

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERISTY

Minutes of a Meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 8 November 2018 in the Temperton Room

Present: Mr Martin Thomas Chair
Mr P Nixon
Mr S Vickers
Mrs A Haycox
Dr D Llewellyn

In attendance: Miss D Crowther Secretary
Dr C Baxter
Mr A Allen
Mrs J Cameron

Apologies: Mrs C Snell
Mr M Lewis
Mr M Simcock

Members were reminded to update their entry in the Register of Interests if required.

18/01 Minutes

Approved: the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 June 2018 (17/29-17/45).

18/02 Matters Arising

Received: a report from the University Secretary on matters arising.

Noted: that the typographical errors in the JCNC minutes had been amended.

18/03 Risk Management

Received: a report from the University Secretary on risk areas monitored by the Committee.

- Noted:
- i) that regular staff meetings and briefings continued including a further meeting of the Survey Working Group which had confirmed good progress with actions by managers and their teams. The group is due to meet again in March 2019 where proposals for developments of future Staff Surveys to enhance engagement and value for money are to be discussed;
 - ii) that work to refresh the Single Equality Scheme is in hand including ensuring it meets the Office for Students requirements with regard to Student Access Participation;
 - iii) that Jonathan Caine had accepted the position of Head of Estates and Facilities.

18/04 **National Pay Negotiations**

- Noted:
- i) that the Board had ENDORSED action taken by the Chairs of the Board, the Finance and General Purpose Committee and the Staffing Committee to agree the uplifts to the salary scale points;
 - ii) that very low numbers of support from UCU branch members had been received in relation to the ballot for UCU strike action at Harper Adams and, therefore, there was currently no mandate for action.

18/05 **University Bonus Scheme**

Noted: that the Board of Governors had agreed at its September 2018 meeting that the KPIs set for the scheme had not been fully met, however, to recognise the hard work of all staff during the past year a 'Thank you' day had been agreed for 24th December 2018.

18/06 **Policy on Payment of Employer's Pension Contributions to Individuals who have left LGPS as a result of exceeding Life Time Allowance (LTA) or Annual Allowance (AA)**

Received: a briefing note from the University Secretary on discussion of this matter at the Board of Governor's meeting in July 2018.

- Noted:
- i) that the Remuneration Committee had reported to the Board of Governors in July 2018 that it had noted that in common with many senior staff who were members of LGPS pension schemes or similar schemes, issues had arisen with regard to LifeTime Allowance and Annual Allowance matters in the case of the Vice-Chancellor. Members were aware that other HEIs had arranged payment in lieu of all or part of employer's pension contributions in such cases to try to ensure fairness around the total remuneration package. The Committee agreed that further work should be undertaken about how this matter could be addressed;
 - ii) that having sought advice from The Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), the Remuneration Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board that a policy on LTA and AA be established which would apply to all members of staff who were members of LGPS or TPS and who had exceeded LTA or AA such that they had decided to leave the Pension scheme. In such circumstances, as the University would no longer be required to pay employer's pension contributions for the staff member, the draft policy suggested that a member could ask the University to consider, on a case by case basis, paying in lieu some or all of the employer contributions to the staff member;
 - iii) that the Board had agreed that arrangements proposed for payment in lieu of employer's pension contributions with respect to the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration were in line the parameters established for the Remuneration Committee. While members were also overall content to agree the draft Policy noting that it was in line with arrangements at other universities, a member asked that some consideration be given to whether or not it would be appropriate to consider whether payments in lieu of employer contributions could be made where a more junior member of staff had chosen not to join the

pension scheme, rather than where a junior staff member had chosen to leave the scheme due to AA and LTA issues ;

