

**Board of Governors****Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Governors held on 28 November 2017 in the Boardroom**

Present:	Mr Mike Lewis	Chairman
	Dr David Llewellyn	Vice-Chancellor
	Mr Colin Bailey	
	Mr Peter Cowdy	
	Dr John Donaldson	Staff Governor
	Mr Richard Hambleton	
	Mrs Heather Jenkins	
	Mrs Lavinia Moroz-Hale	
	Mr Peter Nixon	
	Prof Mark Omerod	
	Mr Mark Roach	
	Mrs Christine Snell	
	Dr Martin Thomas	
	Mr Campbell Tweed	
	Mr Dominic Wong	
Apologies:	Mr Tim Burnhope	
	Mrs Emma Foulkes	
	Miss Charlotte Garbutt	SU President
	Dr Moira Harris	Staff Governor
	Dr Julia Pointon	
	Mr Stephen Vickers	Vice-Chairman
In attendance:	Dr Catherine Baxter	University Secretary & Clerk to the Board
	Mrs Liz Furey	Director of Finance
	Prof Peter Mills	Deputy Vice-Chancellor

**Register of Interests**

Members were reminded to complete or update their entry in the Register of Interests as necessary.

**17/22 Staff Observers**

Welcome: Members welcomed Mr Craig Jones, Head of Financial Accounting, who was attending as a staff observer.

*Mr Mike Lewis and Mr Martin Thomas left the meeting at this point*

**17/23 Election of Chair and two Vice-Chairs of the Board of Governors**

Received: a report from the University Secretary on expressions of interest received for the role of Chair and the two roles of Vice- Chair for 2017/18;

Noted: that Mr Lewis had expressed an interest in the role of Chairman of the Board of Governors for 2017/18 and Mr Vickers and Mr Thomas had expressed interest in the two roles of Vice- Chairs for 2017/18;

Agreed: that Mr Lewis be appointed to the role of Chair for 2017/18 and that Mr Vickers and Mr Thomas be appointed to the roles of Vice-Chairs 2017/18;

*Mr Mike Lewis and Mr Martin Thomas re-joined the meeting at this point*

**17/24 Minutes and Notes of the Planning Day held on 28 September 2017**

- Approved:
- i) the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors held on 28 September 2017 (17/01 – 17/21);
  - ii) the notes of the Board of Governors/University Executive Planning Day held on 28 September 2017, noting that the University Executive had also considered the notes and that the actions highlighted in the document were being progressed by relevant staff;

**17/25 Matters Arising**

- Received: a report from the University Secretary;
- Agreed: that matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on the 28 September 2017 were either included later on the agenda or had been appropriately addressed.

**17/26 Governors Discussion: HEFCE Annual Meeting**

Received: a briefing by Mr Martin Thomas on his attendance at a recent HEFCE meeting;

Noted: Members noted the following key points in discussion of the documentation and briefing provided by Mr Thomas:

- i) that as outlined in the notes provided by Mr Thomas, the meeting had been extremely informative and had been well attended by Governors from a wide range of universities;
- ii) that key themes had included a briefing on the British Business Bank; a presentation on HEFCE's latest report on the financial health of the higher education sector; a presentation by the Executive Chair Designate on changes to REF and Research England/UKR matters. There had also been a presentation by Chris Millward on access, teaching excellence and student success. This had been followed by a presentation on the consultation about the new regulatory framework for the higher education sector that would be operated by the office for students (OfS) once it came into being in 2018;
- iii) that presenters had emphasised the importance of ensuring financial sustainability of the sector and realistic forecasts, together with the need for further efficiency measures. The presentation on research funding had emphasised that there were opportunities for universities to bid for a range of new funds. It was indicated that these funds would total £4.7 billion in the period to 2021. Speakers also noted the important link between research and the government's industrial strategy where universities had a role to play in using their scientific and other expertise to tackle key problems. It was also noted that there were nine areas of joint working between the new research body and the OfS including REF. It was further noted that our REF was currently subject to a review;
- iv) the presentation on access, teaching excellence and student success have noted a positive overall picture with respect to full-time students but noted that there had been a decline in part-time students and a focus on retention continued to be important. There had also been mention of the role of Degree Apprenticeships, NCOP networks, and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). It had also been noted

that there are currently 17 projects focusing on barriers to student success with 64 HEs involved in this work;

