

COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT **Paul Beaumont**

Having only had one, semi-elected Council at the time of writing, this report may be a little premature.

Council met on Monday 13th October to run over beginning of term formalities - receiving Officer Trustee reports, and Constituent Union reports.

The mandate set by the previous Council for a referendum (technically a preferendum, but there is no provision technically for this in the Constitution) was altered to a survey successfully. This will hopefully give the Union both better data, and more manoeuvrability in policy (set and approved by Council as opposed to by ballot of all students).

Whilst I wholly agree we should use referenda for certain issues, something as detailed and time consuming or complex as higher education funding should really be studied quite carefully and be available for discussion in a forum such as Council, rather than a fixed motion that goes straight to ballot. Some students may argue that this is 'taking away from the student voice' – but I would disagree, as the Council is the body of representatives all elected by students to represent them, make informed decisions and pass policy.

No other papers were taken to the first Council (a motion to remove an Officer was withdrawn after the Officer resigned), but I hope to have some healthy discussion papers come to the next few. Council shouldn't be a talking shop, but a balance between rubber stamping issues that have previously been discussed with interested members (ideally at sub-committees) and discussing more widely reaching points would seem sensible. As part of the consultation mechanism, the Library will present to Council at its next meeting over their redevelopment project.

At the time of writing, elections are on going to fill the remaining Council Ordinary Member positions. Quorum was easily reached at the first meeting, and I am hopeful that once members settle down in to the year (the second week of term is always going to be busy) this will continue and we may have an even greater turnout.

I also look forward to receiving papers starting to implement discussions previously had on dissolving the Executive and restructuring Council after the Democracy Review is completed.

Notable Point from 28th October Council Addendum

Council voted by the two thirds required to alter the Executive Committee's Standing Orders to read:

1. This committee does not meet and has no membership.

This effectively destroys the Executive Committee (who's functions have been subsumed over the years back to Trustee Board, Leadership Team and Council, as appropriate). Formal removal of the committee from the Bye-Laws can happen during the Democracy Review (which would require Board approval too; Council on its own just has the remit to change the Standing Orders).

Council agreed to form more ad-hoc sub-committees that may be appropriate to replace Exec. For instance, previously Exec may have considered policies on the web servers, or minibuses, and the student attending by their defacto membership of Exec may not, necessarily, have had any interest in these matters. Now, a more interested subset of Council may be found to sit on these ad-hoc committees, and can meet to approve these - if Council so delegates - or form a working group to report to Council which then approves the policies.