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EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

12 September 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, H Colclough, Dr S Fancey [absent EF22/06 and Pensions Update], Professor A Long, D Pearson,
 Observers: L Bird, L Orme, S Pelham,
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: S Corbett, A Dunlop, J Embley, Prof T Lawson, D Monnery [absent EF22/05], S Newitt, E Pritchard [EF22/07], Rachael Savidis [EF22/07]

MAIN ITEMS DISCUSSED/DECIDED ON AT THE MEETING

1 **Introduction**
Vice-Chancellor’s Horizon Scanning [Oral Report]
 The Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive presented on sector wide matters and the implications of these for the University. The bank holiday for the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II on 19th September would be treated as a regular bank holiday which required some activities to be re-arranged but on-campus support and facilities for newly arrived students would be maintained. The new Government’s ministerial appointments for HE and Science were yet to be confirmed, reform timelines including funding for foundation years remained unclear but it was expected that the Freedom of Speech Bill would progress. The VC’s first all-staff briefing in November would focus on a celebration of the THE nomination. Board members would be invited. **The Committee noted the update and noted that the University was working with other regional institutions to coordinate cost of living support to students .**

2 **People**
People and Culture Update [EF22/04]
 The Committee considered ‘People’ activity and key successes achieved over the last year as well as work that is underway or planned for 2022/23. The University’s Values and Behaviours framework had been completed and there were plans in place for it to be embedded and celebrated. Enhanced people policies, including maternity, adoption and paternity pay had been introduced and the role of Assistant Professor had been introduced on 1 August 2022. Athena Swan Bronze awards had been achieved by Applied Sciences, Architecture and The Built Environment and Computer Information Sciences. **The Committee noted the report and that the timings of the next staff survey were under discussion, requested a diagram of the new Faculty and Departmental management structures and feedback on the implementation of the Values and Behaviours framework.**

Academic Promotion Round 2021-22 Update [EF22/05]
 The Committee considered the outcome of Academic Promotions and Professorial Progression in 2021/22 and an update on the new Academic Development Review approach which will be introduced to support the development and promotion of colleagues from 2022/23. The 2021/22 process had seen the highest number of applications to date and an EDI analysis would be presented at the November meeting. The approach for 2022/23 would include an invitation to all academic colleagues to engage in a template-based process for feedback on their career progress and aspirations. **The Committee noted the more developmental approach to the process and that links to the PDA process would be explored with workload impacts minimised.**

	<p><u>A proposal for addressing low pay and improving equity in the context of ongoing national pay negotiations</u> [EF22/06] The Committee considered emerging draft proposals for addressing low pay and improving equity in the context of the current cost of living pressure and ongoing national pay negotiations, that would be subject to consultation with Unison once complete. The proposals were being benchmarked against the approaches being taken by other regional Universities. The Committee noted the report and provided feedback.</p> <p><u>Pensions Update</u> [Oral Report] The Committee noted an update on pensions issues.</p> <p><u>Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report Q4 2021/22</u> [EF22/07] The Committee considered the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report May to July 2022, which included the 2021/22 annual summary, and noted that the Director of Health, Safety and Sustainability was leaving the University on 28 October 2022 - Rachael Savidis had been appointed as Assistant Director on a fixed term basis. The Q4 mandatory training completion rates had increased by 2% on the last quarter and completion rates for statutory inspections by British Engineering Services remained at 92%. An external audit of HR, VCO and Finance had not identified any high-risk issues. Wellbeing initiatives now include a focus on financial wellbeing and there was an increase on time lost to sickness compared to 2020/21 but this was still below the sector average. The Committee noted the report, noted that this was E Pritchard's last committee and thanked him for his work during his time at the University.</p>
3	<p><u>Core Financial Performance and Planning</u></p> <p><u>Finance Monthly Report: P12 2021/22</u> [EF22/08] The Committee considered the University's financial position and performance at Period 12 2021/22 (31 July 2022), indicating a strong position. The University continued to maintain significant headroom notwithstanding inflationary pressure. The Committee noted the report.</p> <p><u>Treasury Management Update</u> [EF22/09] The Committee considered a Treasury Management Update. OfS had determined that due to the amount of the SALIX Recycling Fund Loan to be repaid that it should be paid over a period of three years rather than eight years previously agreed by the Committee; the amounts involved were not material. The Committee noted the report.</p> <p><u>Review of Approved Tuition Fees 2023/24</u> [EF22/10] Resolved: that the previous approval of tuition fees for 2023/24 be confirmed.</p> <p><u>Student Recruitment 2022/23</u> [EF22/11 and presentation] The Committee noted an update on student recruitment for 2022/23.</p>
4	<p><u>Policy/Regulation/Projects</u></p> <p><u>Estates Strategy Update</u> [Presentation] The Committee considered an update on Estates Strategy, noting that the majority of planned operational work was on track for completion for the start of the new academic year and that the Student Union Building was in need of investment and this was being addressed with the SU in the Heart of the Campus project. Information from OfS about the funding bid for CHASE was still awaited but work was in progress to clarify requirements for the building and appropriate communications were in place. The Committee noted the report</p> <p><u>Lockheed Martin Partnership</u> [Oral Report] Considered under Estate Strategy update above.</p> <p><u>IT Transformation Programme – Business Case</u> [EF22/12] The committee considered a recommendation to initiate the cloud and infrastructure transformation and the required investments following scrutiny by the IT Advisory Board. The proposed solution would support delivery of the Strategic Outcome for organisational sustainability and the transition would be managed through the Planning Group as a major project. Resolved: that the initiation of the cloud and infrastructure transformation and the required investments be approved.</p>

Heat Decarbonisation and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Bid [EF22/24]

The committee considered a request to bid for PSDS funding for Coach Lane East and work being undertaken to develop a heat decarbonisation strategy and noted that the suitability of the University's buildings for application to the scheme had been reviewed with input from Arup and Equans. It was recommended that a bid was submitted to install an air source heat pump at Coach Lane East, and to install LED lighting and solar panels. **Resolved: that submission of the bid for PSDS funding for Coach Lane East be approved.**

Contracts and Legal Claims Update [EF21/13] **CONFIDENTIAL AND LEGALLY PRIVILEGED**
(NB: this item is Legally Privileged and included in Reserved Business Minutes)

Students' Union Financial Performance P12 2021/22* [EF22/14]

The Committee noted the report.

Richard Elliott
Assistant Secretary to Employment and Finance Committee
September 2022