the context of the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework, which covered both staff and students, as presented to Council at its November 2020 meeting;
- the five principles of the Race Equality Charter including the aim of long-term institutional culture change;
- mapping of the principles to the EDI Framework objectives;
- the University’s self-assessment team and its composition including representatives from Schools, Services and the HSU (including BAME Ambassadors); and
- the six working parties looking at data presentation, staff and student perspectives, policies, processes and procedures, teaching and learning and culture and communications.

7.2 Members queried how much support would be required to educate existing staff on equality and diversity matters to achieve long-term culture change. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning responded that a range of material was available from AdvanceHE, combined with mandatory EDI training offered by the University. The need to explore this further with staff in terms of where efforts should be focused was noted. In response to a query on how success would be measured, it was noted that Advance HE had a narrow definition of success relating to increased satisfaction with the culture and ethos of the institutional (to be established from surveys at the beginning, and during, the process). In addition, success in terms of the student experience could be measured by a reduction in differential attainment, and, from a staff perspective, progress against the diversity targets contained within the People First strand of the Strategy Map. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning reported that the Office for Students (OfS) had released data on last year’s attainment gap which showed that the University was in the top 10% of the sector, with one of the lowest attainment gaps between students from the black and white ethnic groups (and this was the lowest gap amongst post-1992 HEIs). It was also noted that the differential attainment gap and continuation gap in other categories, for example for disabled students, was not statistically significant compared to the non-disabled peer group.

8. **OUTCOME OF THE CMA REVIEW**

8.1 Council was briefed on the review of the University’s compliance with CMA regulations, the outcome of which had concluded that the University had met student expectations in this area and was compliant with consumer law. It was noted that the review was in response to a call from the Office for Students (OfS) for institutions to review compliance in the context of pandemic restrictions and covered two specific areas: consumer protection and communications with students. The University Secretary highlighted the confidential nature of the review.
The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning left the meeting.

**INNOVATIVE**

9. **UPDATE ON THE UNIVERSITY’S REF SUBMISSION**

9.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise updated members on the preparations for the University’s REF2021 submission, which had been successfully submitted that morning in advance of the 31 March deadline. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Pro Vice-Chancellor and his research colleagues and members acknowledged the exceptional amount of work that had gone into the submission.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise left the meeting.

**GROWTH AND EFFICIENCY**

10. **APPLICATIONS, ENROLMENTS AND RETENTION**

10.1 Council was briefed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the positive picture with retention, particularly for taught home students thanks to the hard work and professionalism of both students and staff in response to the disruptions of the pandemic. Members were pleased to note that home applications were up against last year despite Covid-19, mainly due to strong performances in three Schools, but that delayed decision-making was continuing to impact on firm acceptances. The significant variation between Schools was highlighted as was Schools’ continuing efforts on conversion.

10.2 Members reviewed summary data showing the changes in UCAS acceptances data for the 2016 – 2020 recruitment cycles, noting the significant growth by several institutions at the expense of others in the region. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor also presented data on apprenticeships starts in West Yorkshire and highlighted that the University was the largest provider for the health service in the region. It was noted that these numbers were in addition to UCAS acceptances and as such were a compensating factor in the University’s overall recruitment performance.

**MINUTES**

11. **Resolved:** that the minutes and confidential supplement of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 be accepted as a correct record. The notes from the Strategy Session on 25 February 2021 were also received.

The Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor left the meeting.

**12. UNIVERSITY SECRETARY’S BUSINESS**

12.1 The University Secretary reported that the terms of office for three external members were due to expire on 31 July 2021, and that, since the previous meeting, external Council member and Chair of the Audit Committee, Mrs Helen Thomson, had confirmed she would be stepping down from Council this academic year.

In line with the Governance and Membership Committee’s recommendation, members resolved to approve the following appointments with effect from
1 August 2021 for a three-year term of office, those members not being present during consideration of their re-appointment.

➢ the re-appointment of **Mr Mark Fisher** and **Professor Isobel Pollock-Hulf**, and for them to retain their respective committee appointments; and
➢ the re-appointment of **Mr Robert Cox** as an external Council member and to replace Mrs Helen Thomson as Chair of Audit Committee on her retirement.

The Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor re-joined the meeting.

Council also resolved to approve the following appointments:

➢ **Mr Rob Kelly** (currently a co-opted Audit Committee member) - external Council member and to retain his Audit Committee appointment with effect from 1 August 2021.
➢ **Mr Ajaz Ahmed** - external Council member and a member of the Estates and Finance Committee with effect from 1 August 2021.
➢ **Mrs Tonya Magennis** to the Governance and Membership Committee to fill the external Council member vacancy with immediate effect.

