COUNCIL

Loughborough University

Minutes of the meeting of 26 March 2026

COUN26-M1

Attendance

Christine Hodgson (ab)

Karen Blay	Nick Jennings	Rachel Thomson
Penny Briscoe	Jennifer Maxwell-Harris (Chair)	Mark Thurston (ab)
Graham Corfield	Nicky Morgan	Julie Turner (ab)
Andrea Davis	Lucy Palmer	Justin Waring
Natalie Gasson-McKinley	David Price	Mike Wedderburn
Naomi Hudson (ab)	Dan Rodenhurst	Sheryl Williams
Matthew Inglis	Surinder Sharma	Jon Woods
Mia Jackson (ab)	Luke Langbein-Stott	

In attendance: Ffyona Baker; Sam Grogan; James Henry; Jo Maher; Dan Parsons; Richard Taylor; Luke Vulpiani

Apologies received from: Christine Hodgson; Naomi Hudson; Mia Jackson; Mark Thurston; Julie Turner

26/1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

26/2 Minutes and Matters Arising

2.1 Minutes

COUN26-M4

Council **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025.

2.2 Maters Arising

Council **NOTED** the following matters arising:

i. Following Council's request, Staff Complaints and Student Complaints have been added to the internal audit schedule for 2025/26 with the work due to be undertaken in June 2026.

ii. The first cycle of Council briefings has been completed. Work on the next cycle of briefings is being undertaken and Council will be updated when dates are confirmed. Expected briefing

topics to include: Student Mental Health and Risk Management; Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park; Commercial; Lobbying and the Role of Universities UK (depending on the availability of external speaker).

26/3 Chair's Report

Council **RECEIVED** a verbal report from the Chair.

The Committee of University Chairs revised Code of Governance is expected to be published for the start of the 2026/27 academic year. There will be a short-window to consider any governance changes once the new Code is published. Loughborough is currently compliant with the existing Code.

26/4 University Finances

4.1 Financial Update

COUN26-P1

Council **CONSIDERED** the current financial position.

Council received an additional paper on commercial activity considered by Finance Committee on 20th March, which explained how the University structures and manages its commercial activities and plans for further engagement with Council.

The Q3 position indicates that the 25/26 deficit remains at £5m in accordance with the budget, while year-end cash forecast has increased from £68m to £85m owing to re-phasing of the Central Accommodation Project. There was positive growth for Imago, research awards and spin-outs The local Government Pension Scheme valuation is nearing completion, and it is expected to see employer contributions reduce from ~26% to 13.4% equating to a ~£4m per annum cash upside.

The key risks for the year remain operating cash and bank covenants. A new financial system will be implemented in August, meaning July will be a critical point with risks to be managed.

4.2 2026/27 Budget

COUN26-P2

Council **CONSIDERED** the process for the 2026/27 budget and five-year forecast to 2031.

Work on the 2026/27 budget and 5-year forecast is being undertaken and Council will receive the draft in July.

The forecast of two years of deficit with a return to surplus in 2027/28 was based on the Financial Sustainability PMB saving £15 million, growth in undergraduates numbers with linked

investment in infrastructure, and recovery in postgraduate taught and international students. Progress on cost savings was good with half actioned and a clear line of sight on other savings, meaning a there is a high-level of confidence the savings can be achieved.

The University has a good revenue base: the most predictable and reliable source of income is undergraduate students and the most surplus generative activity is student accommodation. Undergraduate student growth is on-track, while the big challenge is projected postgraduate international student numbers.

26/5 UCL COVID Student Claim Settlement

COUN26-P3

Council **CONSIDERED** an update on the UCL COVID student claim settlement.

26/6 University Strategy KPIs

COUN26-P4

Council **CONSIDERED** an update on the Strategy KPIs.
Council **ENDORSED** the proposed changes to two of the Commercial and Partnerships KPIs
Council **ENDORSED** the changes to the basket of measures which underpin the Staff KPI.

Commercial and Partnership KPIs 2 and 3 will now be reported by percentage growth annually to ensure more accurate measurement of performance.

The overall staff Council KPI will be based on progress towards the People and Culture Strategy. The current KPI is an indicative basket of quantitative and qualitative measures, which may be developed further as the Strategy is implemented and there are opportunities to draw on additional people analytics data. Human Resources Committee also reviews the measures that make up the KPI providing further assurance to Council.

