

## Human Resources Committee

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| TIME /DATE / VENUE | 0900, 21 September 2021, via videoconferencing (Google Meet)  |
| PRESENT            | Claudia Iton (Chair)<br>Professor Graham Galbraith<br>David Wilding (Minute 34 to 37 and 38 to 44)<br>Christopher Williams  |
| IN ATTENDANCE      | Bernie Topham, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor<br>Chris Chang, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life)<br>(Minute 38 only)<br>Yvonne Howard, Interim Director of Race and Equality (Minute 38 only)<br>John Parr, Interim Chief People Officer<br>Helen Dunn, Deputy Director of HR (Organisational Development)<br>Rebecca Hopkins, Deputy Director of HR (People Services)<br>Dr Mike Rayner, Staff Representative<br>Professor Paul Hayes, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor<br>Professor David Sanders, Staff Governor |
| SECRETARIAT        | Adrian Parry, Executive Director of Corporate Governance<br>Jacqui Bryden, Senior Governance Officer  |

To facilitate the attendance of staff for specific items, some items were taken out of the order designated in the agenda.

## 1 Welcome, Quoracy, Conflict of Interest and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was conducted virtually via videoconferencing. Members were reminded of the protocols for virtual governor meetings.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Jenny Crighton.
- 1.3 The Executive Director of Corporate Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business.
- 1.4 There were no conflicts of interest declared.

## 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record.

## 3 Matters Actioned and Matters Arising

- 3.1 Action was reported within the agenda papers on two items: one for note and one that would be covered later in the agenda.
- 3.2 It was clarified that agenda item number two to be covered later in the agenda had not been widely discussed in correspondence as had originally been proposed.
- 3.3 In discussion, it was noted that the summary of equality and diversity data had been published on the University's website but its placement was obscure and difficult to access. It is expected that this will be remedied by the ongoing redesign of the website currently underway.
- 3.4 The published HR policies were last reviewed some three to five years ago and the updated policies had yet to be uploaded. The website is the remit of Marketing and Communications and a separate project to update it was in progress, and would include structuring information to make information easier to find. The committee stressed the importance of the policies being accessible and available as soon as possible. The HR team would make this point to the webteam so that visibility and access are obtained as soon as possible.

**Action: Chief Operating Officer and DVC/Interim Chief People Officer**

## 4 The Committee's New Terms of Reference and Annual Review of the Previous Terms of Reference

Adrian Parry, Executive Director of Corporate Governance introduced a report that provided a review of the business conducted by the Committee during the previous year, proposed re-orientated terms of reference for the Committee, and provided an indicative programme of work for the academic year 2021/22. The Committee was also invited to consider the future balance of face-to-face and online meetings within the schedule of meetings for the next year.

4.1 In discussion, it was noted that:

### Review of 2020/2021

- i. Talent management and succession planning should have been addressed more rigorously and there should be a greater focus upon these activities in the coming year.
- ii. The new leadership programmes for training and development would support an increased focus upon talent management and succession planning.

### Proposed new terms of reference

- i. The proposed terms of reference provided for a more strategic and holistic approach to the work of the Committee. By engaging with people across the university through the strategic work area leads, the committee would provide a forum for a range of staff to showcase their work and interact with the committee as a critical friend and supporter.
- ii. The reorientated terms of reference should be reviewed regularly over the course of the year. It should be expected that they would need to evolve and adapt over time.
- iii. Business presented at future meetings would be consistent with the reorientated terms of reference. However, it was also important to recognise that the Committee would still need to receive and discuss a number of legal and regulatory compliance matters.
- iv. It was planned that the Committee would receive two high-level presentations at each meeting: one from the strategic lead of an objective or enabler of the University strategy about how the skills, knowledge and experience of people was contributing to its delivery; and one from a faculty, department or professional service that addressed their contribution to the delivery of the University strategy and the "lived experience" of their contribution to the delivery of the University's objectives.
- v. Those invited to provide high-level presentations at future meetings should be drawn from across the university. Committee members should identify the particular aspects of University activity they would like to consider and debate.
- vi. The proposed change in the name of the committee was intended to reflect a greater focus upon the contribution required from people within and beyond the HR department to successfully deliver the objectives of the University Strategy.