- v) that the consultation documentation on the new regulatory framework was very detailed and would need careful consideration. Members noted that the Vice- Chancellor and the Senior Team were currently reviewing the document and would be making a formal submission in due course. Key issues included a role for Governors in ensuring that institutions were focusing on the student experience with a particular emphasis on outcomes. The consultation was clear that the Office for Students would have a very different role and approach to the sector when compared to the HEFCE approach to date. OfS was clearly a regulator which would in due course have far-reaching powers;
- vi) that there had been some concerns expressed amongst those attending the meeting with regard to how the changes might affect University autonomy;
- vii) that institutions would be required to pay a fee for maintenance of the Office for Students. For Harper Adams this was likely to be a cost of approximately £55K per year. Members noted that the Charity Commission are currently considering a proposal to charge fees and it was not yet clear whether or not this would affect universities;
- viii) that the meeting had made reference to Brexit but overall, those presenting had suggested that there were opportunities for institutions as well as challenges;

The Chairman thanked Mr Thomas for his very helpful briefing papers and presentation at the meeting.

#### 17/27 Vice- Chancellor's Report

- Received:
- i) a report from the Vice-Chancellor on recent developments of note;
  - ii) a report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on progress with the joint Veterinary School project with Keele University;
- Noted:
- i) that the recent University Open Days had been well attended with 68% of those booking a place visiting the University during the recent Open Days. Overall, the number of applications had seen a slight increase when compared to the same period in 2016, however it was important to recognise that it was still very early in the cycle and there continued to be particular challenges relating to the agriculture sector in addition to increasing competition between institutions as well as competition from other opportunities such as apprenticeships. The demographic downturn also continued to be very challenging. The Vice-Chancellor had been highlighting these issues to industry given their need for well-qualified graduates;
  - ii) that the Industrial Strategy includes a strand called 'Transforming Food Production'. It is suggested that there is a need for a business case for this strand, however, there is a helpful emphasis on the importance of precision farming. It is also understood that the Food and Drink Sector Council have been active and are seeking support for a sector deal. It is as yet unclear how much influence primary production/agriculture may have within this proposal. Some groups focusing on research and innovation have been suggested although the overall emphasis is on manufacturing. This emphasis has also

been a feature in the Midlands Engine discussions and it remains important for the University and other key agri-food sector representatives to emphasise that food production is a critical part of the wider food chain. Within the document there is also reference to regional anchor institutions and this may provide an opportunity in due course;

- iii) that the University continues to work towards securing an opportunity to be considered for HEIF funding. Invitations to David Sweeney and Mark Wallport had been issued and it was hoped that they would visit in Spring 2018. Engagement with Innovate UK has continued positively and applications would be made to KTP with particular reference to funding streams that would align with the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund;
- iv) that as noted earlier in the meeting, the University is engaging with the OfS consultation. Through Universities West Midlands there had been an opportunity to meet with the OfS Chief Executive Officer, Nicola Dandridge. Indications are that the OfS has an understanding of high-cost subjects and the incoming Chairman, Michael Barber, had talked about the importance of institutional specific funding (ISF). The Vice-Chancellor had invited Nicola Dandridge to visit the University;
- v) that there has been keen interest in the role of careers services in supporting students from widening participation backgrounds to secure graduate-level jobs in support of the industrial strategy, closing skill gaps and responding to employer need;
- vi) that the University's Careers and Placement Fair had attracted 174 companies. Thanks were due to staff who had parked at the Newport and District Agricultural Society Showground for the day to make room on campus for students and employers. Significant positive feedback had been received from employers attending the event;
- vii) that there continued to be a need to make a case to DEFRA in relation to growing risks related to an appropriate supply of graduates seeking a career in the agri-food chain. Recent statistics have shown that the decline in PhD students in particular has not improved and in fact has continued to show a steep decline. The number of undergraduate students studying agriculture and closely related subjects has also only just managed to regain the levels seen prior to the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. Lord Gardiner and Michael Gove had both been briefed on this situation during their recent visits to the University and both had since made very positive comments about their visits including in Parliament and on other public occasions;
- viii) that, as requested by the Board, the Vice-Chancellor had reviewed the performance of HEI's which had performed similarly or better overall than Harper Adams in TEF2. A presentation was made to members which highlighted the following key points: TEF metrics are dynamic and although each university had access to the details of its own metrics such detail was limited with respect to other HEI's. However the Vice-Chancellor had reviewed positive flags and used an average Z score system to try and highlight how Harper Adams had performed against similarly ranked HEI's. A review of recently received TEF3 metrics had also been undertaken and in the case of HAU the latter metrics were stronger than those for TEF2. In particular, HAU was indicated in three of the areas identified as top 10 absolute performance. The University had also achieved a very