- iv) that in light of the member's query, the Board asked that the Staffing Committee considered whether or not it might be appropriate to develop a further policy in relation to staff who decide not to join the pension scheme, or whether this needed to be carefully considered in light of legal requirements such as auto enrolment;
- v) that advice has been sought from UCEA together with a review of advice published by the Pension Regulator. Both sources confirmed that an employer may not take any action that induces any staff member not to join the employer's pension scheme. UCEA's advice was that to offer any member of staff who chooses not to join the pension scheme an opportunity to receive the employer's pension contributions instead of joining a pension scheme would be regarded as such an illegal inducement;
- vi) that it would be helpful to clarify that members would need to demonstrate that they were consistently breaching the LTA/AA limits and that they would seek advice prior to making a firm decision;

Approved: that subject to the above amendments, the Committee wished to **RECOMMEND** to the Board that the LTA and AA Policy document was approved.

18/07 **Proposed Contribution Increases in Public Sector Pension Schemes**

Received: a copy of the UCEA briefing note on the impact of proposed contribution increases in public sector pension schemes.

Noted: that F&G P Committee had advised that further professional advice be secured.

18/08 **HR Strategy and Action Plan**

Received: an updated version of the HR Strategy and Action Plan for the interim period 2018-2020.

Approved: the refreshed and updated HR Strategy and Action Plan.

18/09 **Equality and Diversity**

- Received:
- i) the annual Equality and Diversity data monitoring report;
 - ii) an oral update on equality and diversity activities including plans to update the Single Equality Scheme;
 - iii) AdvanceHE equalities monitoring data;

- Noted:
- i) that overall the data remains consistent year on year with no alarming trends or unexpected results. Members also noted low BME staff numbers which was typical of the Shropshire population and also reflective of those teaching and supporting the subjects delivered at the University;
 - ii) that mental health awareness continues to be a focus with HR supporting managers and delivering training for all staff;

- iii) that the final updated Single Equality Scheme would be presented to the January 2019 Staffing meeting. **CEB**

18/10 **Staff Development**

Received: an oral report from the Organisational Development Manager.

- Noted:
- i) that a Technicians Commitment Action Plan was in development to recognise the work undertaken by technicians. The action plan was to be presented to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on 9 November 2018 with a deadline of 1 December to post the Action Plan online;
 - ii) that the Organisational Development Manager and HoDs were meeting to discuss actions points from the Staff Survey. It was further noted that employee wellbeing information was being further developed such as cycle to work scheme, occupational health provision and other campus facilities;

18/11 **Staff Survey**

Received: a report from the Organisational Development Manager on recommendations relating to the Staff Survey Process.

- Noted:
- i) that many HEIs conduct a survey at five yearly intervals as a minimum while others do not conduct a survey at all;
 - ii) that there was a need to understand whether the Capita survey remained best value for money and to ensure it was not repeated too regularly to avoid survey fatigue. In particular exploring why certain staff groups tend not to engage with the survey would be very useful;

Approved: the 6 recommendations for implementation as follows:

- Next surveys to take place February 2021, 3 years and 4 months after the 2017 Staff Survey, thereafter February 2024, 3 years after the 2021 Staff Survey;
- A meeting of key stakeholders will be arranged by the ODM before the February 2021 survey to determine and agree purpose and ensure value for money is achieved;
- Capita to be retained subject to a suitable guide and continued access to meaningful HE data as well as other employer data;
- Uptake of UCEA benchmarking questions to be monitored via HR and Staff forums prior to a decision as adopted at HAU; **AA/DC**
- Focus groups and survey to be used in interim to 2021 to supplement 3 yearly surveys/address any immediate themes as they arise; **AA**
- Meet with those groups of staff who are less likely to complete the survey to ascertain why this is and whether they would prefer to have their feedback captured in another way. **AA**

18/12 **Policies and Procedures**

- Approved:
- i) the final version of the new Organisational Development Policy and Procedure;
 - ii) the new policy on Apprenticeships
- Noted:
- iii) that Chair's action had been taken to approve a specific revision to the Recognition Agreement reflecting the new statutory requirement to report facilities time;
 - iv) an oral report on the University's plans to address actions arising from the recent review of the Research Concordat to support the career development of early career researchers;
 - v) a briefing note from the University Secretary on a recent report on sexual harassment complaints made by students studying at UK HEIs.
- Agreed: to endorse the Chair's action on the Recognition Agreement.

