

People and Remuneration Committee

24/12 A hybrid meeting of the Committee was held on Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 1 and via Teams.

Present: Vice-President of the Council, Kate Owen (Chair) via Teams
The President of the Council, Helen Gordon via Teams
Lay Member of the Council, Sian Butler via Teams
Lay Member of the Council, Sue Maple via Teams
An elected member of the Council, John Jack

By invitation: Vice-Chancellor
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
University Secretary
Director of Human Resources
Head of Governance (*Secretary*)

Apologies were received from Kevin Corrigan

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

24/13 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting, held on 1 February 2024 as a correct record.

24/14 Matters Arising

24/04 How to find out more from the staff voice

At its meeting on 1 February 2024 the Committee had a broad ranging discussion on how it could find out more from the staff voice. The Committee received the paper on options again for further discussion.

The following comments and questions were noted:

- Council members did not want to create unnecessary work in seeking out the views of staff, and were content to use existing channels
- The Staff Forum had recently had new co-chairs appointed who were considering what the Forum's identity and profile should be. Currently the Staff Forum were struggling with patchy staff engagement

- The University had not had reason to engage with the Staff Forum since the pandemic – that had impacted to some extent how they were working
- Was the University clear in what it wanted from the Staff Forum? If there was clarity on identity that would help with engagement with Council on the staff voice
- The Staff Forum did have a consultation agreement as well as a mission statement. Work was in hand with MCE to help raise its profile
- It was felt that there would be little value at present in having a dedicated session with Council members and the Staff Forum. It was more important for the University to engage with them on the role they would have in upcoming changes
- If the Committee were to meet with the Staff Forum, then consideration would also need to be given as to engagement with UCU
- The Committee were supportive of hearing both from the Staff Forum and UCU as a first step in hearing more from the staff voice – the Chair and Director of HR agreed to come up with a proposal as to how that might happen
- In terms of hearing a broad range of voices it was suggested that comments could also be fed back through: the Vice-Chancellor’s surgeries; All Staff Briefings; via the four elected members of the Council. It was agreed that the four elected members of the Council could give this further consideration

All other matters arising were covered below.

24/15 Corporate Risk 1 – Recruitment and Retention of Staff

The Chair reminded the Committee that it was responsible for two key risks in the Corporate Risk Register 2023/24 – Risk 1) Recruitment and Retention and Risk 4) Capacity for Change.

The Committee received a paper on Risk 1 – *Failure to recruit, retain and develop both Professional Services and Academic staff due to competitiveness of recruitment market alongside challenges of sector pay and benefits package and rising workloads*. The Director of HR provided an update on current challenges and risk mitigations underway, plus areas for future work. In particular it was noted that:

- Staff recruitment remained challenging in some parts of the University. Challenges continued to differ between Academic and Professional Services roles, as well as within academic disciplines and across different professionally qualified roles. [Redacted, section 43].
- Of concern were recent changes to visa and immigration rules in relation to sponsorship for a Skilled Worker Visa and increases in minimum qualifying salary to £38,700. These new rules, and debates about changes to Graduate Visa routes,

had led to some attrition in recent months as the University was unable to sponsor visas and might require further revisions to starting salaries for some roles.

- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- The University offered opportunities for personal and professional development, both through formal sponsored learning and development and informal learning and secondment opportunities. However, take up varied considerably.
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- Work was underway to produce more consistent and reliable data sets on workforce metrics, both institutionally and as a tool to support School and Directorate leaders.
- New benefits had been introduced, including paid carers leave and a volunteering policy to enhance non-financial benefits. The annual leave purchase scheme remained popular.
- Driven by changes to the National Living Wage, changes would be made to the grade boundaries in the University pay spine from 1 August 2024, this would increase starting salaries for staff in Grades 2-6. This was a welcome and positive change and would support recruitment and retention of staff in some grades, particularly the lowest paid.
- The University sought to embed the distributed leadership principles in all management and leadership development, alongside a focus on improving Learning & Development opportunities for aspiring and new line managers, and targeted leadership development programmes, such as for Research Leaders. Leadership development would be further reviewed in the coming 12 months.
- Longer term talent and succession planning, specifically in the context of School and Directorate leadership roles, was a current focus. Academic department leadership roles should provide a future pipeline of leaders working towards senior leadership roles.
- Work was in hand to develop workload principles for academic roles.
- Supporting the mental and physical wellbeing of colleagues remained a strong focus. This was in the context both of managing teams/colleagues within Schools/Directorates but also upskilling those who are responsible for managing or are impacted by student mental wellbeing.