good range of “green flags”. Further work was required in the areas of continuation, assessment and feedback. With respect to the HEI’s that had scored above HAU it was clear that teaching quality had been assessed at a similar level and employment/National Student Survey outcomes had also been very similar. Of these ten HEI’s four, Coventry, Loughborough, Keele and Aston, were similar in some ways to HAU while the others were quite different including private, and very small HEI’s, very large HEI’s and pre-92 institutions. It was noteworthy that HAU was already collaborating with both Keele and Aston;

- ix) that the Vice-Chancellor had also reviewed the University’s performance with multi-faculty agriculture HEI’s. While HAU did not compete for overall research scores with many other scores HAU was equal or outperforming including for example in employment and National Student Survey scores. This suggested that overall research score boosts performance for some of the University’s other competitors;
- x) that the University had considered carefully whether or not it would be strategically appropriate to apply for the TEF3 round of assessment. It had been confirmed that subject level TEF would start in 2019/20, however in the meantime, HEI’s could reapply for institutional level TEF which it was understood would remain current until 2020. It was likely that whether an institution applies for TEF3 or not it will still have to engage with subject level TEF. Having reviewed the metric information and considered the written submission, the University had decided to submit for TEF3. Members supported this decision. It was further understood that the LEO data may be challenging in the future as agricultural -related employment does not tend to score well in terms of graduate earning data;
- xi) that six subject level TEF pilots are currently underway across 40 HEI’s. This project did not involve Harper Adams, but it was hoped that a member of staff may be appointed as an assessor in due course;
- xii) that there continued to be concern across the sector about degree classification inflation. Harper Adams was currently below the sector average in terms of the number of first class honours and 2:1 degrees that were awarded;
- xiii) that the University had seen a positive return from its new approach to more directed marketing towards individuals so far in the 2017/18 recruitment round;
- xiv) that while the number of students registering for foundation degrees had fallen overall, there had been an uplift in the number of honours degree students starting their courses. Overall, the University’s entry requirements were fairly similar to those of most multi-faculty HEI’s offering similar subjects. The University had also seen an increase in students from a non-rural background;
- xv) that the University continued to engage actively with the Brexit debate and to try and influence policymakers about the importance of recognising graduates applying in the agri-food chain as well as the need for skills that were currently being fulfilled by EU nationals;

- xvi) that the University would explore opportunities to speak with a common voice with other providers of agri-food chain related subjects where opportunities arose and it was appropriate to do so. There may also be opportunities to engage with sector level bodies such as RASE, NFU and others;
- xvii) that the University's focus on student success and retention was continuing with a number of positive interventions being shown to have supported students especially during the first few weeks of term when issues such as homesickness can affect student's ability to engage positively with their studies. The number of first-year students leaving within the first few weeks was similar to that experienced in previous years however it was hoped that the new success and retention plan may help to improve overall retention throughout the year. Members would be kept informed.