Future meetings

- i. Some governors were committed to a number of committee and project board meetings which were sometimes held on consecutive days or within close proximity. It would be helpful if in-person meetings could be dovetailed to minimise travel for governors.
- ii. A balance between in-person and virtual meetings should be identified. It was noted that some agenda items required a level of debate that was better addressed at in-person meetings whilst others could be more easily accommodated via online meetings. This would place a premium upon agenda planning for the year ahead.

4.2 The Committee:

- i. Noted the assessment of business conducted for the year 2020/21 and agreed to report its assurance to the Board that it has discharged its terms of reference.
- ii. Agreed that the draft terms of reference for the proposed People, Culture and Engagement Committee should be submitted to the Board of Governors for approval, noting that some flexibility may be required to subsequently amend the terms of reference in the light of the Committee's experience of operating.
- iii. Noted the indicative work programme for 2021/2022.
- iv. Agreed that the next meeting in December 2021 would be face to face and that future meetings would reflect a hybrid model of in-person and online meetings.

## 5 Overview of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Agenda and Direction

Committee received a report and presentation from Yvonne Howard, Interim Director of Race and Equality, and Tracey Lamb, EDI Manager/Consultant that outlined the key strategic priorities and revised approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI).

### 5.1 Key points noted were:

- i. The EDI framework remained a work in progress and the actions would be actively managed to meet the objectives of the University Strategy.
- ii. It was important to provide safe environments to facilitate uncomfortable conversations about racial equity and inequality.
- iii. The report identified the necessary systems and structures to facilitate sound equality analysis. These were:
  - a. The emerging EDI Framework and objectives
  - b. The proposed governance arrangements
  - c. The emerging action plan for racial equity
  - d. Review of training and development
  - e. Engagement plans
- iv. The current programme of EDI activities undertaken by the University was disparate and required a more coherent and integrated approach.
- v. The framework identified three key objectives. These would be supported by activities in the employee and student life cycle and by EDI programmes aligned to the University's vision and values. The objectives were:
  - a. To build a positive, inclusive culture that inspires staff and students to realise their full potential and promotes engagement and wellbeing.
  - b. To work towards fair representation and fair outcomes for our staff and student communities.
  - c. To develop a robust understanding of our EDI data to effect sound evidence-based decision making.
- vi. These objectives had been developed to facilitate a holistic approach to EDI, to reduce variance in outcomes, challenge stereotyping and to build a better understanding of lived experiences.
- vii. The EDI framework identified aspects of the staff and student lifecycle. There were many activities at university and department level that underpinned these, which would be brought together holistically and logically.
- viii. The proposed governance arrangements ensured the clear articulation of roles, accountability and structures. The new EDI groups (EDI Steering Group, EDI Advisory Group, EDI Working Groups, and EDI Staff and Student Networks) would meet regularly to provide feedback and to support collaborative working methods. There

was a proposal to establish an EDI Partnership within the local community to support access and participation.

- ix. Reports from the EDI Steering Group to the University Executive Board, HR Committee and the Board of Governors to identify progress would be more frequent during the year. This would facilitate appraisal of actions and improve agility in guiding effective change.
- x. The focus group workshops run by Dr Jason Arday would recommence in October following the summer break. The emerging themes from the workshops were leadership commitment and accountability, a review of existing student support for reporting hate crime, staff recruitment practice and profiling, the sense of belonging, intercultural competence, and the provision of safe spaces.

5.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- i. The framework emphasised the desire for ongoing review and evidence-based decision-making.
- ii. The framework provided a high-level overview. A supporting action plan detailed the specific activities in place to address each objective and ensure alignment of all activity.
- iii. The current Equality and Diversity policies on the website were dated from 2016 to 2018 and would be reviewed as part of the EDI Framework.
- iv. It was important that the activities were systematic and clearly linked to the core purpose and University Strategy because that approach would drive cultural change.
- v. There was commonality in the Charters adopted by the University: Race Equality Charter, Athena Swan, as well as gender, LGBTQ+, neurodiversity, disability and it was important to consider the intersectionality of them to ensure a holistic approach.
- vi. The metrics and key performance indicators were essential to understand the changes and improvements made. Examples of measurable outcomes would be improvements in staff survey responses to matters such as parity in the sense of belonging and the representation of BAME staff in management roles.
- vii. The three key objectives of the EDI Framework represented a starting point. To set the priorities, it was important to listen to staff and student voices on EDI issues, to focus on the culture and building a sense of equity for staff and students.
- viii. More detail on the actions and key measures would be presented to Committee at the next meeting in December.

**Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life)**

- ix. There was scope for cross functional working with other departments and experts to deliver this agenda, such as Marketing.
- x. The goals to be realised within the short to medium term would include bias-free recruitment with confident and diverse panels and more diverse staff recruitment. Staff survey data would indicate parity about the sense of belonging for all staff or the actions identified to achieve parity, particularly reward. There would be a shift in culture, recruitment outcomes, fixed term contractual arrangements and retention.

- xi. It would also be important to drive changes to address the gender pay gap.
- 5.3 The Committee noted the progress to date, especially the importance of clarity on the accountabilities, priorities and metrics that accompanied the proposed activities.

**Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life)**

## 6 People Delivery Plan

John Parr, Interim Chief People Officer provided an oral overview of the progress of the People Delivery Plan, which incorporated the updated HR policies, the Human Resources and Finance (HRF) Transformation Project, the Pay and Reward Project, and the Inclusive leadership Programme.

- 6.1 It was important to note that all activity within the People Plan was subject to financial constraints and some activities may need to be revised or deferred accordingly.
- 6.2 The Pay and Reward Project was ambitious and aimed to provide more flexibility through the inclusion of elements such as market supplements, contribution pay, and anti-social hours payments. It was also important to recognise that not all reward was pay based.
- 6.3 Managing Performance was essential to effective succession planning and the inclusion of performance measurement would enable career paths to be built and developed. However, this was dependent upon a solid Performance and Development Review process.
- 6.4 The HRF Transformation Project would facilitate staff being able to increase their access to HR Services via self-service functionality.
- 6.5 The HR Department would work to a set of clear priorities in taking these matters forward. The Department would also be fully engaged in the delivery of a number of significant strategic projects, including the plans for a London Campus and Medical School.
- 6.6 In discussion, it was noted that:
  - i. The Performance and Development Review (PDR) process had been updated two years ago. This would be reviewed to ascertain its impact upon performance management and to gauge its influence upon enhanced performance. The rating on the PDR system was a self-assessed rating and as such, line managers could not indicate their performance assessment in the rating applied, though they were at liberty to add their comments to the PDR document.
  - ii. The PDR process was essential for forging an effective manager and staff relationship and played a key role in promoting good employee relations. Proposals to better help managers to assess performance would be submitted to the next meeting.

**Action: Deputy Director of Human Resources (Organisational Development)**

- iii. The PDR process applied to staff at all levels of the University. This was because it was important that all staff understood and appreciated their contribution to the delivery of the University Strategy.
- iv. An HR action plan would be developed to underpin the University Strategy. This would provide a clear sense of direction for HR activities.
- v. The University's four immediate strategic imperatives were: recruitment; the student experience; student employment; and research and innovation. It was important that all HR activities supported these imperatives.
- vi. The HR action plan was to facilitate significant cultural change and may require a pragmatic approach to implementation. There was a need to identify three to five priorities that would drive the necessary change.
- vii. The action plan priorities would be set by Spring 2022.

**Action: Interim Chief People Officer**

6.7 Committee noted the update.

## 7 Staff Survey Outcomes

Helen Dunn, Deputy Director of Human Resources (Organisational Development) provided an oral update and presentation on the outcomes of the Staff Survey. The overall response rate had been 69% against a survey response rate in 2017 of 72%. The outcomes would be shared with senior managers and then with all staff by the end of the week.

- 7.1 The timing for the survey had been challenging and there had been a number of changes to the date of the survey due to the pandemic and the cyber incident. The survey had run from 14 June 2021 until 4 July 2021, which was late in the academic year.
- 7.2 The response rates in different departments and faculties had been variable and work would be undertaken to understand the reasons for the variance in participation. There was some anecdotal evidence to suggest that the increased workload associated with online teaching and the cyber incident had been factors that had mitigated against a higher response rate.
- 7.3 There were 7 key question areas within the Staff Survey:

### Staff Engagement

- i. Positive responses to the statement 'I feel a strong sense of belonging' had declined by 9%. This was assumed to have been due to the impact of remote working created by the pandemic.
- ii. The HEI benchmark had declined by 3% and this had been updated by the survey provider, People Insight.
- iii. Positive responses to the statement 'Working here makes me want to do the best work I can' had declined both against 2017 and the sector, and would be explored with staff.

