



## HARTPURY

# MEETINGS OF THE STRATEGY, FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEES of HARTPURY UNIVERSITY AND HARTPURY COLLEGE

## Minutes of Meetings 10am Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024 Gordon Canning Room

### Members

Edward Keene  
Henry Hodgkins  
William Marshall  
Robert Brooks  
Andy Collop (Professor)  
Alastair Grizzell  
Chris Moody

### In Attendance

Mick Axtell  
Rosie Scott-  
Claire Whitworth  
Lesley Worsfold

Gillian Steels

Graeme Brooks  
Mark Price Vitruvius

### University SFR Committee

Present (Chair)  
Present  
Present  
Present  
Present (Vice-Chancellor)  
-  
Present

Present (Chief Operating Officer)  
Present (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)  
Present (Deputy-Principal FE)  
Present (Deputy-Principal  
Resources)  
Present (Clerk to the Board)  
Present items 8-9 inclusive  
Present part of item 9

### College SFR Committee

Present (Chair)  
-  
-  
-  
Present (Principal)  
Present  
Present  
Present (Chief Operating Officer)-  
Present (Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)  
Present (Deputy-Principal FE)  
Present (Deputy-Principal Resources)  
Present (Clerk to the Board)  
Head of Property

		ACTION & ACTION DATE
SFR01/05/24	<b>Apologies</b> Apologies noted as above. <b>Quoracy</b> It was confirmed that the University SFR Committee and the College SFR Committee meetings were quorate.	
SFR02/05/24	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> The Clerk advised that members' interests would be taken as those disclosed in the Register of Members' Interests. It was noted that the Chair, Vice-Chancellor/Principal and Chris Moody were members of both the University and College Boards.	
SFR03/05/24	<b>Minutes of the Last Meetings</b> The minutes of the University SFR Committee and the College SFR Committee 6th February 2024 meetings were agreed as true records.	

SFR04/05/24	<b>Matters Arising</b> The Actions Log update, confirming actions were either complete or in train was noted.	
SFR05/05/24	<b>EDI Annual Report</b> The EDI Report provided Governors with an update on Hartpury's EDI objectives/Single Equality Action Plan and general EDI activity to ensure Governors are meeting their statutory duties to monitor and oversee Hartpury's EDI activity.	
	<p>The following aspects were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gender Pay Gap</b> (full report available on the Hartpury website)- as part of our KPI's Hartpury has committed to reducing the median gender gap to 10.5% for this academic year and the report demonstrates the gap has narrowed to 3.21% (9.33% for the previous year); therefore, our KPI has been exceeded. Out of 37 competitor universities and colleges, Hartpury ranked 4<sup>th</sup> for both mean pay gap and median pay gap.</li> </ul> <p>It was confirmed that the KPI would now be reviewed. Governors were pleased with this positive outcome. Governors queried what actions had led to the reduced gap. It was noted that Hartpury worked to boost the pay of the lower paid which may have impacted this. The new professional services payscale which took effect from January would also impact this for the analysis for 2024. Governors queried the position in relation to equal pay and were advised a report on this would be issued later in the year, but given the use of pay scales it was not expected this would raise issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>EDI Forum</b> continued to progress our EDI objectives as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Empower our community to embrace equality</li> <li>○ Celebrate and recognise the strength of diversity</li> <li>○ Promote an inclusive culture</li> <li>○ Apply zero tolerance to all forms of harassment and discrimination.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The <b>Wellbeing &amp; Inclusivity Calendar</b> promotes monthly themes and key awareness raising days/weeks. Monthly themes included - respect, kindness, giving, inclusivity, re-adjusting and goal setting, talking and openness, and stress management. EDI Forum members have accountability for the monthly themes and generating promotional materials. The Hartpury Student Union are heavily involved in promotion to students.</li> <li>• To <b>support a teaching and living environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination</b>, Hartpury had continued to roll-out active bystander training with circa 700 staff/students trained and plans to roll-out to first year undergraduate students in September 2024 as well as FE and HE staff CPD.</li> <li>• <b>Increased marketing activity across a range of EDI topics.</b></li> <li>• One of the first five universities to achieve <b>Student Minds University Health Charter</b> and successfully completed our year one annual journey.</li> <li>• A successful <b>Inclusivity Symposium</b> held January 2024.</li> </ul>	