*Professor Mark Ormerod left the meeting at this point*

- xix) that the University continued to engage positively with colleagues at Keele University on the joint Vet School project. Prof Mills had also been updating the working group appointed by the Board in September on a regular basis. A further update would be provided during December 2017;
- xx) that the University had not been successful in its bid to HEFCE for Catalyst Funding. Feedback had been generally positive however, the panel had felt that it was perhaps too early in the joint project for funding to be awarded. Alternative sources of funding were currently being explored particularly private sector links;
- xxi) that a useful discussion had taken place with the Vice- Chancellor of Keele University and staff at both institutions were clear that both Vice- Chancellors were equally enthusiastic and supportive about the project. The public announcement made in July 2017 had been positively received overall;
- xxii) that the detailed work being undertaken by the steering group and the specialist working groups that had been put in place since the September 2017 meeting of the Board had identified a significant amount of work that needed to be completed prior to the opening of the new school. With this in mind, both universities had agreed that a realistic start date was likely to be 2020 although in the meantime, a significant amount of work needed to be achieved. Due to the need to address a number of key issues before presenting to both Governing bodies a firm proposal for proceeding to the next phase of the project, it had been agreed that rather than aiming to provide recommendations to governing bodies in the period January/February 2018 it would be more appropriate for firm recommendations to come forward in the period April/May 2018. It was therefore, no longer necessary for the Harper Adams Board to hold a Special Meeting on the 18 January 2018. The planned Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting and Staffing meeting on 18 January 2018 would go ahead, however, members would be informed that the special board meeting was no longer required;  
**CEB**
- xxiii) that considerable work had been done in the meantime to review how the student experience could be protected and enhanced given the need for the institutions to work jointly and to provide students with

practical opportunities to engage with facilities on each of the campuses. The Curriculum Group had worked together to develop proposals around innovative use of technology and minimising travel between the campuses where appropriate to do so;

- xxiv) that the Finance and Legal group had also been working hard on consideration of appropriate matters including tax and whether or not the joint Vet School should be a separate legal entity. Advice received to date indicated that an unincorporated partnership structure would be more appropriate;
- xxv) that the proposal to create the joint Vet School had a particular focus on widening participation and a number of practical steps were being explored to support this. There was also an emphasis in the proposal on the need to ensure retention within the veterinary profession and a better understanding of how farming enterprises were managed in a practical sense and how veterinary professionals could engage with large animal/agri-food chain related work. It was felt that Harper Adams had a particular opportunity to engage with this and to ensure that its students were work ready at the end of their programme;
- xxvi) that working together, both universities may find opportunities to help drive further efficiencies across their activities not necessarily related to the joint Vet School only.

*Professor Mark Ormerod re-joined the meeting*

#### 17/28 **HEFCE Annual Accountability Return 2016/17**

Received: a briefing note on the documentation required for the HEFCE Annual Accountability Return and the process that is to be followed to seek approval of the various documents required from the Board and its subcommittees;

Noted: that as the briefing note set out, the Board had considered and approved a number of reports during the past year particularly in relation to the PREVENT duty and academic quality matters. The remaining reports that need to be approved as part of the annual accountability return had been included as part of the agenda for the meeting.

#### 17/29 **Audit and Risk Management Committee**

Received:

- i) a report on the meeting of the committee held on 16 November 2017;
- ii) the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee for 2016/17 financial year, including as annexes, reports of the internal and external auditors for year ended 31 July 2017
- iii) the Value for Money Report 2016/17;

Noted:

- i) that the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee had reviewed the Terms of Reference over the summer. No major changes were proposed, rather the layout of the Terms of Reference had been reordered to ensure that they were clearer. The committee had agreed to recommend the updated terms of reference to the Board;
- ii) that the committee had received the final Internal Audit Report for 2016/17 and noted a positive report on the University's Access

Agreement. The internal auditors had also presented an overall positive opinion in their Annual Report and had confirmed that in their opinion, the University has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance, internal control and economy, efficiency and effectiveness and during the year the auditors had identified further improvements to the framework supporting these activities which would ensure that they remained adequate and effective. Furthermore the auditors were content that the university was addressing recommendations made previously. The auditors had also confirmed that they would be presenting their usual annual benchmarking report on the outcomes of internal audits for their HE clients at the next meeting of the Audit Committee in February 2018;

