

VoNC in University of Nottingham Council (UCU/Unite/Unison)

The University of Nottingham UCU/Unite/Unison branches note that Council has materially failed to discharge its duties as set out in Section 6 (The Council) and Section 7 (Powers of the Council) of the University Statutes, and Ordinance X (Powers of Council), in relation to its decision to support the Future Nottingham Phase 2 (FN2) restructuring of the University. Specifically, Council displayed:

1. Failure to Discharge Responsibility for the Conduct and Activities of the University:

Under Statute Section 7, 1, Council “shall be responsible for the conduct and activities of the University.” The Council’s decision to approve FN2 draft business case without first securing the complete data necessary to assess its impact on student recruitment, teaching quality, and research output constitutes a failure to exercise responsible stewardship over the University’s core activities. Proceeding without an evidence base capable of demonstrating that no significant harm would result is inconsistent with this foundational duty.

2. Disregard for Senate and Failure to Exercise Oversight Powers Appropriately:

Ordinance X empowers Council “to review amend refer back control or disallow any act of the Senate” and to give directions thereon. This provision presupposes engagement with Senate’s considered position. Senate, as the University’s principal academic body, did not support the restructuring. Rather than treating Senate’s non-support as a material concern warranting further scrutiny, Council overrode it. This approach inverts the purpose of Council’s oversight function, which exists to safeguard institutional integrity, not to circumvent academic judgement.

3. Failure to Require Adequate Reporting on Teaching and Research:

Ordinance X expressly provides that Council shall “receive and consider reports on teaching and the welfare and development of students” and shall “promote and make provision for research within the University and require reports from time to time on such research.” Council approved FN2 despite the absence of complete data addressing its potential impact on teaching, student welfare, and research. This represents a failure to exercise the Council’s own reporting and oversight powers before taking a consequential decision.

4. Exposure of the University to Significant Reputational Damage:

Statute Section 7, 1 places overall responsibility for the University’s conduct and activities on Council. Council is empowered (Ordinance X) to govern, manage and regulate “all affairs whatsoever of the University.” A major restructuring that risks negative impact on student recruitment, teaching quality, and research output carries the direct potential for reputational harm to the University’s standing, rankings, and long-term sustainability. By proceeding without the data required to exclude such risks, Council has acted in a manner that exposes the institution to foreseeable and avoidable damage.

5. Breach of the Duty to Ensure External Members Act Independently and Impartially:

Statute Section 6, 3.1.2 requires that External Members appointed to Council shall be “considered by the Council to be otherwise independent and impartial.” The decision to proceed without full data, and against the expressed position of Senate, raises serious questions about whether External Members applied independent and impartial judgement or gave undue deference to executive preferences. Council’s governance depends on External Members acting as a genuine check on institutional

decision-making; the circumstances of this vote suggest that function was not adequately discharged.

All three Campus Union branches believe:

- That Council has ratified the draft Business Case without due diligence to university processes and against the overwhelming vote of Senate
- That Council has ratified the draft Business Case without access to the necessary data needed to make such an important decision (see list above)
- That Council is not fulfilling its governance duties with due diligence and in robust and transparent ways
- That Council has potentially demonstrated disregard for the Nolan Principles and its own [Conflict of Interest Procedure](#) by appointing Michael Queen as the new Chair of Council. Queen's role as ex Director and audit committee chair for PA Consulting is a blatant Conflict of Interest because UoN is paying for PA Consulting services for Future Nottingham strategy.

As a result of Council's actions, the combined unions can no longer sustain any confidence in the university Council and call on all those who supported the Future Nottingham 2 business case to resign in order that they can be replaced by individuals who genuinely have the best interests of the university at heart and can perform their duties competently.