

**MEETING OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 – 10:00-13:00**

**Meeting held via Zoom**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Mohammed Saddiq (Chair), Jack Boyer (Chair of the Board of Trustees), Linda Fletcher (Lay member of the Board of Trustees), Andrew Poolman (University Treasurer and lay member of the Board of Trustees), Jessica Cecil (Lay member of the Board of Trustees).

**In attendance:** Claire Buchanan (Chief People Officer), Hannah Quinn (Head of Governance), Hugh Brady (Vice-Chancellor, part-meeting).

**Apologies:** None

**1 WELCOMES, APOLOGIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Linda Fletcher was welcomed to her first meeting and the Committee noted thanks to Andreas Raffel for his service.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

**3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

3.1 The minutes were APPROVED as a fair and accurate record of the meeting of 07 October 2020.

**4 ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 The Chair noted progress on each item. Items marked complete would be removed from the register.

**5 CHAIRS REPORT (reference REMC/20-21/008)**

5.1 The Chair introduced the item.

5.2 NOTED the report of actions taken outside the meeting (items 1 – 4).

5.3 CONSIDERED what training or briefings scheduled outside of formal meetings, would be useful to members' development (item 5). NOTED that the Committee had a range of needs, but that guidance on the evolving regulatory and political environment, the hard and soft landscape, stakeholder impact and benchmarking would be useful. The potential to consider a wider benchmarking group with reference to some international institutions was also of interest.

ACTION: Chief People Officer

**[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**

**6 PAY AWARD UPDATE**

6.1 The Chief People Officer introduced the item. The following points were NOTED:

6.1.1 That there was no national pay award in the last academic year, and no negotiation process. Locally, the University had still paid contractual pay increments to staff up to grade L.

6.1.2 The start of pay negotiations for the academic year 2021/22, which would have three stages. Unions had rejected offers made at the first stage, on 31 March

and sought a higher pay award. Two further meetings were scheduled in April and May.

- 6.1.3 That the pay award was anticipated to be between 1 and 2% and if it were not accepted by Unions, would likely lead to a ballot for strike action. The likelihood of strike action was exacerbated by existing pension issues.

6.2 The following points were DISCUSSED:

- 6.2.1 That regardless of latest valuation of the pension scheme, the 2018 valuation would provide an effective pay cut to staff through increased contributions.

- 6.2.2 **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests].**

**[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**

## **7 EQUAL PAY AUDIT (reference REMC/20-21/009)**

7.1 The Chief People Officer introduced the item. The following points were NOTED:

- 7.1.1 The statutory requirement to conduct an equal pay audit every three years, and to explore differences over 5%. Consideration of the ethnicity pay gap in advance of any legal requirement.

- 7.1.2 The impact of the national pay structure and the robust job evaluation scheme in minimising equal pay issues.

- 7.1.3 Low sample sizes in some areas which had restricted reporting.

- 7.1.4 Particular areas of concern including gendered roles in Security Services and resulting differences in pay supplements, a review of gendered shift allocation among Residential Life staff, and the proportion of male staff at M grade and above, however a clear pipeline would impact this proportion over time.

7.2 The following points were DISCUSSED:

- 7.2.1 Members commended the team on a detailed and important report, which showed encouraging progress.

- 7.2.2 Gender disparity was considered to be a transitional issue, and was being addressed by initiatives to support women's promotion and career development. One such academic initiative was greater recognition of citizenship duties in promotion criteria, addressing the fact that women more often take up key administrative and pastoral roles. The increase of female staff at grade L also showed the talent pipeline which could transition.

- 7.2.3 The disciplinary differences in recruitment of staff, and that Science & Engineering continued to recruit more men, however, initiatives were in place to review PhD recruitment which was an important recruitment pipeline for these areas.

- 7.2.4 A recent high court judgement which had required significant back pay to female staff at a supermarket chain. The CPO confirmed that she was confident that between the national pay scales, job evaluation scheme and external independent input, there were no concerns in this area.

## **8 GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORTS (reference REMC/20-21/010)**

8.1 The Chief People Officer introduced the item. The following points were NOTED:

- 8.1.1 Some distribution issues at particular grades and in particular groups of staff. The impact of clinical excellence awards on salary accounted for some of the merit pay gap and efforts were underway to support female staff to apply for these awards.

- 8.1.2 Changes to the academic promotions framework commencing this round and particular acknowledgement of the higher pandemic impact on female staff. Explicit consideration would be taken of gendered impact and additional reviews of distribution were planned.

8.2 The following points were DISCUSSED:

- 8.2.1 The support to staff applying for clinical excellence awards which was designed to recreate some of the informal support and discussion that men may have with each other.