- iii) that the report of the external auditors had also been positive. One unadjusted journal item had been highlighted. The Audit Committee had considered this and had agreed with the University's interpretation of the matter and noted in particular, that the amount of money involved made no material difference to the outcome presented in the accounts, as it was a matter of presentation only. KPMG had also confirmed their independence as they had provided tax advice during the year and had also been appointed by both Keele and Harper Adams to advise on tax matters related to the joint Vet School. The Audit Committee would continue to monitor this situation;
- iv) that the committee had conducted the Annual Review of the performance of both internal and external auditors and had agreed to recommend to the Board that both be reappointed. Some points of feedback to KPMG had been agreed and the Chair and the Director of Finance would be meeting with the partner in the near future to discuss these matters;
- v) that the committee had considered and agreed its Annual Report to the Board of Governors for 2016/17 . The committee was presenting a positive report to the Board and wish to confirm its opinion that the University has an adequate and effective framework of control with regard to key financial systems and other systems reviewed by the internal and external audit work conducted and presented to the committee during 2016/17. The committee also confirmed that it was satisfied that current systems provide basic measures to secure economy efficiency and effectiveness and promote value for money. It also confirmed that the responsibilities of the Board of Governors detailed in the Statement of Financial Responsibilities had been satisfactorily discharged and that the University had met its obligations to ensure it delivers public benefit in accordance with the definition of public benefits set out by the Charity Commission and that it had prepared appropriate reports for submission to Companies House;
- vi) that the committee had also confirmed a positive opinion on the institution's risk management, arrangements for economy effectiveness and efficiency. The committee had also ensured that its opinion was informed by relevant assessments of management control and quality assurance of data. It had furthermore noted that the committee's opinion was supported by the opinions presented by both internal and external auditors;
- vii) the Audit and Risk Management Committee had also noted the positive outcome of the Higher Education Assurance Review (HAR)

process that had been concluded in June 2017. In particular, the committee had been pleased to note the positive comments of the HEFCE auditors about the work of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the excellent attendance of the committee's membership. The Board expressed its thanks to members of the committee;

- viii) that the committee had received a briefing and presentation from the Director of Finance on the new approach to value for money reporting introduced by HEFCE during October 2017. This had led to the development of a new Annual Efficiency Return (AER), that the University would need to complete by 31 January 2018. It was noted that the new AER focused on activities that were cash releasing, resource releasing, provide additional productivity, or capital receipts. The detailed guidance had been presented to the Board along with the agenda papers for their information. The committee had also received the Value for Money Report included within the agenda presented to the Board and had agreed to recommend it to the Board for approval;
- ix) that the committee had considered the Risk Analysis and Action Plan together with the University's Risk Management Policy 2017/18 noting that University had reviewed its plan against sector benchmarking reports during the summer. The committee had agreed to recommend to the Board that the number of changes set out later on the agenda under the Risk Management item should be approved by the Board;
- x) that the committee had considered the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the University and had noted minor amendments proposed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The committee had been content with the Annual Report and Financial Statements and had no issues to draw to the attention of the Board.

- Approved:
- i) the revised Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Management Committee;
  - ii) the VFM Strategy and the outline Value for Money Plan for 2017/18;
  - iii) that RSM should be reappointed as internal auditors for 2017/18 and KPMG should be reappointed as external auditors for 2017/18;
  - iv) the Risk Analysis & Action Plan for 2017/18.

Endorsed: the committee's decision that the Vice-Chancellor, as Accountable Officer, should approve the AER return due to be submitted by 31 January 2018 to HEFCE and that following this, the AER report should be presented formally to the Board at its meeting in April 2018. It was further agreed that the Director of Finance would circulate a copy of the presentation she had made to the Audit and Risk Management Committee to members of the Board of Governors for their information

**LF**

- Received:
- i) report on matters considered at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 8 November 2017 (including the report on Board level KPIs);
  - ii) a briefing note from the Director of Finance on the draft Audited Accounts;
  - iii) the 2016/17 audited accounts Harper Adams University incorporating external auditors opinion, Vice-Chancellors Report and Corporate Governance Statement;
  - iv) the Letter of Representation for the Harper Adams University group;
  - v) a letter of support for Cedar energy Ltd from Harper Adams University;

