



EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

14 March 2022 - via Microsoft Teams (including videolink)

CONFIRMED SUMMARY MINUTES

Contact Georgina Bailes georgina.bailes@northumbria.ac.uk, Secretary to the Board of Governors, with any queries about these Summary Minutes.

- Present: H Fairfoul (Chair), C Apsey, Dr R Blackman-Woods, Dr S Fancey [absent during Estates Development], N Pope [to Lessons from IC3 and Post Award Delivery Challenges], Professor A Wathey
- Apologies: D Pearson, S Pelham
- Observers: L Orme [to Estates Development]
- Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)
- In attendance: A Dunlop, J Embley, Professor T Lawson, D Monnery [to Estates Development], S Newitt.

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1.	<p><u>Introduction</u> <u>Vice-Chancellor’s Horizon Scanning</u> [Oral Report] The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive presented on sector wide matters and the implications of these for the University. UUK guidance on the crisis in Ukraine was being followed. Government policy announcements in response to the review of post-18 education and funding included a freeze on headline tuition fees until at least 2024/25, changes to the student loan system and confirmation that a move to post-qualification applications/offers was not being considered. Consultation on potential higher education reforms would run until 6 May; little detail was yet available on the Lifelong Loan Entitlement. The likely continued rise in inflation meant that the tuition fee freeze would have a greater impact than first thought. The Committee noted that all of Northumbria’s Russian connections had been audited and two projects suspended.</p>
2.	<p><u>People</u> <u>People and Culture Update</u> [EF21/61] The Committee considered continuing developments to the organisational culture as part of the response to Covid and in the longer term. Activity to support and develop colleagues to remain safe, be effective in their roles and to achieve a good sense of physical and psychological wellbeing was continuing as part of the accelerating return to campus; development programmes were re-starting now face to face engagement was possible. Unison had accepted on behalf of professional support staff the bundle of changes to terms and conditions that had been subject to negotiation. The Committee noted that a wide range of channels was used to communicate developments in the organisational culture to staff.</p> <p><u>Culture Framework</u> [EF21/62 and presentation] The Committee considered the Culture Framework, and plans to embed it, as a means of encouraging and recognising positive individual and team behaviours which would contribute to the achievement of Vision 2030. The Committee commended the report and noted that the Framework would be underpinned by an implementation plan before formal launch to ensure credibility. Progress would be measured through a variety of feedback mechanisms including staff surveys. Continuous modelling of the desired behaviours by senior management would be critical and it would be important to present the Framework in a way that supported the distinctiveness of Northumbria as a place of academic enquiry, critique and challenge. The Committee endorsed the Culture Framework (in development) for submission to Board of Governors on 25 April 2022.</p> <p><u>Gender Pay Report 2021</u> [EF21/63] The Committee considered the 2021 Gender Pay Report for Northumbria University and Northumbria University Services Limited (NUSL); the mean and median pay gaps for Northumbria University, NUSL and both companies were lower than the education sector averages. The Committee commended the report and noted that it would be published at the end of March 2022.</p> <p><u>Voluntary Living Wage – update</u> [EF21/64]</p>

	<p>The Committee considered statutory changes to the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage effective 1 April 2022. It was proposed that the University committed to a full review of the lower pay scale in advance of the implementation of the 2022/23 national pay award, with a full exploration of the implications of following the Voluntary Living Wage. The Committee approved the review, noting that it would begin as soon as national pay settlement information was available.</p> <p><u>Industrial Action Update</u> [Presentation] The Committee noted an update on current and proposed further industrial action by UCU.</p> <p><u>National Pay Negotiations</u> [Presentation] The Committee considered an update on the current national pay negotiations in the context of significant pressures on both staffing and non-staffing costs. The Committee endorsed Northumbria’s participation in the process.</p> <p><u>Pensions Update</u> [Oral Report] The Committee noted an update on pensions issues.</p>
3.	<p><u>Core Financial Performance and Planning</u> <u>Finance Monthly Report: P6 2021/22</u> [EF21/65] The Committee considered the University’s financial position and performance at Period (31 January 2022) with oral updates relating to Period 7 indicating a further strengthened position; inflation was beginning to have an impact on projections and might require some headroom to be used. The Committee noted the report.</p> <p><u>Treasury Management Update</u> [EF21/66] The Committee considered the proposed unscheduled prepayment of the unsecured and interest free SALIX Recycling Fund Loan, which would end in 2025 and in addition changes made to eligibility criteria for projects from April 2022 made it difficult for Northumbria to continue to identify projects suitable for the recycled funding, and other treasury management updates. The Committee noted that much larger-scale grant funding was potentially available to continue work to reduce energy costs and approved the unscheduled prepayment of the unsecured and interest free SALIX Recycling Fund Loan.</p> <p><u>Student Recruitment 2021/22 and 2022/23</u> [EF21/67] The Committee received an update on student recruitment for 2021/22 and 2022/23. Work and investment were in progress to target marketing in a more sophisticated way including changing the perceptions of teachers and parents to secure the required levels of high-quality applicants and convert those into enrolments. The Committee noted the update.</p>
4.	<p><u>Policy/Regulation/Projects</u> <u>Estates Development</u> [Presentation] The Committee considered an update on planning for the University’s estate, looking at immediate priorities needed for September 2022, issues to be addressed during 2022/23 and longer-term plans. Immediate priorities included the provision of a number of hubs across campus in support of the Education Strategy, replicating the style and approach of CCE Café, which would cement the role of the Quadrangle at the heart of the campus; work was also in progress to free up space to support both Education and Research Strategies, especially to provide additional laboratory space. Future commitments to the Heat Network and Carbon Zero target would significantly influence other decisions, and longer-term plans would also be shaped by non-estates issues such as new ways of working. Major potential capital investment thinking in the city was being shared between Northumbria, Newcastle University and the City Council to identify any opportunities for joint ways forward. a report would be provided to Board of Governors on 25 April setting out a programme of priorities for the short term. The Committee commended the clear pathway forward.</p> <p><u>Lessons from IC3 and Post Award Delivery Challenges</u> [Oral Report] Dr S Fancey declared a potential conflict of interest given the role of his employer in the Strength in Places fund and restricted his input to this item to general observations. The Committee considered how the lessons from the unsuccessful IC3 bid were being applied to future large-scale bidding. The main lessons from the process were around bid coordination, UE ownership of bids including their content, and securing partner commitment more explicitly. The Committee noted that the content of bids was not within the competency of the Board or the relevant Committee to assess, but assurance was required that a robust assessment had been</p>

undertaken. Dedicated teams with access to professional expertise were generally required for such projects, and both process and culture dimensions needed to be addressed.

Contracts and Legal Claims Update [EF21/68] **CONFIDENTIAL AND LEGALLY PRIVILEGED**
(NB: this item is Legally Privileged and included in Reserved Business Minutes)

Students' Union Financial Performance P6 2020/21* [EF21/69]
The Committee noted the report.

Richard Elliott
Assistant Secretary to Employment and Finance Committee
March 2021