

**Notes of meeting no 13 of the special, combined JNC held on Friday 22 May 2020 (v 1.0)**

**Present (virtually)**: Stephen Shute, Pro Vice Chancellor, (Planning and Resources) (SS) (chair); Peter Brook, Interim Director of HR (PBr); Robert Hutton, Director of Estates (RH); John Hallam, Interim Assistant Director of HR (ER) (JH); Andrew Chitty (UCU) (AC); Jo Pawlik(JPk); Mike Moran (UCU) (MM); Paula Burr (UNITE) (PB); Daniel Hyndman (UNITE) (DH); Claire Colburn (UNISON) (ClCol); Caroline Fife, (UNISON) (CF); Holly Foster, (UNISON) (HF).

**Apologies**: Adam Tickell (AT); Tim Westlake (TW); Bridget Edminson (BE); Steve Pearce (SP).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Actions |
| 1/13 | **Notes of the previous meeting (no 12, 15/05/20)**These were noted and agreed subject to deletion of the words ‘recording of on line seminars’ in the heading of 8/12. | JH |
| 2/13 | **Covid-19 Business Recovery Plan (BRP)**Robert Hutton (RH) attended to brief members on planning for the return of campus based activities. The intention was to open some laboratories inside the next two weeks. The BRP was based on sector best practice – a model from the University of Loughborough. A first draft of the BRP had been to the University Health and Safety Committee (15/5) and also Council (20/5). Final versions of risk assessments were being drawn up for review and sign off by RH and BE. These would be shared with nominated H&S representatives. Guidance and risk assessments would be reviewed every 4 weeks. RH said that everything was being done to ensure a safe return. This included checks for legionella in water systems, occupation density, the use of split teams / shifts and the need to recognise that each situation was different, requiring room based assessments. Government requirements to maintain social distancing also had to be factored in. There was no intention to be prescriptive about travel arrangements to the campus. RH said he was grateful for feedback received to date and said that the BRP would remain a ‘live’ and evolving document.AC said the consultation for the BRP had been rushed – the document had been received the previous Friday with comments required by the following Monday. AC said ventilation was a concern in the laboratories. The H&S / CIBSE ventilation standards should be referenced, although it was noted much remained unknown about exactly how the virus was transmitted. RH said he would speak further with engineering and technical staff about this. RH said laboratory ventilators did not recirculate air.CF noted that the Government had produced specific guidance for returning to work in laboratories and offices. RH said he was aware of these protocols and these were referenced in the BRP. CF raised a number of concerns – shared use of common areas such as toilets and kitchens. She also sought assurance that the latest guidance would be followed in terms of layouts for desk plans in offices. She asked when individual staff would be consulted over the planned return and the associated risk assessments. CF also asked if risk assessments would be published. RH said all issues were being considered, including travel flows and use of Perspex where feasible and appropriate. CF suggested a notice board or TV in all entrances would be useful to pass on the latest daily update information to people entering the building. RH said this was a helpful suggestion, which would be considered. It was agreed RH would liaise further with HF.PB noted that the laboratory in Chichester 1 was a geography lab and not a research lab. Ventilation there was supplied by a portable air cleaner, which might lead to a different risk assessment. RH thanked PB for this information and said he would also follow up on this.AC said that UCU would like an extended SCJNC to discuss the recovery plan with RH and BE in attendance. SS said this was unlikely as the intention was that some returns would commence from Monday week (1/6) and BE was also on leave until 1/6. | RHRH |
| 3/13 | **Update on Covid-19 / Financial Situation / Recovery Planning**SS said that as had just been discussed, preparations were underway for a return to some laboratories from Monday week – following appropriate risk assessments and in line with social distancing guidelines. Kelly Coate (KC) was leading discussions on different scenarios for teaching for autumn term (20/21) including on-line delivery options. A second wave of covid-19 infections could not be ruled out. The campus community would be informed about teaching for the autumn as soon as possible. The admissions picture remained uncertain. Substantial reductions in recruitment and attrition were anticipated in terms of international students. The number of possible requests for deferrals was also a concern. AC said that student deferrals could be linked to the absence of a decision on the planned approach to teaching for the autumn term. AC questioned how teaching could be done at 33% occupancy even if the worst-case scenario of a 50% reduction in international students materialised.  |  |
| 4/13 | **Update on Voluntary Severance (VS) Scheme**PBr had written to SCJNC members to advise that Council had now approved the VS scheme. A slightly revised scheme document, FAQs and a proposed shortened draft settlement agreement contract had been circulated just prior to the meeting for comments by the TUs. The intention was that the scheme details would be posted on 26 May with the scheme formally launching on 27 May. LHH Penna had been appointed to provide out-placement support. AC asked if there was a VS savings target. SS said no specific target had been set but the University had modelled different possible outcomes.MM and AC said they would like to see the Vice Chancellor fighting publicly to defend the University and the sector. SS said the VC prioritised the University’s interests at all times and had frequent meetings with local MPs and Ministers to explain the challenges faced by the sector as well actively promoting the University’s interests through his membership of UUK Board. | TUs |
| 5/13 | **Government Job Protection (Furlough) Scheme**PBr said that UEG had now confirmed it would seek to furlough some staff. There had been a need to review each case carefully to ensure it met the Government’s criteria and could sustain audit scrutiny – as had been discussed previously. Letters would be going out immediately now to staff to be furloughed – around 170 people. Letters would also be going out to relevant casual workers subject to further checks and confirmation by UEG. The furlough FAQs had been updated and would be posted after this meeting. This would remain a dynamic document.PB said that on occasions during today, Sussex Direct had not been available and expressed concern at the impact this would have on the ability of staff to update home / contact details. PBr said this would be raised with IT. The issue of more flexibility around 48 hours notice for return had been addressed and would be amplified in FAQs. PBr said not all would want to be contacted at home rather than via work e-mail. HoS, with HRBPs would be responsible for managing communications with furloughed staff.JPk asked about staff being compelled to return to work from furlough. PBr said no one was being compelled to return to the campus and this was a matter for a conversation between the HoS / Director and the member of staff and undertaking risk assessments as appropriate. | JH |
| 6/13 | **Academic Fixed Term Contracts**SS said he had nothing further to add on this. AC said UCU were awaiting responses to questions raised with SB at the last meeting – specifically on Doctoral Tutors. SS said that he would take this back. PBr noted that HR was at full capacity with the furlough and VS schemes and consequently it had not been possible yet to provide further data on FTCs. | SS |
| 7/13 | **Director of Finance Presentation**It was noted the Director of Finance would attend the SCJNC on 5/6 to give a presentation on the financial situation. |  |
| 8/13 | **Force Majeure Clause**AC asked for a response to be provided as soon as possible. | SS |
| 9/13 | **Autumn Term Teaching Mode**AC said it was regrettable that KC was unable to offer a Friday date to attend SCJNC before 10/7. This was an important matter. A decision was required. SS said options for a meeting with KC on an alternate day (not a Friday) would be explored. SS said that only two institutions to date (Cambridge and Manchester) had published their approaches to teaching for 20/21. The UoS was not out of step, therefore, with the rest of the sector at this point. The factors to be considered were complex and difficult. AC referred to the video of the Bolton approach and said he would share this with KC | JH |
| 10/13 | **Any other business**None. |  |
|  | **Date of Next Meeting**Friday 29 May 2020 @ 14.00 |  |

**Human Resources**

**26/05/20**

**v 1.0**