18/13 **UCEA Programme of Work**

- Noted: a copy of a UCEA briefing note on the proposed programme of work for 2018/19

18/14 **UCEA Response to Migration Advisory Committee Report**

- Noted: a UCEA briefing paper summarising the impact on UK HE employers of the 14 main recommendations from the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report on European Economic Area (EAA) workers in the UK labour market.

18/15 **Staff Consultative Group**

- Received: the minutes of the meeting of the Staff Consultative Group meeting held on 17 October 2018.
- Noted:
- i) that one of the representatives for support staff had resigned from his post to take up a new role elsewhere. Thanks were given for his support and contribution to the group;
 - ii) that Andy Allen had provided SCG an overview of the Staff Action Plan. It was also noted that action plans were being produced by each department to address the survey findings;
 - iii) that the overall engagement rate was 91% which was pleasing. However it was further noted that this was not consistent across departments. Action was taken to try to address this and to increase the overall response;
 - iv) that a 2 day mental health first aid training course had taken place in July and had been well received by staff with further courses planned;
- Survey

- v) that the group had agreed that there were no amendments to be made to the constitution apart from the inclusion of the Head of Human Resources being added to the membership and composition;
- vi) that a member of staff had requested that the University provide flu vaccinations. In discussion with Occupational Health Services it was noted that owing to the fact that the vaccine being live it and subject to individual health screening prior to administration, was not confirmed to be practical to dispense on campus and costs were prohibitive. Other options were investigated and a link to a website with details of local cost effective providers would be issued to all staff;
- vii) that in discussion, it was confirmed that extra one-off long service days would be awarded based on original commencement dates regardless of any absences;
- viii) that the maximum service recognised for the scheme would be at 30 years. **DC**

18/16 **Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee**

Received: the minutes of the meeting of the JCNC held on 5 November 2018.

- Noted:
- i) that the UCU Chair had taken the decision to step down as Chair. An extraordinary AGM was held and Luis De Aguiar had been confirmed as interim Chair until the next formal AGM;
 - ii) that amendments to the JCNC Recognition and Procedural Agreement had been approved by the Chair;
 - iii) that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor confirmed that the outcomes from the KPMG Academic Staff Workload Review Report had been covered via oral reports in previous meetings. It was further noted that all academic workload plans were updated as and when required throughout the year;
 - iv) that comments on the draft Organisational Change Policy had been received from UCU colleagues and other members of staff. Useful feedback had been received and revisions had been made. A final draft of the policy had been considered by the Staffing Committee earlier on the agenda;
 - v) that an oral report on the Gender Pay Gap had been received confirming that two focus groups had taken place. Dr Alison Parken was currently working on her report to be submitted by the end of November 2018;
 - vi) that good progress on action plans had been made at the Staff Survey Working Group and an update would follow in the Weekly Diary; **AA**
 - vii) that JCNC had been updated on plans to review the the staff survey process and had raised no concerns;
 - viii) that the MARS panel had met on 1 November and considered

9 applications. Decisions would be communicated to line managers and applicants on 2 November;

- ix) that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, in discussion with HoDs, had considered developing a policy or guidance document around covering for long term absence of academic staff. However, it was appreciated that all cases are individual and that it would be difficult to develop a suitable standard approach;
- x) that the recent survey undertaken by UCU on the Celcat timetabling systems had been a useful piece of work. It was acknowledged that further work was needed. A review group was to be set up to establish a plan for timetabling for 2019/20.

Agreed:

that informal comments would be sought from the UCU Branch Committee on the possibility of extending the standard notice period of newly appointed academic staff from two to three months; **DC**

18/17 Any Other Business

Noted:

that the staff HESA data had been returned by the required deadline.

18/18 Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 17 January 2019