	<p>Governors reflected on the increased reporting on bullying and harassment noting that over the 2022-2023 academic year, 105 concerns had been triaged and assessed as peer-on peer abuse, bullying, cyber-bullying, homophobia and transphobia. This demonstrated a 56% increase when compared to the previous academic year. Governors queried if this was a matter for concern. The Deputy Principal Resources advised that in part this was thought to relate to friendship issues and good reporting practice, but that actions to reduce were also ongoing through a Respect campaign and Residential Code of Conduct. Governors queried if there were any statistics for the current year and were advised these were not yet available.</p>	
	<p>Governors expressed concern at the survey results relating to “On the whole, I believe our promotion processes are fair and based on merit” (50% - Jan 24) and “I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences” (54% Jan 24). It was agreed this did not reflect the culture Hartpury was working towards. It was noted that the survey had been separate from the wider staff survey and that the response rate had been low, and confirmed that the results would be reviewed against the staff survey and actions then put in place as necessary. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal commented it would be useful to drill down into recent promotions to provide assurance. He noted that two professors had recently been appointed from internally and that such appointments should provide exemplars to counter any staff concerns. Governors agreed it would be helpful to have an update reflecting on the recent staff survey.</p>	<p><b>Dep Prin Resources June 24</b></p>
<b>SFR06/05/24</b>	<b>Monthly Management Accounts – March</b>	
	<p>The Management Accounts updated on the financial position of the University Group, and enabled the committees to monitor whether financial performance was on track and gain assurance on any areas of potential concern.</p>	
	<p>It was noted that the operating result for the eight months ending March 2024 was a surplus of £117k compared to a budgeted surplus of £142K. This was mostly in line with budget and the reforecast. Although we had had a favourable in year review of funding from the ESFA for our FE provision, this was offset by lower HE student numbers as previously reported.</p> <p>A full reforecast had been carried out in January and showed a projected surplus of £1,323k compared to an original budget of £1,024k. Although there was movement on this, there was nothing to suggest that this would not be achieved. An updated settlement of an additional £157k from the ESFA relating to the increase in Teachers’ Pension contributions had now been received, although not incorporated into the reforecast yet. A further review would be undertaken as part of the April Management Accounts preparation.</p> <p>The January 2024 reforecast also included an update to the balance sheet and cashflow and no material differences were expected.</p>	

	<p>Cash balances at the month end were £3,122k. The University has an overdraft facility of £1m. The University complied with its bank covenants and was forecast to continue to do so.</p>	
	<p>Governors expressed concern at the ongoing variance relating to transport expenses, while noting that income had also risen, but not to the same extent.</p> <p><b>Commercial Confidentiality – Contract – 3 years</b></p>	
	<p>Non-confidential</p> <p>It was noted that the variance relating to utilities contained a typo and should be -85 not -185. This would be updated. Governors were pleased that catering income had increased. It was confirmed that the financial impact to the changes to the ULH timings would be reflected going forward.</p>	
	<p><b>The University SFR Committee NOTED the March 2024 Management Accounts.</b></p> <p><b>The College SFR Committee NOTED the March 2024 Management Accounts.</b></p>	
<b>SFR07/05/24</b>	<b>Draft Budget</b>	
	<p>The first draft of the budget for 2024/25 was reviewed. The budget setting process for 2024/25 had commenced in January and had been reviewed and challenged by SMT. It was confirmed that at the SFR meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024, a wider financial assessment on the institution of the final proposed budget, reflecting the feedback from this meeting, would be presented.</p> <p>The budgeted surplus for 2024/25 was currently reported at £488k before FRS17 adjustments on a total income of £55.806m, which was a 0.87% (1.95% 2023/24 budget) surplus as a % of income. Staff costs were 57.91% of income (57.19% 2023/24 budget). The financial plan submitted to the OFS in November 2024 indicated a projected surplus of £1,076k for 2024/25.</p> <p>The key assumptions within the budget were:</p> <p>Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HE numbers continue to reduce, as is being seen in the wider HE Market. Both recruitment and retention data were being monitored closely. This could also impact future years as lower year groups work their way through the academic years.</li> <li>• ESFA 16-18 income reflected allocation and impact of rise in funding per student and introduction of T Levels which attract a higher rate of funding.</li> <li>• Commercial income in accommodation was budgeted to increase reflecting increased charges.</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>Pay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2% pay award assumed, plus a budget for incremental rises for all staff – it was noted this was an overall proposed envelope with details of how it would be allocated to be considered further prior to January 25.</li> </ul> <p>Bids for new posts across all areas had been received during the budget cycle and reviewed by SMT. Proposed new posts and amendments were detailed, these had been limited where possible.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 1.5% vacancy factor was included</li> <li>• The increase in Teachers Pension contributions had been incorporated, matched by additional ESFA funding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Non Pay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased marketing budget to drive student recruitment in both the Home and International markets.</li> <li>• Student transport costs had increased, although these are partially offset by additional income.</li> <li>• IT spend increased within Admin and Central Services due to increased licenses for new software and the aim to invest in the Digital Strategy. Background information on this was noted and governors supported the action being taken. It was agreed that an Action Plan on the way issues highlighted were being addressed should come to the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p>It was confirmed the balance sheet and cashflow would be developed once we have a final budgeted out turn and will form part of the final budget sign off by these committees in June.</p>	<p><b>June 24 COO/Dire DS &amp;CI</b></p>
	<p>In terms of capital expenditure, it was assumed there would be a £500k Vice Chancellor/Principal's Capital budget, a £350k IT Capital budget and that other major capital projects would continue in line with budget. It was noted that at this stage the impact of the position with ULH was not included and that this would be reflected in the final budget when this was prepared.</p> <p>It was highlighted that there were a number of items where work was still required before the budget can be finalised including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-funded salary positions to be identified and ensure that income is included</li> <li>○ Impact of Catering outsourcing</li> <li>○ A Level provision</li> <li>○ Research costs</li> <li>○ Transport options v accommodation</li> <li>○ Efficiency Challenges</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any amendments required for Sandwich Year Vet Nursing Students</li> <li>○ Review of PGT programmes</li> <li>○ Effect of delay in ULH construction</li> <li>○ Delaying certain staff appointments</li> <li>○ HE income assumptions, such as returners</li> <li>○ Effect of transferring Vet Nursing placement students on to a different course pathway</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>HE Recruitment Update</b></p> <p>The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that HE had approached the HE budget projections differently this year, recognising the issues in 2023/24. Critical friends had been used to challenge and probe. At this time projections for foundation year were down by c 30 which was a cause for concern, particularly as this would have a 4 year impact. Sport applications were up, although it was noted that this area typically had a lower conversion rate. Animal and Equine applicants were down, with animal numbers being a particular point of concern. Agriculture numbers were growing, Veterinary Nursing numbers were at expected levels. There had been increased spend on digital marketing and two applicant days recently to support conversion. Post applicant day there had been positive indicators of commitment through applications for livery and accommodation. Modelling was being done, based on latest information, on a monthly basis to try to ensure understanding of numbers as soon as possible. It was recognised however that students continued to behave differently to pre-covid. It was confirmed that at this time retention was improved on last year, and confirmed activity would be ongoing to support this during the summer recognising that this was a risk point. It was confirmed that international was 10% up.</p>	
	<p><b>FE Recruitment Update</b></p> <p>At this stage recruitment was looking positive, but a significant number of students required beds. To date there had been 320 applications for 120 T'level places. Governors queried if there was flexibility on beds to increase places for T'level students or more widely to take on additional T'level students. It was agreed that these aspects would be considered, but recognised that HE was also sensitive to on site beds, and that HE students would be with Hartpury for up to 4 years. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal confirmed that a range of options were being modelled. It was noted that for FE students local students generally required transport and more regional students on-site beds. Governors queried whether options of additional temporary residential accommodation would be considered as previously. It was noted that universities who had tried this had found the student experience was significantly compromised. It was noted that retention of students at Blackfriars was good.</p>	
	<p>It was stressed that the SMT were considering options supported by the data. It was confirmed changes to areas such as closure of</p>	