- Work was required to make effective improvements in systems and processes. The new Heads of Directorate were taking a lead on a project to prioritise processes for systemic review, alongside other process improvement projects.

The Committee thanked the Director of HR for the paper. The following comments were made:

- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- Work had been undertaken recently with the Staff Forum on changes to the pay and grading structure
- Work was ongoing to look at how AI and Co Pilot could help
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]
- [Redacted, section 43]

The Committee noted the steps that were being taken to address the challenges which were long term issues for the sector. It was expected that this risk would remain on the corporate risk register for the time being, albeit with further mitigations in place.

24/16 Potential Restructuring – strategic approach and support for Staff

The Committee received for its information a paper from the Director of HR on key issues and support in relation to staff should it be necessary to undertake any form of restructuring activity in the coming 18-24 months. The paper did not cover the detail of any restructuring activity itself, at the time of writing there were no formal proposals.

It was noted that the University had a Restructuring Procedure, jointly agreed with UCU and the Staff Forum, which set out the University's approach to restructuring activity. This procedure covered the essential formal steps should organisational restructuring be required, it was focused on forms of restructuring which necessitated a reduction in staff numbers, with approval routes dependent on the number of colleagues affected and the nature of proposed changes.

The key considerations within restructuring activity which would impact staff included:

- **Support for School/Directorate Leadership Teams and Line Managers** - a key success factor would be the ability of line managers to lead their teams through restructuring at a local level. Managers required to lead consultation processes with individual/teams would be fully supported by HR. Mental wellbeing and

emotional support for line managers could be provided through the EAP scheme, HR and Senior Leadership. Additional peer support, mentoring and coaching for line managers could also be arranged. School/Directorate teams and colleagues not directly impacted might also be affected. Effective School/Directorate wide communication, working closely with Internal Communications, HR and UEB leads, would be required. A breadth of change management resources were already available through People Development and UoRLearn.

- **Individual Support for Colleagues** - Support for colleagues directly impacted by restructuring would sit within a standard framework but guided by the level and type of support individuals need. Examples of the support included - additional consultation meetings; counselling through EAP scheme; career coaching and outplacement support; mentoring support; financial wellbeing guidance; CV/Interview skills training; job search resources through links with recruitment agencies. Further wellbeing support can be provided through existing resources, including OH and Wellbeing Peer Support networks.
- **Measures to Mitigate Need for Redundancy** - consideration might be given to opportunities to mitigate the need for compulsory redundancies, e.g. the use of sabbaticals and/or volunteers for part time working or job-sharing opportunities. Consideration of an internal only or internal first recruitment policy might also be adopted for some roles, noting that this required clear rules given the number of specialist roles. The use of early retirement mechanisms would be carefully managed.
- **Use of Voluntary Redundancy Schemes** - There was no absolute requirement within the University Restructuring Procedure to offer a voluntary redundancy scheme. The Trade Union might seek approaches which included the use of voluntary redundancy to avoid any compulsory redundancies. The University had made use of organisation wide voluntary redundancy schemes in the past few years to avoid the need for compulsory redundancy. Schemes were most recently launched in 2018 and again in 2020. On both occasions, schemes were launched in advance of and as a way to avoid the need to identify specific areas for restructuring.
- **Statutory or Enhanced Redundancy Payments** - In the case that compulsory redundancies were required, the University procedure did not deviate from the use of statutory redundancy payments. Any considerations to enhance compulsory redundancy payments, must ensure that the provisions of an enhanced scheme comply with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, thus an enhanced redundancy payment formula should mirror the statutory redundancy pay formula with regard to age bands and multipliers; or else must provide an objective justification for any other enhanced payment formula.
- **Redundancy Selection Pools and Selection Criteria** - This was a critical part of a formal redundancy exercise, if the selection pool was incorrectly identified, dismissals could be rendered unfair. This was an area where should it be required

to select staff for redundancy, detailed legal advice would be sought. Seeking to consult and agree selection pools and selection criteria would be an important aspect of the collective consultation process.