- 8.2.2 Efforts to improve disclosure rates, particularly in relation to ethnicity and disability disclosure.

- 8.2.3 Recent changes in recruitment of Professional Services staff which removed identifying information when shortlisting was carried out.

## **9 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S RESIDENCE (reference REMC/20-21/011)**

- 9.1 The Chief People Officer introduced the item.
- 9.2 NOTED and DISCUSSED the report of actions taken by the University to mitigate risk caused by the ending of the residential occupier tax relief on 5 April 2021. The HMRC had responded positively and accepted the methodology and rationale used.

## **10 REVIEW OF SENIOR TEAM OBJECTIVES (reference REMC/20-21/012)**

- 10.1 The Vice-Chancellor attended for this item. The Vice-Chancellor introduced the item.

- 10.2 The following points were NOTED:

10.2.1 That the report summarised the Executive's view of the challenges and achievements over the past six months and that the team had done exceptionally well to deliver in challenging circumstances.

10.2.2 [REDACTED: Sensitive personal information]

10.2.3 [REDACTED: Sensitive personal information]

10.2.4 The dependence on IT Services and the incredible growth of our digital education capability as well as progress against the Digital Strategy.

10.2.5 [REDACTED: Sensitive personal information]

10.2.6 Progress in capital developments, the challenges of the Temple Quarter development and recent success in the New University Library planning application.

- 10.3 The following points were DISCUSSED:

10.3.1 Retention of senior staff and succession planning. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that bench strength had improved in all Divisions, and that excellence of individuals could sometimes mask the strength at lower levels. There was no evidence that any particular individual was at heightened flight risk, and colleagues were enjoying the challenge.

10.3.2 [REDACTED: Sensitive personal information]

10.3.3 That all staff were working particularly hard due to the pandemic and it would be difficult to justify any pay increase, or redefining of roles, to the wider community.

- 10.4 The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor, on behalf of the Remuneration Committee, for his efforts and for leading the executive team through this extraordinary period. The Executive were commended for what they had managed to deliver despite the many barriers and restrictions. The Vice-Chancellor left the meeting.

- 10.5 DISCUSSED the relative high performance of the Executive in comparison to other institutions, and the potential risk of approaches from competitors. The importance of balancing any retention initiatives with the recognition that staff at all levels had worked incredibly hard. The tension between national pay scales and global ambitions. Further information on succession planning was requested for the next meeting.

ACTION: Chief People Officer/Head of Governance

## **11 SENIOR TEAM PAY PROPOSALS (reference REMC/20-21/013)**

- 11.1 The Chair introduced the item.
- 11.2 NOTED that members of the Executive had taken a voluntary pay cut at the start of the pandemic, and CONSIDERED the proposal for some return of the voluntary pay reduction.

11.3 [REDACTED: Sensitive personal information]

- 11.4 The following points were DISCUSSED:

- 11.4.1 **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**
- 11.4.2 The decision at the last Remuneration Committee that any additional payment to the Executive Group could only be considered alongside the relaxing of pay restraint for all staff.
- 11.4.3 **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests].**
- 11.4.4 **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**
- 11.4.5 **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**
- 11.4.6 **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**
- 11.4.7 **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**

11.5 DELEGATED authority to the Chair to approve the proposal if conditions were met.

## **12 REGISTRAR AND UNIVERSITY SECRETARY ROLE EVALUATION** (reference **REMC/20-21/014**)

12.1 The Chair introduced the item.

12.1 **[REDACTED: Sensitive personal information]**

12.2 **[REDACTED: Sensitive personal information]**

## **13 ADVANCE HE REVIEW OF CUC REMUNERATION CODE** (reference **REMC/20-21/015**)

13.1 The Chair introduced the item.

13.2 NOTED the review undertaken by Advance HE and DISCUSSED the relevant recommendations. Confirmed that in Scotland and Wales there was a requirement to include staff and students on Remuneration Committees. This had been considered previously and not taken forward by Bristol or most UK HEIs.

13.3 AGREED to undertake a self-assessment against the CUC Remuneration Code, and that this would be an opportunity to consider best practice rather than just compliance.

## **14 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

14.1 Items 7, Equal Pay Audit, and 8, Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reports, with associated actions.

## **15 COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

15.1 Noted in relation to item 11, the need for transparency and a careful narrative when communicating any decision.

## **16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

16.1 The Chair of the Board provided an update on the review of the Vice-Chancellor. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board met with the Vice-Chancellor in January and July to review his objectives. **[REDACTED: Could prejudice commercial interests]**

16.2 The Committee sought further understanding of any recruitment which might be required to support the aims of the new strategy, and where that could conflict with pay norms.

ACTION: Chief People Officer