

## Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting

**Held Thursday 1 December 2022**

*Present* Mark Sterling (*Chair*), Raj Joshi (Vice Chair) and Shabir Chagan

*In attendance* Jacque Carman (*Vice Principal and Chief Operating Officer*)  
Rachael Charles (Human Resources Director)  
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were received on behalf of Clair Graham.
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	The Clerk declared her interest under item 7, Support Staff Contracts.
	<i>It was agreed that item 3, Committee Terms of Reference would be taken at the end of the meeting.</i>
<b>4</b>	<b>Overview of Framework of Pay and Conditions of Staff</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Overview of Policy Framework</b>
	<p>As the first meeting of the newly formed Personnel Committee a power point presentation was given to provide an overview of the framework of pay and conditions including the policy framework.</p> <p>Members asked a range of questions about the framework and noted the responses given:</p> <p>The current number and range of contracts was due to the diversity of roles across both teaching and learning and support staff roles.</p> <p>The level of the new increase in the National Minimum Wage was unexpected and would impact on the College and Halesowen College Enterprises Limited. Both the Personnel and Finance and Resources Committee would be engaged in reports on the ensuing recalibration of pay scales.</p> <p>Pay strategy over the medium term was being considered. The College was communicating with the Association of Colleges, which sought to help and had asked about a national role in negotiating pay. The College felt that this would not help given the very different positions of colleges across the sector. Halesowen College, however, did see the medium-term approach being one of wishing to offer realistic and competitive salaries, combined with wider benefits to support wellbeing and work life balance, while being business effective.</p> <p>The policy framework was subject to regular review by management with a central record maintained and reports provided to the Corporation in accordance with need. The College also provided significant changes to key policies to the Staff Council for review.</p> <p>Equality was embedded through policy and procedure and reported on across a range of monitoring reports.</p> <p>The College retained a suite of policy and procedure to educate and support staff and students in operating with compliance for data protection, cyber security and appropriate use of information technology.</p>

		<p>Audits of policy were addressed in relation to the scheme of internal audits undertaken across the agreed annual audit plan and external auditors annually reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Application of policy and procedure was supported by line management training.</p> <p>The College was mindful of the impact of the cost-of-living increases and while many policies did include a statement on equality impact, the College did not want to perpetuate a tick box approach. Impact on people was a key concern and the support of the Equality and Diversity Forum was being sought. The College was also mindful that such challenging times could increase incidents of fraud. The staff newsletter also included sections on a range of support for staff including those experiencing hardship.</p>
<b>6</b>		<b>Risk – Recruitment and Retention of Staff</b>
		<p>The extract of the risk register was noted by members.</p> <p>Following consideration of key risks and questions raised under the presentation to the Committee, members focused on the main issue of attracting and retaining staff as highlighted.</p>
	Action 6a	Members requested a deep dive approach on attraction and retention of staff, 'considering the art of the possible' for review at the next meeting of the Committee.
<b>7</b>		<b>Staff Contracts Review</b>
		<p>Members noted where the College stood in relation to other local providers, particularly regarding annual leave and annual teaching hours.</p> <p>Members asked about confidence in staff agreeing and signing revised contracts.</p> <p>It was noted that the College was hopeful that the current contract review would be positive and that work with unions and regular clear and non-divisive communication with staff would support this process.</p>
		The Personnel Committee recommended that the updated information on staff contracts be provided for the Corporation.
<b>8</b>		<b>Safeguarding and Prevent</b>
	8a	<b>Report on Safer Recruitment of Staff</b>
		<p>Rachael Charles gave a comprehensive review to give assurance that the College trained staff and had good recruitment procedures in place to deliver safer recruitment practice.</p> <p>The College had a pragmatic risk-based approach and members asked how assurance was gained that staff were following policy and procedure. The use of a verification sheet by Human Resources, together with a sample check by the Human Resources Director and Safeguarding audits by external consultants was noted. The College also had training with automatic renewal prompts in place.</p>
		The Personnel Committee recommended to the Corporation the Report on Safer Recruitment of Staff for assurance.
	8b	<b>Report on Training and Development</b>
		Members noted that 96% of staff had completed mandatory training. Further training sessions to address those not yet having completed training were scheduled for the staff development day on 3 January 2023.
		The Personnel Committee recommended to the Corporation the Report on Training and Development.

<b>9</b>		<b>Staff Survey on health and wellbeing</b>
		<p>Members considered the outcomes from the newly utilised survey around staff lifestyles and wellbeing.</p> <p>The College was seeking to improve communication and raise awareness of ways to support staff in healthy habits, through both the staff bulletin and more regular Q&amp;A sessions.</p> <p>The difference in responses across age ranges of staff were noted, as were points on staff trust, attitudes and motivation.</p> <p>Members discussed current thinking on the validity of staff surveys with a wider range of approaches, incorporating regular 'pulse checks', face to face discussions and use of the appraisal system, noting that these required well trained managers to work well.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
<b>10</b>		<b>Target Monitoring - Personnel Annual Review</b>
		<p>The Committee considered the current targets provided for within the Annual Plan and Targets report and supported by the Personnel Annual Review Report.</p> <p>The capabilities for monitoring sickness absence through the newly deployed Civica system was also noted. This supported management focus on sickness absence, which had not returned to pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Members stressed the need to articulate to the Corporation the negative trends on staff data, the risk and challenges and the work to mitigate against these.</p>
<b>3</b>		<b>Committee Terms of Reference</b>
		Members considered the terms of reference, understanding that they remained subject to annual review. No changes were currently recommended.
<b>11</b>		<b>Any Other Business</b>
	11a	<b>Frequency of Meetings</b>
		It was noted that an additional meeting of the Committee may be required before the scheduled meeting in March 2023.
	Action 11a	It was agreed that frequency of meetings for the 2023/2024 calendar would also be considered at the meeting in March 2023.
<b>12</b>		<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>
		The next meeting of the Personnel Committee is scheduled for 8 March 2023.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

<b>Actions from Meetings</b>			
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Agenda item and action</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Reported by</b>
<b>Personnel Committee Meeting 6 July 2022</b>			
Action 6a	<b>Risk – Recruitment and Retention of Staff</b> Members requested a deep dive approach on attraction and retention of staff, 'considering the art of the possible' for review at the next meeting of the Committee.	March 2023	JCa/ RCh
Action 11a	<b>Frequency of Meetings</b> It was agreed that frequency of meetings for the 2023/2024 calendar would also be considered at the meeting in March 2023.	March 2023	JSu