	modern pentathlon and Hartpury RFC and Gloucester-Hartpury would impact in future years.	
	<p>Governors queried whether the numbers of staff matched the volume of students, and stressed the importance of having corrective action in place to ensure this was in balance. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that action was already being taken where staff resigned, contact hours had been reduced and PhD hours had been reduced. The need to balance maintaining quality was recognised. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal advised that in the recent OFS visit Hartpury had highlighted the pressures universities faced balancing the cost base against maintaining quality given reducing resources. It was noted that the staff to student ration was going up. The cost of supporting students with additional needs, a statutory requirement, was recognised as growing. It was confirmed all costs were being reviewed, whilst keeping the need to maintain the student experience at the forefront. Governors recognised the increase in pension costs, and it was confirmed this was an area the COO would review in the future. It was recognised any change would need to be carefully considered to avoid impacting staff recruitment.</p>	Feb 25 COO
	<p>It was noted that a number of universities were undertaking significant redundancy schemes, particularly where there had been a dependence on international, especially with a focus in Nigeria. It was recognised that such actions were driven by the lack of increase in funding for HE, and would cause significant cultural change in institutions. Governors questioned whether are proposed international HE growth would be impacted. The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that we were generally expanding in markets where we already had a presence, and were not recruiting in Nigeria. It was confirmed this area would also be carefully monitored.</p> <p>The Deputy-Vice-Chancellor advised that local competitors were also operating more strategically and again this was an area being watched.</p>	
	<p><b>Confidential – Commercially confidential 3years</b>  <b>.The Budget to date was noted and it was confirmed it would be updated as discussed for the June meeting.</b></p>	
SRF09/05/24	<b>Confidential Item - Commercially Sensitive – Restricted 3 years</b>	

<b>SFR08/05/24</b>	<b>Confidential Item - Commercially Sensitive – Restricted 3 years</b>	
<b>SFR 10/05/24</b>	<b>Policy Update</b>	
	It was noted that the following policy had been reviewed as part of the regular review cycle - FE International Fees Policy 2025	
	<b>The College SFR Committees APPROVED the FE International Fees Policy for 2025.</b>	
<b>SFR11/05/24</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	None	
	<b>Dates of future meetings</b> were noted.	

The meeting closed at 12.55pm