12.2 The University Secretary presented the findings of the annual review of compliance with the 2020 CUC HE Code of Governance and thanked the Vice-Chair of Council and Mrs Taylor for their valuable input. It was noted that the University was largely compliant with the Code with the only areas of exception being those new elements of the Code relating to culture, values and civic engagement. Whilst the University undertook a significant amount of work in these areas, they did not currently form part of the regular reporting cycle to Council and this would be addressed through the Governance Action Plan, progress against which would be reported regularly to Council.

Professor Isobel Pollock-Hulf left the meeting.

13. **ESTATES MATTERS**

13.1 The Director of Estates and Facilities updated members on a range of capital projects outlined in **Paper EFC_2021_03_12_P9** including:

➢ **Faith Centre** – noted a planning application had been submitted and that completion was anticipated by summer 2022, along with landscaping/external works to the Barbara Hepworth and Joseph Priestley East Buildings (which had been delayed due to Covid).
➢ **Joseph Priestley (Science) and Ramsden Buildings** – noted that the previously paused window replacement scheme and the external decoration works to the Ramsden Building had commenced.
➢ **Technology Building** – the refurbishment scheme was progressing well and was due for completion by September 2021.
➢ **Carbon Plan** – the University had been unsuccessful in a bid for funding the photovoltaic install at the Technology building. However, the scheme would go ahead funded by capital under the Carbon Plan and there may be an opportunity to provide additional cells for the new Faith Centre. A research project with the School of Computing and Engineering would monitor the effectiveness of the initiative.
Richard Steinitz and Harold Wilson – work to improve teaching accommodation for Sport and Nursing was underway and an OfS grant for growth would allow enhanced facilities for the Psychology Department on the Queensgate campus to be completed earlier than previously planned.

Film School – a planning application for change of use for the Firth Street Depot site had been submitted, tenders had been returned for the refurbishment works and the University was looking to appoint a local contractor in the next few weeks.

13.2 Members were briefed on acquisitions and disposals outlined in Paper UC_2021_03_25_P13.*

The Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor left the meeting.

13.3 Members considered a proposal for an uplift in the annual cost of the strategic maintenance five-year plan in all but year 2. The Director of Estates and Facilities explained that, in previous years, a number of capital projects had encompassed elements of strategic maintenance but now that the University was moving away from this type of work, additional monies were required to maintain the University’s Estate. The Chair of the Estates and Finance Committee confirmed that the Committee had explored the logic of the proposal and affirmed that the changing nature of the University’s Estates programme had impacted on the overall costs.

13.4

The Director of Estates and Facilities left the meeting. The Vice-Chancellor and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor re-joined the meeting.

**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

14. REGISTER OF DONATIONS

14.1 The updated Register of Donations was noted. UC_2021_03_25_P15

15. FINANCIAL REPORT

15.1 Council received the management accounts for the period to 31 January 2021, noting the positive direction of travel from the initial consideration of the Financial Forecast in July 2020. Members commented on the excellent financial management by University colleagues and the Chair noted the
effectiveness of enhanced financial scrutiny by the Estates and Finance Committee.

16. COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE
16.1 Council received the meeting schedules for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years.

17. COMMITTEE MINUTES
17.1 The minutes of the following meetings were noted:
Audit Committee, 28 January and 11 March 2021
Estates & Finance Committee, 12 March 2021
Governance & Membership Committee, 25 February 2021
Summary of the Senate minutes, 10 March 2021

18. UNIVERSITY SEAL
18.1 The application of the seal since the last meeting was noted.

Mr Delroy Beverley joined the meeting.

19. RISK MANAGEMENT
19.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor presented the revised Risk Register, which had been extensively discussed and challenged at the March 2021 Audit Committee meeting. Members considered the revisions to rebalance risk within the Inspiring, Innovative, International and Growth and Efficiency themes of the Register, following which they resolved to approve the Risk Register, as recommended by the Audit Committee.

OTHER COUNCIL MATTERS:

20. ANTI-TAX EVASION POLICY
20.1 Council resolved to approve the University's new Anti-Tax Evasion Policy, as recommended by the Senior Leadership Team and Audit Committee, which addressed the University's obligations under the Criminal Finances Act.

OTHER BUSINESS

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
21.1 It was also noted that this would be Mrs Tracey Taylor's last Council meeting. The Chair and members thanked Mrs Taylor for her effective support and wished her every success for the future.

22. AVAILABILITY OF AGENDA, PAPERS AND MINUTES
22.1 Resolved: to exclude the following papers from the open version under Standing order 11.8.

Agenda item 9 Outcome of CMA Review
Agenda item 11 Update on the University’s REF Submission
Agenda item 12 Applications, Enrolments and Retention
Agenda item 13 Estates Matters
23. **DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 8 July 2021, 13.00 (venue tbc).

(* = Further details in the Confidential Supplement to these minutes, excluded under Standing Order 11.8)