- **Use of Equality Impact Assessments** - were not a legal requirement but could be an effective tool in demonstrating a positive approach to inclusivity during organisational change.
- **Redeployment** - The University would always seek to redeploy colleagues at risk of redundancy. There was a defined framework for redeployment in these circumstances which included reference to pay protection.
- **Outplacement and Career Coaching Services** - Externally provided outplacement and career coaching provision would be set up to support colleagues at risk of redundancy should it be required.
- **Fixed Term Contracts** - Given the University use of fixed term contracts in some Schools and UCU focus on casualisation, the University would need to give attention to scenarios where the ending of a fixed term contract may give rise to consultation obligations.
- **Enhanced Protections for New and Expectant Parents** - from April 2024, the law had changed in relation to redundancy protections for new and expectant parents. Under the new legislation, enhanced protection began from when an expectant mother informs their employer of their pregnancy and runs until 18 months after the birth. These provisions also applied to adoption leave.

The Committee thanked the Director of HR for the paper. The Committee was assured that the University had robust processes in place should any restructuring need to take place in the future.

24/17 Draft Annual Report for 2023/24

The Committee received and noted the first draft of the annual report for 2023/24. The Director of HR informed the Committee that the report used the same format as previous years. The report would be incorporated into the 2023/24 Financial Statements.

The Committee agreed that it did not wish to receive a draft version in future.

24/18 Nolan Principles of Public Life

The Committee received for its information a paper from the University Secretary on the Public Interests Principles.

It was noted that one of the conditions of registration imposed on Universities by the Office for Students was that they meet the Public Interest Principles, often called the Nolan Principles. At its meeting on 20 May 2024 the Audit Committee were provided with a complete list of the Office for Students' conditions of registration, and how the

University met them. The Audit Committee were satisfied and would report so to the upcoming meeting of the Council.

The Committee noted the public interest principles and when Council received assurances that the University was meeting them:

- (1) Academic freedom (VC report to Council November 2023)
- (2) Accountability: "the provider operates openly, honestly, accountably and with integrity; and demonstrates the values expected of an English HE provider" (annual report of Audit Committee to Council; and from now on People and Remuneration Committee to Council)
- (3) Student engagement (RSU membership on Council; Senate and SEC reporting to Council)
- (4) Academic Governance: "the governing body receives and tests assurance that academic governance is adequate and effective through explicit protocols with the Senate" (Reporting between Senate and Council; proposal to Council that a proportionate stock take of the Senate related recommendations of the last Council effectiveness review should take place during 2024; such work could include consideration of establishing explicit protocols)
- (5) Risk management (Audit Committee to Council)
- (6) Value for money (Audit Committee annually to Council)
- (7) Freedom of speech (VC report to Council November 2023; Student Experience Committee November 2023; annual report to November Council)
- (8) Governing body size, composition, diversity, skills mix and terms of office (Appointments Committee and effectiveness reviews of Council)
- (9) Fit and proper persons (proposals approved at Council March 2024)

It was suggested that there was one of the principles which needed some attention from the People and Remuneration Committee, and that was principle 2, Accountability. The first part of that principle – the provider operating openly, honestly, accountably and with integrity – should be covered in the annual report of the Audit Committee. But the second part of the clause – the provider demonstrated the values expected of an English HE provider – was not covered explicitly anywhere. It was proposed that People and Remuneration Committee own the assurance to Council on this part of the Accountability Principle; and that it require the University Secretary and the Director of HR and the Head of Governance to bring proposals to its next meeting on what that assurance might comprise.

24/19 Severance Payments and Early Retirement Arrangements

There was no report on this occasion.

24/20 Out of Cycle Salary Increases

The Committee received and noted out of cycle salary increases since the last meeting.

24/21 Report of the University Executive Board

There was no report on this occasion.

24/22 Any other business

It was noted that changes to the terms of reference for Staffing Committee would be submitted to UEB on 17 June 2024 – the Committee would be retitled the People and Culture Committee.

24/23 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 15 October 2024 2.00 – 4.00 pm

Thursday 30 January 2025 2.30 – 4.30 pm

Tuesday 3 June 2025 9.30 – 11.30 am