- Noted:
- i) that the Charity Commission Regulations and the Reporting of Public Benefits had been presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Audit and Risk Management Committee at recent meetings as an aide memoir when considering the University's Annual Report and Financial Statements. A copy had also been circulated to members of the Board with the agenda;
  - ii) that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had considered a report on University KPIs reported at Board level together with PIs reported internally. Members of the committee had particularly welcomed the evidence of excellent performance in terms of external quality indicators included in the PI tables. The committee had also considered the three KPIs set out the University bonus scheme and noted that two of the three KPIs had not been met in 2016/17. However, following detailed discussion members had agreed to recommend to the Board that an additional closure day be agreed for Friday, 22 December 2017 as a way of recognising the hard work of all staff during the previous year. A similar recommendation had been put forward by Staffing Committee later on the agenda;
  - iii) that the committee had considered the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the University together with the Letter of Representation for the Harper Adams University group, and a Letter of Support for Cedar Energy Ltd from Harper Adams University. The committee had concluded that it wished to recommend these to the Board for its approval. The committee had also noted for its information the 2016/17 Annual Report and Accounts for Cedar Energy Ltd and for Harper Adams University Development Trust together with the relevant Letters of Representation. The committee had no issues to raise from either of these reports and accounts;
  - iv) that the committee had noted the key area of judgement set out in relation to workforce provision. To date HMRC had advised that one payment of £130K should be made although no comments had been made on the remainder of the University submission to date. It was possible that HMRC may consider offset of tax already paid but this was not guaranteed. This area had been thoroughly audited by KPMG and they had confirmed that this was an appropriate prudent approach given the fact that practice had varied in relation to this matter over recent years and it remained a matter of opinion and judgement. The University's personal tax group continue to meet on

a very regular basis to review changes and developments in HMRC regulations;

- Approved:
- i) on a going concern basis, (and subject to ii below) the 2016/17 Audited Accounts Harper Adams University, the Letter of Representation for the Harper Adams University group, the Letter of Support for Cedar Energy Ltd from Harper Adams University;
  - ii) that note 21 of the Harper Adams University Group Accounts should be amended to reflect the fact that the University had completed the purchase of 239 acres of agricultural land adjacent to its existing site and that the strategic review should also be amended to reflect this purchase;
  - iii) **LF** the preparation of Cedar Energy Ltd accounts taking advantage of exemptions available under FRS 102.

17/31 **Academic Board, Academic Developments and Annual Assurance Reports on the Management of Quality and Standards**

- 2017;
- Received:
- i) a report on the meeting of Academic Board held on 9 November
  - ii) a reminder of the three Assurance Statements on academic quality and standards due to be submitted to hefty by 1 December 2017;
  - iii) a commentary on areas for improvement/enhancement arising from the Key Student Indicators Report together with the full KSI document;
  - iv) a summary of external examiner reports 2016/17;

Agreed: that based on the reports received by the Board of Governors on the management of academic quality and standards throughout the year, and including the reports included in the agenda for the November 2017 meeting, members were content that full assurance should be confirmed to HEFCE by the Accountable Officer as a Governor on behalf of all of the Governors in relation to the University's management of academic quality and standards as follows:

"the Governing Body has received and discussed a report and accompanying action plan relating to continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This included evidence from the Institution's own periodic review processes, which fully involves students and include embedded external peer or professional review"

and

"the standard of awards for which we are responsible have been appropriately set and maintained"