### Purpose, Leadership and Communication



- i. All Survey areas that covered purpose, leadership and communication had demonstrated an upward trend against 2017.
- ii. Positive responses to the statement 'I understand that the work I do will help the University deliver its strategic aims' had increased by 11% due to the work that had been done to support the launch of the updated University Strategy.
- iii. The Survey demonstrated a higher incidence of positive feedback on line management than received in 2017 and when compared to sector benchmarks.
- iv. Positive responses on communication had improved by 2% and overall stood at 51% and the reasons for this response would be explored. In comparison, this indicator had declined across the sector as a whole.

#### Enablement, Reward and Wellbeing

- i. Some of these questions included on enablement, reward and wellbeing were new to this survey and, consequently, there was no comparator to assess progress since the previous survey. The response to the question on wellbeing had received a positive response rate of 49% and would be an area for particular focus.
- ii. Positive responses to the statement 'There is a good cooperation between the teams I work with' stood at 70%, which was high when compared with the sector benchmark and constituted a strength for the University.
- iii. There was, on the whole, positive feedback on pay, although academics were less positive.

#### Autonomy

- i. Positive responses to the statement 'I have flexibility in how I approach my work' had improved by 18% to 80% overall.
- ii. Positive responses to the statement 'My job makes good use of my skills' had declined by 2%.
- iii. It was clear that responses to this element of the Survey had been greatly influenced by the context and the circumstances that had prevailed at the time it was undertaken.

#### Comparison by Position and Engagement by Role

- i. Academic responses to the Survey were generally less positive overall than those provided by professional services staff. Responses from those in academic management roles tended to be positive.
- ii. Engagement by role showed similar downward trends for both academic and research staff and would be explored to determine if this was due to the nature of the role itself or to other factors.

#### Free text



- i. The Survey had included two free text questions that had asked respondents to identify what for them was the best thing in the University and what would be the one thing that they would change.
  - ii. Free text comments had highlighted the positive role of colleagues, students, teaching, the overall experience of working at the University and pay and benefits.
  - iii. Areas identified by staff for improvement included staff workloads, communication, leadership, organisational change and processes, systems and technology.
- 7.4 Once the overall results had been published to all staff, local results would be shared by Heads to create prioritised action plans based upon the responses received.
- 7.5 Work had already commenced on the development of the next staff survey which would take place in early 2022. It was anticipated that this would focus upon the topic of gender culture but may be broadened to include coverage of other protected characteristics.
- 7.6 In discussion, it was noted that:
- i. Wellbeing was an area of concern for staff and was stronger amongst academics due to lockdown pressures upon teaching activity.
  - ii. Support for wellbeing had been offered via the occupational health service, line management support for return to campus and the Employee Assistance Programme. However, it appeared that this should have been more clearly communicated to staff.
  - iii. It was important to understand the wellbeing support that staff wanted and needed and to be proactive in understanding this.
  - iv. The context of the relentless pressure from the pandemic itself had been very hard for all staff. Government policy changes, constant adaptation, isolation and the cyber incident had all been important exacerbating factors.
  - v. New ways of working had been introduced and these had often required the adoption of a more managerial approach to activities. The resultant transition had proved challenging for many staff and this could be anticipated to continue for some months. It was important that the level of strain for staff did not become unacceptable.
  - vi. Some areas of the University had consistently provided positive or negative responses to each Staff Survey. It would be important to ascertain the reasons for these responses.
- 40.9 The Committee noted the report and expressed its thanks for the hard work undertaken to manage the Staff Survey, which had provided good results and also lots of information on which to build.

## 8 Gender Pay Gap Update

Rebecca Hopkins, Deputy Director of HR (People Services) provided an oral update and presentation on the progress made to address the Gender Pay Gap.

