

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 June 2017

Present: Mr S Vickers Chairman
Mr M Lewis
Dr D Llewellyn
Mr M Thomas

In attendance: Dr C Baxter University Secretary
Mrs L Furey Director of Finance
Professor P Mills Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Apologies: Mr P Nixon
Mr D Wong

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

16/46 Minutes

Approved: the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee held on 20 March 2017 (16/33-16/45).

16/47 Matters Arising

Noted:

- i) that all the actions highlighted in the minutes has either been completed or were in progress and/or were an item later in the agenda;
- ii) that the Director of Finance provided Members with an update on procurement KPIs. This was circulated as an additional item at the meeting.

16/48 Risk Management

Received: a report by the University Secretary on progress with risk items assigned to the Committee;

Noted: that the Committee were content that the University continued to manage the highlighted risks assigned to it.

16/49 Vice-Chancellor's Report at 9.30pm of those received at the same point in 2016. The University was actively engaging in a campaign called 'ó Advantage Harper ó'. This aimed to attract late applicants to the University over the extended clearing period which now exists throughout the summer months ;

ii) that Agriculture , especially the Foundation Degree in Engineering remained challenging areas in which to attract students . It was

believed that Agriculture had a number of factors affecting student

- xiii) that the Vice-Chancellor had addressed the HEFCE catalyst panel during the week focusing on the use of the University's use of catalyst funds to develop the Agricultural Engineering Innovation Centre (AEIC) and facilitate the relocation of the Dairy Crest Research and Innovation team on to the University's campus. Feedback had been very positive with the panel confirming that they were very impressed with the use the University had made of the funds. HEFCE staff had also suggested that a further application from the University would be positively received should appropriate projects come to the fore. This would be discussed further with prospective partners;
- xiv) that two Harper Students had been shortlisted for the Farmer's Weekly awards. In addition to this the Harper Adams Cereals Challenge team had come second and a further team had won the Guild of Agricultural Journalists Award at the Cereals event;
- xv) the University had been saddened to learn of the death of Professor Aliston former member of staff at the Royal Agricultural University and a well- known figure in the agri-food sector. The Vice-Chancellor had sent condolences on behalf of the institution;
- xvi) that SRUC had issued a new strategy which was currently under active discussion;
- xvii) that the Director of the Midland's Engine had visited the previous week. Discussion had focused on the need to ensure that Agro Tech as well as food processing remained the focus on the Midland's Engine. The University of Lincoln had made significant headway with emphasising the importance of food processing and had been able to secure direct support from the Lincolnshire LEP as they are the only university in the county. It had been hoped that Harper Adams and Lincoln might be able to ~~open~~ ^{open} a joint HEIF ~~bid~~ ^{bid} together, unfortunately however, the University of Lincoln had decided to proceed with an alternative partner (The University of Cambridge);
- xviii) that the Vice-Chancellor had developed a paper for the EIS/Midland's Engine Staff. This feedback had been requested from the Director. The Vice-Chancellor asked to speak with the consultant who was working
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- xxiii) that the University continued to be aware of developments around the University Centre, Shrewsbury Project.

16/50 Management Accounts

Received: the management accounts to the period 30 April 2017.

16/51 Budget/Financial Planning

Considered:

- i) the updated Financial Strategy
- ii) the Draft Budget 2017/18 including the Financial Forecast 2017

Noted:

- i) that the updated Financial Strategy reflected the detailed discussions that had been taking place over recent months. These had been drawn upon the update the Financial Strategy agreed in the past and to ensure that it was up to date and reflected more recent discussions. In particular the KPIs reflected those previously agreed for the ASSUR Annual return.
- ii) that a small number of new KPIs had also been suggested in the paper including for example, a KPI related to the allocation of academic staff workload and comments from the Committee were welcomed about these proposals;
- ii) that pay as sensitive turnover had previously been targeted at 50% however, given the University's growth and development and the rising cost of pensions and other related staffing matters it was no longer possible to meet this target and, therefore, it was felt that a more realistic target would be 55% and that this remained in line with other universities especially as many others have already outsourced their cleaning and catering and other infrastructure related staff and that the University continues to maintain these staff on directly employed contracts. At the current time the University's cost for staff remains

- vi) that the proposed budget for 2017/18 and Financial Forecast for 2018/122 had been based on an anticipated student intake of 630 for September 2017. It was recognised that this was lower than the

- xiv) that at the recent Open Day in May there had been some additional students wishing to apply for 2017 entry and at this point it is possible that further students may attend the Open Day in July 2017 who are still looking for 2017 entry;
- xv) that a meeting with Course Tutors had been planned for July and a number of ideas would be discussed at that meeting to further improve the University's attractiveness to potential undergraduates. One issue that would also be explored is whether or not the University can improve the local transport network by putting on additional minibuses or similar.
- xvi) that at the Board meeting in July it was proposed to brief Members in more detail about the proposal to create a new area of activity which remained confidential at this point. The proposal was in partnership with another university and a formal announcement would be made once the Board of Governors at Harper Adams and the Council at the other university had determined whether or not they were happy to support the project continuing. Should this project be successful it was recognised that this could attract a significant group of additional students to the campus in due course, however in the meantime it was important to ensure that the current programmes remained attractive

capital was c. £3 million and this was managed by Mr. M. O. b. ! U and

16/53 **Strategic Topics for Discussion at Board Meetings**

Received:

- i) A paper setting out topics for discussion

Noted:

- i) that the proposal to include a standing item at Board meetings on strategic topics had arisen from the Chair's discussion with a number of Members. Although there was currently a planning session each year it was felt that inclusion of a strategic topic at each Board meeting as a

- iv) that the Committee were supportive of the approach being taken by the University and would be happy to be kept informed in due course.

16/57 **Committees**

- Received:
- i) the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 1 June 2017;
 - ii) the minutes of the FARM Strategy Committee held on 24 May 2017;

16/58 **Date of Next Meeting** 8 November 2017