

EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

**6 November 2023 in room 209, Sutherland Building, City Campus West and via Microsoft Teams
(including videolink)**

UNCONFIRMED 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, H Kajee, M Larsen, Prof A Long, D Pearson, I Wilkin [to EF23/30]
 Observers: L Orme [to Student Recruitment], S Pelham [to Estates Update], N Shah
 Secretary: G Bailes, R Elliott (Assistant Secretary)
 In attendance: J Embley [to EF23/36], Prof T Lawson, Prof G Marston [EF23/31] D Monnery [from EF23/26], S Newitt, D Scott [EF23/31], C Stogden, P Thomas, Prof G Wynn [EF23.34]

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. The Real Living Wage announced on 24 October would be implemented and the University had been awarded funding for a UKRI Centre for Doctoral Training in Artificial Intelligence. The Committee noted the update.</p>
2	<p><u>People</u> <u>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report</u> [EF23/26] The Committee considered the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion annual report for 2022/23, publication of which was required under the Public Sector Equality. The report was presented by EDI theme for this year and following Committee feedback Northumbria-specific images had been included. The Committee commended the report, requested some additional information be included and endorsed the report for submission to Board of Governors on 27 November 2023 subject to the discussed amendments.</p> <p><u>People Metrics and Analytics</u> [EF23/27] The Committee considered a People Metrics report which reviewed aspects of the University’s performance relating to mandatory training. The new NUPF system allowed for better monitoring and automatic reminders than the previous system and trend data showed spikes in when training was completed - it was now possible to monitor how effective the reminders were and how soon after being overdue training was being completed. The Committee noted the update, provided feedback on some areas for future examination in this area and noted that a future meeting would consider proposals for the components of a people metrics scorecard.</p> <p><u>Industrial Action</u> [Oral Report] The Committee noted that the UCU aggregate ballot that closed on 3 November had not reached the threshold for industrial action.</p> <p><u>Pensions Update</u> [Oral Report] The Committee considered an update on the University pension schemes. The 31 March 2023 valuation of the USS pension was now materially complete and, if agreed, changes to contributions were expected to be implemented in January 2024. It had been announced that from April 2024 TPS employer contributions would increase by 5% and the impact of the increased cost on the sector and options for change were being discussed by a group of the five largest HE contributors, which included Northumbria. The Committee noted the report and that UUK and UCEA were coordinating the sector’s responses to pensions issues.</p>
3	<p><u>Core Financial Performance and Planning</u> <u>Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022/23</u> [EF23/28]</p>

The Committee considered the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022/23 from a performance perspective. The conformance elements would be considered by Audit Committee on 13 November. Performance in 2022/23 was positive overall with a strong cash position and the majority of targets met. **The Committee endorsed the report and the use of the going concern basis of accounting for submission to Board of Governors on 27 November 2023.**

Student Recruitment [Presentation]

The Committee noted an update on Student Recruitment for 2023/24

Cost Management Update [Presentation]

The Committee noted the update and requested a further update before the next planned full Committee meeting on 27 March 2024

Finance Monthly Report P2 2023/24 [EF23/29]

The Committee noted the University's financial position and performance at Period 2.

Revised Financial Regulations [EF23/30]

The Committee considered the latest proposed revised University Financial Regulations following an initial presentation on proposed changes at its 19 September 2023 meeting. The regulations had been updated to improve clarity of processes and would be considered by Audit Committee on 13 November. **The Committee noted the revised Financial Regulations and requested an analysis of the proposed changes and their anticipated impact; a revised timetable for the approval of the revised Financial Regulations would be agreed with both Employment and Finance and Audit Committees.**

4 **Policy/Regulation/Projects**

CHASE Business Case [EF23/31]

The Committee considered the CHASE Business Case and the anticipated benefits of the project for the University and the region. The final decision on the project and any required approval for the release of funds would be made in June 2024. **The Committee confirmed its support for the CHASE project and approved the proposed business case as presented and agreed it as the appropriate basis on which to progress the development of detailed design and financing plans.**

Estates Update [Presentation]

The Committee considered an update on the development of the University's Estate. Scoping and planning of the building work required to Ellison was in progress, demolition of Lovaine had commenced, "strip-back" work to Wynne Jones would begin this week and surveys to date had not revealed the presence of any RAAC. **The Committee noted the update.**

Major Outsourced Services Monitoring [EF23/32]

The Committee considered the major outsourced services monitoring report. The catering contract had been extended, the appropriate action for the hard facilities management contract which was due to expire in June 2024 was under consideration and the accommodation contract had been extended with long term plans to be aligned to the University Accommodation Strategy. **The Committee noted the report.**

Annual Material Income Contract Performance Summary [EF23/33]

The Committee considered the Annual Material Income Contract Performance Summary. Income from these contracts had increased in the last three years. **The Committee noted the report and requested more detailed information on one key partnership.**

Apprenticeship Subcontracting Rationale [EF23.34]

The Committee considered the Apprenticeship Subcontracting Rationale and noted that the ESFA approval cycle had changed. **The Committee approved the existing subcontracted services on apprenticeship programmes to fulfil ESFA subcontracting rules.**

Citrix Contract Renewal [EF23/35]

The Committee approved the contract for the continuation of the remote access service.

Contracts and Legal Claims Update [EF23/16]

The Committee noted the requirement for additional Oracle licences.

