

Mr M Thomas
Mr S Vickers
Mr D Whg

In attendance: Dr C Baxter
Mrs L Furey
Professor P Mills

University Secretary
Director of Finance
Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Apologies: Mr M Lewis

Members were reminded to update their entry in the register of interests. Mr D Whg declared an interest as a newly appointed Director of Cedarvale. Mr S Vickers declared an interest as current staff member of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Mr M Thomas declared an interest as current staff member of the Teachers Pension Scheme.

Part A

18/01 Minutes

Approved: minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee held on 14 June 2018 (17/41-17/53).

18/02 Matters Arising

- Noted:
- i) that the Board, at its meeting in September 2018, had agreed a new financial target for the Staff Bonus Scheme of £5.5M cash generation, to replace the former surplus target;
 - ii) that the other matters arising in the report had either been addressed or were included later on the agenda.

18/03 Terms of Reference

Received: the terms of reference for the Committee

Agreed: that no further changes were required for 2018/19, (the update to Chairing Arrangements had already been included).

18/04 Vice-Chancellor's Report

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor on recent developments of note;

- Noted:
- i) that new Home/EU undergraduate student registration on the first day of term had been 607, which was a lower number than that indicated by firm acceptances, although a lesser drop-off rate than in 2017. Some applicants had deferred their place for a year, while others had decided not to study at University, to study elsewhere, or to take up employment. 26 Degree Apprentices had been secured which was very positive and taught postgraduate numbers were up on 2017 intake which was also a strong outcome;

- ii) that an impact and value for money focused report to the Board at its November meeting on how the refined approach and investment in marketing had helped maintain and grow market share in a very competitive climate was being prepared;
- iii) that the University is intending on using unconditional offers selectively for the first time for the current recruitment cycle for \sept 2019, whilst also and keeping a watching brief on OfS discussions and sector wide about such offers;
- iv) that the recruitment rounds for 2019 entry is in hand, but at an early stage in the cycle. Bad weather affected attendance in October at the Open Day, as some areas of the UK had severe travel warnings. Some October registrants had re-booked for the November Open Day and bookings were currently c 540. The comparable total number of bookings for November 2017 was 607, but there were likely to be further bookings over the next week. If the numbers who attend is a greater percentage of those booking than in 2017, this would also be helpful. Individual timetables for the day had been emailed to applicants who had booked, and a Masterclass Lecture had been added as a new feature which would showcase staff expertise in key topics;
- v) DataHE were engaged as consultants to the University providing a range of data analytics using publically available data and paid for data sets from UCAS. As the DataHE team were all senior UCAS staff at one time, they have key expertise in using the data. Their independent scrutiny and analysis showed that the University's assumptions about population changes in rural catchments were reasonable, but also that there were some rural areas which offered further opportunities to secure market share where Harper Adams was not currently quite so well represented. Actions were in hand. The DataHE presentation had included a projection of demographic changes and showed that numbers of 18 year olds might reach a low point projecting circa 595 for home undergraduates as a low point based upon demographic projections. It was important to note that this student recruitment projection would not include apprenticeships, international students or PGT students. At the current time the University appeared to be very slightly ahead of the

Higher Awards. The Hands Free Hectare team had been nominated for the innovation category;

- ix) that the University's registration with the Office for Students had been successful. OfS had advised that additional monitoring of the University's access and participation plan was required. The Director for Fair Access and Participation, Chris Millward would be visiting the University in the New Year and this would provide an opportunity to discuss contextualisation that was necessary for admissions to small specialist institutions and the challenges of recruiting a diverse base of students into agri-food and related subjects, with a focus on widening participation. The University continued to seek ways to do this. The Vice-Chancellor had also recently spoken to the Equality Challenge Unit about this matter. The ECU team had advised that they recognised the importance of this matter.
- (e) p1.145 TDp12.3 (v)4 (i)2sC d (e)Igni)

in due course, to discuss with the Trustees whether or not Masters scholarships might be funded instead;

- xii) that members agreed that the key challenges for the University continue to be ensuring current and future financial sustainability/maintaining student recruitment. The papers for the mee.1 (d[s]-8 (26-12.2 (a)-12.3 [.]) 1Type /Page.2

meeting that it would adopt a cash generation target of £5.5M as the financial KPI for the Staff Bonus Scheme and that would be appropriate to reflect this in the ASSUR table; **LF**

xxi) that following discussion, members agreed that the borrowing target range should continue to be 25 to 30%. However members recognised that the University had been paying back rather than drawing down loans for a period of time. Nevertheless once borrowing is 0.5% of the 100% target, 0.5% (TW) 205/2

18/08 Pensions

Received: a briefing note from the Director of Finance on recent developments with respect to LGPS and TPS

Noted: that as highlighted earlier in the meeting,

phase of operation of the technologies and in particular his active engagement with suppliers of the system to explore ways in which efficiency and effectiveness could be improved. Mr Gunn-Why, for example, had identified a number of areas for improvement and had also engaged suppliers to ensure that they were supporting the project more appropriately in relation to warranties and maintenance of key equipment. He had also identified that there were issues related to use of the biomass boiler as the lead contributor to the district heat network. This had caused conflict with CHP whilst there was insufficient heating load. As outlined in the paper, it was proposed that the CHP would operate from September to April and then be switched off for maintenance while the biomass could be drawn upon as a heat demand top up, subject to demand and weather conditions. There would be a need to use existing gas boiler plants within buildings and the photovoltaic array would continue to contribute electricity during daylight hours.

- ii) that an updated financial model for Cedar Energy Ltd would be

importance of planning for the Agriculture Bill and ensuring positive engagement with the emerging policies. There had also been a discussion around the role of the Farm and its support for the work of the University following up on members' comments at the Board and University Executive planning session in September 2018;

- ii) that a very recent report on a corporate manslaughter case involving use of ATV vehicles and tractors had been shared with relevant staff across the University and the Health and Safety Officer was supporting and following up where necessary to ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place. The Health and Safety Officer was also working with the University Secretary to address some suggestions that had been made by a former member of staff about ways in which health and safety practice needed to be clarified and/or improved and enhanced within one of the Departments. Detailed follow-up meetings were taking place with the Head of Department and a number of actions had already been completed.

18/14 Higher Education Innovation Funding- Institutional Knowledge Exchange Strategy

Received: the HEIF Institutional Knowledge Exchange Strategy

Noted: that the University had been able to secure HEIF funding again and had received £370 K per annum. In light of this, it had been necessary to submit an interim plan as the cycle was currently part way through a five year allocation. Harper Adams had therefore been asked to submit a slightly briefer document. The University's proposals focused on public and industry engagement especially related to new technologies. A consultant with expertise in HEIF have been particularly helpful in supporting the University with this work. Feedback from the HEIF was currently awaited.

Agreed: to endorse the Institutional Knowledge Exchange Strategy

Date of next meeting 17 January 2019

Part B

18/16 Risk Management

Received: a report on the management of risks assigned to the Committee.

18/17 Estate Developments

Received: a report by the University Secretary/Estates Consultant on progress with current estate developments;