

EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

3 April 2023 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West

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), Dr R Blackman-Woods, H Colclough, Dr S Fancey, H Kajee, Prof A Long, D Pearson
 Observers: L Bird, L Orme, S Pelham
 Apologies: C Apsey
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: J Embley, Prof T Lawson, D Monnery, Prof G Marston [EF22/54-EF22/56], S Newitt, P Thomas

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. Following the recent budget, local discussions on potential applications of the Shared Prosperity Fund were in progress. The Lifelong Learning Entitlement would be introduced from 2025, and a cap on foundation years fees for non-STEM subjects was still anticipated with its impact on the University being modelled; restrictions on visas for international students were likely to focus on visas for dependents. The Committee noted the update.</p>
2	<p><u>People</u> <u>Pay and Cost of Living</u> [EF22/51] The Committee considered an update on the University’s response to the cost-of-living challenges, including increased salaries for the lowest-graded staff, 35 days annual leave for all staff with the option to sell up to one week and a 3% non-consolidated pay supplement between January 2023 and July 2023 while national pay negotiations were on-going. The Committee noted the update and that the sell-back scheme would be reviewed and re-confirmed annually; work would also be planned to communicate the value of the total reward package.</p> <p><u>University’s Response to Industrial Action</u> [EF22/52] The Committee considered an update on the University’s approach to mitigating the impact of the UCU industrial action, which had resulted in 15 days of strike action so far; there were indications that the University’s open and regular communications with colleagues had some effect in reducing levels of action. The Committee noted the report and that student feedback to date had been generally positive, but the proposed marking and assessment boycott was likely to cause more anxiety even with the guarantee of graduation in place, and that the Students’ Union would be involved in planning mitigation and communications.</p> <p><u>Pay Gap Report 2022</u> [EF22/53] The Committee considered the Pay Gap Report for 2022, the gender element of which had been published as required. The University had gone beyond what was legally required by also reporting ethnicity and disability pay gap information. For 2022, the overall mean and median gender pay gaps were the lowest figures reported to date and below both sector and all UK industries averages. The Committee welcomed the report and the inclusion of ethnicity and disability data.</p> <p><u>Pensions Update</u> [Oral Report] The Committee noted an update on pensions issues, and noted that Northumbria would be supporting sector-wide campaigning to government to address potential employer contribution rate increases for HE institutions with significant TPS memberships.</p>

3	<p><u>Core Financial Performance and Planning</u></p> <p><u>Financing for Estates and Other Investment</u> [EF22/54] The Committee considered proposed work to put in place the necessary financing for the University's investment plans which proposed that an initial piece of scoping work was carried out in order to more fully assess the financing requirements and options. The Committee noted the report and that the eventual finance strategy for the next University Strategy would be a decision of Board of Governors, and supported the proposed approach.</p> <p><u>The Centre for Health and Social Equity: Next Steps</u> [EF22/55 and presentation] The Committee considered progress on the draft Business Case for the Centre for Health and Social Equity (CHASE) and required funding including an OfS grant for the next stage of the programme which would be completed by March 2025. The Committee noted the progress, that the majority of the next stage would be funded from cash reserves and that although the works were required regardless of the completion of the CHASE programme the OfS grant would likely be repayable if the intended building was not constructed. Resolved that the release of funds for the next stage of the CHASE programme be approved.</p> <p><u>Estates Masterplan Development</u> [EF22/56] The Committee considered an update on the development of the University's Estates Masterplan (EMP) including a number of outline plans for the future use of specific buildings which would support the new University Strategy from 2024. The assumptions and recommendations outlined would form the core set of planning assumptions for the EMP, fixing plans for a number of buildings so that other plans could be developed in greater detail. The Committee noted the update and that the EMP would include the use and development of spaces between buildings as well as the buildings themselves, and approved the outline plans to form part of the EMP subject to any change as more detailed information became available.</p> <p><u>Purchase of Durant Hall</u> [EF22/57] The Committee approved a proposal to purchase the freehold of Durant Hall.</p> <p><u>Finance Monthly Report: P7 2022/23</u> [EF22/58] The Committee noted the University's financial position and performance at Period 7 (February 2023) and that income and expenditure was favourable to budget.</p> <p><u>Student Recruitment 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25</u> [EF22/59 and presentation] The Committee noted an update on student recruitment for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.</p>
4	<p><u>Policy/Regulation/Projects</u></p> <p><u>BIM Academy Share Sale and Exit</u> [EF22/60] The Committee considered the proposed sale of 100% of the University's shareholding in BIM Academy (Enterprise) Limited as the partner had announced that it wished to exit the joint venture and had offered to purchase the University's shareholding. PhD student contracts would continue to their natural end date. Resolved that the sale of 100% of the University's shareholding in BIM Academy (Enterprise) Limited be approved.</p> <p><u>ERP Update and Programme Approvals</u> [EF22/61] The Committee considered an update on progress with the University's People and Finance system implementation which had progressed with the core HR functionality released in November 2022, payroll functionality was expected in summer 2023 and finance functionality by early 2024. Quality had been prioritised over speed and changes to the scope of the project had increased costs. The Committee noted the update and that the engagement of Inoapps to assist with the Enterprise Performance Management element did not represent double spend and that the route to completion was now much clearer. Resolved that the anticipated spend with Oracle Consulting be approved</p> <p><u>Students' Union Financial Performance P7 2022/23</u> [EF22/63] The Committee noted the report.</p>