26/7 People and Culture

7.1 People and Culture Strategy

COUN26-P5

Council welcomed and **ENDORSED** the People and Culture Strategy with minor changes delegated to Human Resources Committee. The Strategy has been developed in collaboration with colleagues across the University including trade unions and other groups and in consultation with Human Resources Committee, staff groups and the Joint Negotiating Committee.

The strategy sets out four strategic objectives to enhance the colleague experience, develop leadership and management capability, strengthen colleague voice and create a future-fit,

inclusive workplace culture. The Strategy describes what is distinctive about working at Loughborough. An integrated delivery plan has been drafted setting out the key deliverables for the coming 24 months. The primary focus in year one is to embed the GLOW (Growth, Learning, Opportunities, Wellbeing) framework, integrate work on wellbeing, and enhance leadership the management. A focus on agile working to maximise resources and skills is also under development.

7.2 Staff Experience Survey

COUN26-P6

Council **CONSIDERED** a report from Human Resources Committee on the results of the staff experience survey. The staff survey data is also important for measuring performance towards the People and Culture Strategy.

Loughborough was ranked in the top quartile nationally for the Inspire HE rankings for the second consecutive year, as well as being named in the Financial Times UK Best Employers 2026 for the first time, ranking 26th out of 500 organisations, fourth amongst Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and the Number 1 Employer in the East Midlands.

The results show that Loughborough continues to perform strongly on staff engagement and overall employee experience, exceeding sector benchmarks. Reward and recognition was the lowest scoring theme, and this also affected the score that action will be taken on the survey. There are few levers to pull on pay and benefits so the focus needed to be on improving non-financial recognition.

7.3 Pay Gaps Report

COUN26-P7

Council **CONSIDERED** the pay gaps report. The gender pay gap figures will be reported online using the gender pay gap reporting service by the deadline of 30 March 2026. There is no requirement to publish race and disability pay gaps but Loughborough voluntarily publishes these reports using the same data.

The gender pay gap continues to close albeit slowly but the longer-term trajectory is positive.

Human Resources Committee and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governance Committee have also reviewed the data to understand where additional actions may bring benefit. The reward round for staff considers equal pay (which is different from the pay gap) to ensure equity for people doing work at the same level.

7.4 Staff Complaints Report

COUN26-P8

Council **CONSIDERED** a report on Staff Complaints. Student complaints are reported on an annual basis to Council in June each year.

The data on staff complaints is limited so longitudinal trends are difficult to determine and further work to understand the data on appeals and grievances is required. Exit survey information is also important to consider to understand the issues around staff complaints.

The internal auditors have been commissioned to review the management of staff and student complaints to provide assurance that the processes are fit for purpose. Council is expected to receive the audit report in the autumn following consideration by Audit and Risk Committee.

26/8 Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park

COUN26-P9

Council **ENDORSED** the proposed approach to the development of Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park that part is retained for University development, and the remainder considered for commercial development with formal valuation of the land and formal market testing for a development partner commencing.

LUSEP is a significant strategic asset, designated in the local plan for industrial development, good transport links and energy rich. A formal valuation of the land and tender for a development partner will enable a clearer assessment of the different options.
There was an understanding that this is a key asset and while moving quickly may be desirable it is important that the right decision for the long-term is made.

Estates Management and Sustainability Committee will consider further and return to Council with an update in July. Council also requested a briefing on LUSEP (both the history and any future plans) and possibly a tour around the July Council meeting.

26/9 Audit and Risk Committee

COUN26-P10

Council **RECEIVED** a report from the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 05 February 2026.

The Director of Estates and Management had attended the meeting to provide assurance on business continuity and estate maintenance. Two students had also been invited to the meeting to provide ARC with some oversight on the student experience. Members welcomed hearing the ‘voice of the student’ and noted how valuable the session was talking directly to students.

26/10 Governance and Nominations Committee

COUN26-P11

Council **APPROVED**, on the Recommendation of Governance and Nominations Committee, the appointment of James Roberts as a lay Member of Council for a 3-year term from 01 August 2026.

26/11 Health, Safety and Environment

COUN26-P24

Council **RECEIVED** an overview of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual report and the meeting of the Health, Safety and Environment Committee held on 28 January 2026. There has been a focus on contractor management and road safety as the construction stage of the Central Accommodation Project commences.
The HSE KPI is light green and it is suggested the wording to explain the KPI is amened to 'risk mitigations are in place that are suitable to the risks identified'.

Council was **ASSURED** that the University is fulfilling its obligations with regard to Health, Safety and Environment and **ENDORSED** the annual report.

