

DURHAM SU PEOPLE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF 30 NOVEMBER 2021

Members present: Clare Powne, Caragh Aylett-Bullock, Jonah Graham, Jack Ballingham, Declan Merrington, Charlie Procter, Seun Twins, Graeme Osborn, Hannah Sketchley, Jonny Snowden

In attendance: Gareth Hughes, Katie Shaw, Martin Horrocks, Charlotte Thornton (Haines Watts), Lauren Hodgson (minutes)

Apologies: Robert Smith, Megan Wishart, Christian Meadows

Usual business items

1. OPENING OF MEETING

Noted: apologies, no conflicts of interest or notification of any other urgent business.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Accepted: the minutes of the meetings held on 5 October 2021 pending minor amendments to item 3, item 4 and item 5.

An updated action list was provided and the Chief Executive gave an update on each of the outstanding actions. A copy of the action list is filed with the minutes.

3. 3REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Received: the minutes of the last meeting from each of the Board's Committees.

Performance and Delivery Committee met on 11 November 2021. The Committee approved the terms of reference for the Committee, including a £30k upper limit as the appropriate level of delegated power to the Committee to authorise expenditure over £20k. The Committee also approved the Risk Policy, and the draft Strategic Risk Register, in advance of consideration by the Board of Trustees.

People and Culture Committee met on 10 November 2021. The Committee approved the terms of reference for the Committee and approved the Safeguarding and Sexual Violence and Misconduct policies to go out for staff consultation.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Received: the Chief Executive's report on Durham SU's activity since the last meeting. There were no further COVID updates to note but changes may need to be considered over the weekend depending on the information provided by Government and University. Updates will be provided as appropriate.

A proposal from a student group has been received to support their plan to be the largest student led group working with investment in shares, exchange traded funds, and commodities by 2030. The Trustee's attention is drawn to this at this stage as there may be request for an electronic resolution from the Board to open a share dealing account. Full scrutiny of the proposal will be undertaken by Performance and Delivery Committee.

Durham SU made a Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission regarding media reports on Durham University training session for students and staff that support other students who have been involved in sex work, which was appended to the Board papers for information. The Charity Commission had made no approach or response to the report.

Assembly met on 25 November and approved the harm reduction drug policy, which presents no potential risk to Durham SU, and suggests that the University follow a similar pattern.

5. FINANCE REPORT

Received: the Finance Report, on the first quarter.

Financial performance for the first quarter remains indicative of a £42k end-of-year surplus, although this £42k has been identified as expenditure on Officer priorities, which have yet to be spent as Officers have been dealing with emergent issues in the first term which have not required use of this budget.

The overall result for the quarter, a £15k deficit, is better than the expected budgeted loss of £18k. Core expenditure is underspent against budget by around £10k, however commercial income has been slow to start and is running around £7k below budget for a variety of reasons including staffing, which is hopefully now resolved. It is still expected that a small amount will be lost, but that improvement should start from January onwards.

Cash balances are reducing as anticipated because student groups are now spending, and activity is very high at the moment.

Good governance items

6. REPORT OF THE AUDITORS

Received: the report of the auditors, Haines Watts.

The draft accounts were provided to the board by the auditors, Haines Watts.

The trustees reviewed the audited accounts, and were grateful for the care and attention of Haines Watts, and the Durham SU Finance team.

The Board approved the audited accounts, for submission to regulators with the trustees' annual report.

7. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Approved: the Risk Policy and the Strategic Risk Register.

Performance and Delivery Committee considered the Risk Policy and Strategic Risk Register at the last meeting and recommended both to the Board for approval. No changes have been made to the Risk Policy from the previous year.

The Risk Policy is used a framework for the Strategic Risk Register and requires the Chief Executive to report on the previous year and Durham SU's record in managing risk, and the internal and external risk profile for the coming year, to consider if current controls are sufficient and likely to be effective.

The Chief Executive noted that Durham SU's constitution is due for review next year and planning for this will begin from now, which is a significant contribution to Strategic Risk 1.

Strategic development items

8. STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP

Discussed: in workshop format, a proposed framework for the 2022 Durham SU strategy, including options for reporting strategic success.

Information items

9. DRAFT TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

Received: the draft trustee's annual report, which will be filed with the audited accounts.

10. STUDENT GROUP FUNDRAISING RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Received: a paper that has been considered by PDC, in which the Committee agreed a risk assessment framework for the management of fundraising by student groups, and associated legal advice.

11. SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORT MADE TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

Received: the serious incident report made to the Charity Commission by the Chief Executive, with the delegated authority of the Chair, on media reports about Durham SU's lobbying work on student sex worker support.