- 8.1 The year-on-year reports did not indicate any significant changes. The future approach would be more focused on targets and an action plan.
- 8.2 This was the third year of data collection undertaken since 2018.
- 8.3 The gender pay gap for the mean salary had increased over that three-year period from 14.2% to 14.8%. However, this was lower than the wider economy, which had a pay gap of 16.3%.
- 8.4 The gender pay gap for the median salary had moved from 23.2% in 2018 to 22.3% in 2019 and back to 23.3% in 2020.
- 8.5 The mean bonus pay gap had remained the same in 2018 and 2020 due to an all staff bonus. In 2019 there had been a gap of 30% because recognition awards awarded to male staff were higher in that year. A review had been undertaken of recognition awards by gender.
- 8.6 The quartile data showed that there were more females in lower paid jobs (Lower Quartile and Lower Middle Quartile) and that the pay gap decreased in higher paid jobs.
- 8.7 The figures provided constituted the headline data required by the government. More sophisticated reports had been produced for individual faculties and departments.
- 8.8 A new EDI Framework was to be established and a new EDI team appointed. This would facilitate more proactive work to be undertaken to address this issue.
- 8.9 The Committee noted in discussion:
  - i. It was disappointing that there had been little change or improvement in narrowing the gender pay gap over the three-year period.
  - ii. Lower paid jobs were predominantly undertaken by females and this was reflected within the gender pay gap figures. There was a need to ensure a better gender balance in senior roles to redress this imbalance.
  - iii. The University had introduced anonymised recruitment for professional service roles. However, this approach was not possible for academic staff as the authorship of publications played a key role in appointment decisions and these were also in the public domain.
  - iv. The Inclusive Leadership Programme would help to provide an open and transparent assessment of talent for succession planning.
  - v. The Performance and Development Review was also important for identifying and assessing talent and succession planning potential. This would be further refined over time to allow for management assessment of their reviewees.
  - vi. The reward system was under review because it was based upon grades and incremental progression and did not necessarily reflect individual performance or

impact. Senior staff should be included in job evaluation processes to ensure parity. This would provide confidence in an equality-based process.

- vii. There was also a need to review management structures to explore ways in which they could support and facilitate change.
- viii. As part of a review of management structures, processes for promotion should be considered as well as career breaks or maternity leave, particularly for researchers returning to their research. These processes would provide a trajectory for academic careers and should be incorporated into a plan. Other measures to be adopted might include job rotation and lateral career moves to help individuals acquire new skills and experience.
- ix. Staff turnover was low at the University and contributed to the problem of achieving a better gender balance in management roles.

8.10 Committee noted the update and looked forward to receiving a structured plan for tackling the gender pay gap.

**Action: Deputy Director of Human Resources (People Services)**

## 9 HR Policy Update

John Parr, Interim Chief People Officer provided an oral update about the eight key HR policies that had been updated to facilitate new ways of working. Key points noted were:

- 9.1 The disciplinary and grievance procedures were a managerial process and removed the involvement of the governors at the appeal stage.
- 9.2 The Human Resources and Financial Transformation Project reflected the updated policies in its system build.
- 9.3 It was important for the University to be more agile. This had been difficult during the last 18 months due to the pandemic. The policies were now ready to be published in their final format subject to minor changes and Chair's approval.
- 9.4 A complex programme of training had been developed and would be led by the University's Employment Lawyer. This would enable the University to train Human Resources staff, trade union representatives and wider management.
- 9.5 This delay in publication of the policies was attributable to the need to divert capacity and resources to tackle the recent cyber incident.
- 9.6 The following points were made in discussion:
  - i. The policies had been discussed and approved by the Committee in September 2020 and January 2021. It was important that progress with implementation was scrutinised by the Committee.
  - ii. The management team had been unable to implement the updated policies due to a lack of dedicated policy resource and ownership in Human Resources, as well as the need to prioritise new working arrangements during the pandemic.

- iii. It was important that the approach to the future development of policies was guided by a designated lead author and was managed in a more collegiate way.
- iv. There should be regular and managed policy reviews and resources should be provided for this task. A rolling programme of review over three years was a solution and would also enable the policies to be amended to reflect any changes in employment law.

**Action: Interim Chief People Officer**

9.7 Committee noted the update.

## 10 Inclusive Leadership Programme

Committee received an oral update from John Parr, Interim Chief People Officer, about the progress of the Inclusive Leadership Programme. The Programme would be scaled back to target priorities within financial constraints. The Programme would be delivered in smaller phases to ensure priorities were met.

- 10.1 The programme was an essential part of the People Delivery Plan and had to be prioritised to address those areas where most impact could be achieved.
- 10.2 The programme would be reviewed and repackaged and submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in its new format.

**Action: Deputy Director of Human Resources (Organisational Development)**

10.3 The Committee noted the update and looked forward to the next update.

## 11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would take place at 1400 on Tuesday 7 December 2021.