26/12 University Honorary Degrees and Medals

COUN26-P12

Council **APPROVED** the award of Honorary Degrees and University Medals to the individuals named in the paper.

26/13 Matters for Report by the Vice-Chancellor

COUN26-P13

Council **RECEIVED** a written report from the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor particularly highlighted the following items not discussed elsewhere:

- The University is leading the development of a bid to the government's newly launched Town of Culture programme, with support from Charnwood Borough Council and a range of local organisations and charities. This is a nationally competitive programme so success is uncertain.
- Loughborough is involved with Project Infinity, located within Infinity Park Derby and the East Midlands Investment Zone. The Project aims to establish a nationally recognised Centre of Excellence for Nuclear and Defence, bringing together advanced manufacturing, prototyping, digital engineering, and supply chain development.
- In February, we received our eighth Queen's Education Prize at St James's Palace from the King and Queen, this time for our pioneering contributions to Para and disability

sport. The event was attended by the Vice-Chancellor, our Chancellor (Seb Coe), Chair of Council and other key partners, including the British Paralympic Association and athletes.

- Loughborough has been named the best university in the world for sports-related subjects in the QS global rankings for the tenth year in a row. Eight other disciplines achieved a top-100 ranking.

SECTION B – Starred Items for Approval

[These items will be approved unless otherwise decided]

26/14 *Degree Outcomes Statement

COUN26-P14

Council **APPROVED** the 2024/25 Degree Outcomes Statement.

26/15 *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Public Sector Duty Compliance Report

COUN26-P15

Council **APPROVED** the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Public Sector Equality Duty Compliance Report 2025.

26/16 *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governance Committee

COUN26-P16

Council **APPROVED** amendments to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Governance Committee Terms of Reference.

26/17 *Council Staff Election Process

COUN26-P17

Council **APPROVED** single transferable vote as the voting system for staff elections to Council and **APPROVED** an amendment to Ordinance IX. First Hearing.

SECTION C – Starred Items for Information

26/18 *Matters for Report

Council **RECEIVED** the following reports:

18.1 *Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor including student recruitment COUN26-P18

18.2 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) COUN26-P19

18.3 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) COUN26-P20

18.4 *Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Sport) COUN26-P21

26/19 *Senate Effectiveness Review

COUN26-P22

Council **NOTED** the plan for the 2026 Senate Effectiveness Review.

26/20 *Towers Hall Building Safety Licence

COUN26-P23

Council **NOTED** an update on the Building Safety Regulator Licence for Towers Hall.

26/21 *Annual Report from the Radiation Protection Officer

COUN26-P25

Council **RECEIVED** the Annual Report from the Radiation Protection Officer.

26/22 *Office for Students Reportable Events

COUN26-P26

Council **NOTED** that there have been no reportable events since the last meeting of Council and no event which needed to be considered if it qualified as a reportable.

26/23 *Capital Framework Progress Report

COUN26-P27

Council **RECEIVED** a progress report.

26/24 *Common Seal

COUN26-P28

Council **RECEIVED** a list of documents to which the University Seal has been attached.

26/25 *Senior Appointments

Council **NOTED** the Kate Gallagher has been appointed as General Counsel and Director of Legal Services and will commence the role at the end of May.

26/26 *Reports from Committees

Council **RECEIVED** reports from the following Committees:

COUN26-P29	**Estates Management and Sustainability Committee – 24 February 2026**
COUN26-P30	**Finance Committee – 23 January 2026**

COUN26-P31	**Governance and Nominations Committee – 21 November 2025 and 13 February 2026**
COUN26-P32	**Health, Safety and Environment Committee – 28 January 2026**
COUN26-P33	**Human Resources Committee – 28 January 2026**
COUN26-P34	**Information Technology Governance Committee – 27 February 2026**
COUN26-P35	**Research and Innovation Committee – 18 November 2025 and 10 February 2026**
COUN26-P36	**Sport Committee – 04 December 2025**
COUN26-P37	**Strategic Portfolio and Resources Committee (Part B) – 09 March 2026, 30 March 2026 and 05 May 2026**

26/27 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 15 October 2026, all-day, Away Day, Loughborough Campus

2026/2027 Meetings

Wednesday 25 November 2026, 9:00-12:00, online

Tuesday 23 March 2027, 9:00-12:00, Loughborough University London

Thursday 24 June 2027, 14:00-17:00, Loughborough Campus