**DGL**

17/32 **Risk Management/Prevent Duty**

- Received:
- i) a summary of the updates to the Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2017/18 recommended by the audit and Risk Management Committee;
  - ii) a copy of the draft data return Report together with the Chair's declaration on Prevent which was due to be submitted to HEFCE by 1 December 2017;
- Noted:
- i) that a mapping of the University's approach to meeting the Prevent Duty against the updated guidance for compliance issued in August 2017 by HEFCE has been shared with the Chair. In due course a copy would also be made available on the Governors Document Library;
  - ii) that the Board had considered and approved the text of the Annual Report on Prevent at the Board meeting held on 28 September 2017;
  - iii) that the University had continued to train and provide refresher training to a wide range of staff in relation to the Prevent duty and further sessions were planned during 2017/18. Members were also content that they had seen sufficient evidence about the University's engagement with Prevent to enable the Board to authorise the Chair to sign the relevant statement for submission to HEFCE;
  - iv) that risks related to recruitment and retention of farm staff reflected challenges in the wider agriculture jobs market. In some businesses a new approach had been taken to staff working hours to ensure that all staff had appropriate breaks of at least 24 hours in any seven day period. This had proved to be successful, after an initial period of uncertainty amongst staff. It was further noted that HMRC were now actively reviewing working hours against minimum wage regulations. This would be a significant project for the finance and HR teams to undertake and would include a review of the working arrangements for farm staff;  
**LF**
  - v) that members of the Board were also supportive of the additional work being undertaken to enhance cyber security, and noted that positive progress had been made to address issues identified earlier in the term;
  - vi) that members were content that the risk of not having access to sufficient agricultural land could now be removed given the forthcoming confirmation of purchase of a further 230 acres of adjoining farmland;
- Approved:
- i) the Risk Analysis and Action Plan 2017/18
  - ii) that the Chair should sign the statements on behalf the Board in relation to the Prevent Duty as follows: "throughout the academic year 2016/17 and up to the date of approval, Harper Adams University has had due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent Duty); has provided to HEFCE all required information about its implementation of the Prevent Duty; has reported to HEFCE in a timely way all serious issues related to the Prevent Duty, or now attaches any reports that should have been made, with an explanation of why they were not submitted";

- Received:
- i) the draft Financial Commentary for Submission to HEFCE on 1 December 2017;
  - ii) the Annual Assurance Return template for submission to HEFCE;
  - iii) a report prepared to meet the requirements of the ASSUR process introduced by HEFCE as an optional element of the annual accountability return;

- Noted:
- i) that the above documents represented the remaining items of the Annual Accountability Return 2016/17;
  - ii) that Finance and General Purposes Committee had considered the ASSUR return in detail at its recent meeting and were content to recommend the KPI data presented in the ASSUR report to the Board for its approval. Members also noted that updated guidance on the calculation of MSI had been received by institutions very recently and the Director of Finance had updated this calculation following discussion by F and GP to reflect the updated guidance;

- Approved:
- i) the Financial Commentary for submission to HEFCE; **LF**
  - ii) the Annual Assurance Return template (Annex A) for submission to HEFCE; **LF**
  - iii) the ASSUR report for submission to HEFCE as an optional element of the Annual Accountability return ;

of  
LF

#### 17/34 **Corporate Planning Statement**

Received: progress report on the Corporate Planning Statement 2017/18;

Agreed: that overall appropriate progress was being made with the strategic actions agreed by the Board in July 2017.

#### 17/35 **Report of the President of the Students Union**

- Received:
- i) a report from the Students Union President on recent activities;
  - ii) the draft financial tables which are to be included in the accounts of Student Union for year ended July 2017;

the

- Noted:
- i) that in the absence of the Student Union President, who had sent apologies for the meeting due to being unwell, the newly appointed SU Manger, Mr Kevin Norris, joined the Board for this item;
  - ii) that discussions were ongoing with the Student Union external auditors to ensure that a more timely process was put into place for future years with regard to the external audit process and presentation of the audited accounts including the Trustees Annual Report would be ready in the early part of 2018 and would be circulated to the Board as soon as possible;  
**CG**

- iii) that the Student Union continued to review its range of activities and to try and ensure that more inclusive activities were being put in place;
- iv) that the newly appointed SU staff team were now in place, including the Finance Officer and the Events and IT Officer who were reporting to the new Student Union Manager, along with the Sports and Societies Officer who had been transferred from the Student Services team. The team had already taken action to improve a number of administrative processes including improvements to stock-taking and management of the Student Union shop. The SU Manager was also currently exploring the development of further online payment gateways including the use of digital payment in the SU bar itself;
- v) that a governance review had been commissioned by the Student Union Board of Trustees. Subject to the recommendations emerging from the review it was anticipated that the Student Union would welcome the reintroduction of a member of staff from the University as a nominated Trustee. A number of Trustees were also coming towards the end of their period of office and, therefore, recruitment of new Trustees would be a priority over the coming few months. **CG**

#### 17/36 Committees

Received:  
12

a report on the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on October 2017;

Noted:

- i) that the report highlighted five RIDDOR reports which had been made in recent months. Mr Thomas, as lead governor on Health and Safety matters, had been briefed on these and advised the Board that these related to 2 fractures caused by trips/slips and one instance where a PhD student suffered a head injury which he believed had caused him to lose consciousness for a few moments. In all of these cases, the individuals concerned were able to return to work within one or two days of the incident and the matters were not ongoing. The other three reports related to hand arm vibration matters which have been highlighted during routine screening. Occupational health reports have been secured and appropriate measures put in place in discussion with the relevant staff. In each of the cases, there was relevant history and or external activity not relating to the workplace which was relevant. Appropriate documentation and correspondence had been shared with the HSE who had indicated to date that they were content with the University's response. Occupational health would continue to monitor as appropriate. The University would also be reviewing its health screening practice with regard to securing baseline assessments for relevant roles;
- ii) that the University engages proactively with display screen equipment assessments. The part-time Health and Safety Assistant supports individual staff members and has also run training sessions for groups of staff to ensure that they are aware of DSE matters;
- iii) that the new Night Residence Officers had increased the level of first aid cover out of hours and further first aiders have been trained over recent months. The University had also agreed to provide, on

an interim basis, first aid cover for the Agri-Epi hub until such time as Agri-Epi had their own first aid arrangements in place;

- iv) that an issue relating to inspection of machinery involving lifting mechanisms was currently being investigated. Mr Thomas would be kept informed.

**CEB**

#### 17/37 Modern Slavery

- Received:
- i) a briefing note on the University's continuing plans to address the Modern Slavery Legislation;
  - ii) the University's updated statement on the Modern Slavery Act for publication in January 2017;

- Noted:
- and
- i) that organisations whose turnover was in excess of £36M per annum are required to engage proactively with Modern Slavery legislation to ensure that their statement on the Modern Slavery Act is refreshed and republished on an annual basis;

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- ii) that the University's exposure to possible risks had been reassessed and remained very similar to the original assessment. In particular, to the fact that the majority of the University support services are in sourced rather than outsourced this does tend to mitigate potential risks with regard to the employment of staff. The University was also member of the North West University's purchasing consortium which proactively takes steps to review potential suppliers before they are added to the relevant frameworks;
- iii) that the Director of Finance had also briefed members of the University's procurement group and would continue to look for further appropriate training suitable for the HE sector with a view to making such training mandatory for all staff responsible for procurement;
- iv) that it would be appropriate to ask tier 1 suppliers to provide a copy their Modern Slavery statements;

of  
LF

- Approved:
- the University's updated statement on the Modern Slavery act for publication in January 2017.

LF

#### 17/38 Meeting Dates

- Received:
- proposed 2018/19 meeting dates for the Board of Governors and its committees;

- Agreed:
- the list of dates for 2018/19

#### 17/39 Any Other Business

- Received:
- Honorary Academic
- a nomination of a new member of Academic Board to join the Awards Committee, in light of changes to the membership of Board;

- Agreed:
- the
- i) that Dr Jim Monaghan should take up the role of representative of Academic Board on the Honorary Awards Committee of the Board of Governors with immediate effect, replacing Mrs Nicky Hunter;

ii) that Mrs Hunter should attend the meeting of the committee later that day in addition to Mr Monaghan so that an effective handover could be facilitated;

**17/40 Date of Next Meeting**

Noted: that the next meeting would take place on 26 April 2018 at 10.00.

**Part two starred items**

**17/41 Risk Management**

Received: an updated report by the University Secretary on the key risk areas monitored by the Board of Governors.

**17/42 Management Accounts**

Received: the Management Accounts report for the period to 31 July 2017 and the Management Accounts for the period to 31 October 2017.

**17/43 Marketing and Communications**

Received: a report from the Director of Marketing and Communications.

**17/44 Harper Adams University Development Trust**

Noted: a report on the meeting of the Trust held on 10 October 2017

**17/45 Committees**

Received:

- i) a report on the meeting of Farm Strategy Committee held on 11 October 2017;
- ii) a report on the meeting of Staffing Committee held on 8 November 2017.

**17/45 HEFCE and other circulars**

Received: a list of HEFCE and other circulars received by the University since the last meeting of the Board.