

## Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting

**Held Wednesday 11 October 2023**

*Present* Mark Sterling (*Chair*), Raj Joshi (*Vice Chair*), Sarah Dawson, Aisha Benachour.

*Invited members of the Finance and Resources Committee* Andrew Hanson (*Chair*), Jacquie Carman (*Principal*), Joanne Chilton, Alison Jarrett

*In attendance* Rachael Charles (*Human Resources Director*)  
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
	Apologies were given on behalf of Shabir Chagan.
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	All College staff present declared an interest in item 5 Staff Pay Update.
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held 8 March 2023 and Matters Arising</b>
	The minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held 8 March 2023 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising with all actions closed.
	<i>Items 4 and 5 were addressed as one item which is confidential until a Corporation decision.</i>
<b>4 &amp;5</b>	<p><b>Staff Pay Spine and Staff Pay Update 2023</b></p> <p>Jacquie Carman updated members on the Association of Colleges' sector pay recommendation which was made following the government's announcement for additional funding, to be used for pay across 16-18 providers. As the funding allocated was through the 16-18 funding formula it was not level across all colleges. The recommendation of 6.5% from the AoC came with a caveat on levels of funding received. The budget for Halesowen College had been recalibrated to account for this additional funding.</p> <p>Halesowen College had received additional funding that equated to a 5.2% pay award, which fell short of the AoC 6.5% headline recommendation.</p> <p>Options on moving forward were presented to members which addressed affordability, risks to the budget and to retention and recruitment of staff. Proposals also encompassed both consideration of a separate non-consolidated award from the previous year's surplus as discussed, revision of staff contracts and the launch of the new Human Resources Strategy. The holistic approach to wellbeing, workload and wages was a significant part of the College's positive change management.</p> <p>Members asked a range of questions on the proposals and options.</p> <p>The Chair asked for clarification and assurance on how the College would fund a budget shortfall should the full 6.5% be agreed. Jacquie Carman outlined a range of mechanisms for addressing the gap, including</p>

	<p>application of actions from the CEFS review, staff vacancy savings, realisation of additional income and if necessary reduced non pay spend. While attrition at day 42 on student numbers was not yet known, the current prediction was that the College would be above contracted levels. If significantly above there was potential for some additional funding. Risks to the budget model, including a shortfall in apprenticeship income were noted and not underestimated.</p> <p>Members also discussed the application of previous year's surplus and understood how this could not be applied to a current year consolidated pay award.</p> <p>In considering the non-consolidated recommendation Jacquie Carman proposed that this be applied to all staff across the College group. A member asked if this was permissible between College and its wholly owned subsidiary, Halesowen College Enterprises. Jacquie Carman confirmed that while the application of non-consolidated pay would constitute the College providing money to company employees, it was not underwriting commercial activity and was ensuring that the College could retain and recruit retail and cleaning staff, essential to the running of the College.</p> <p>Additionally, it was emphasised that the College wished to avoid habitual use of non-consolidated awards and that, if approved, the current award would be the last. It was noted that the return to a more normalised cycle, with regards to consideration of pay, was desirable.</p> <p>Members supported the importance of the timing of the pay award as part of a holistic approach, which recognised the contribution of staff. The College could further lead on wellbeing and rewards when launching the HR Strategy.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman confirmed that any pay award could not be given while in dispute with a union. A letter had been received from NEU, however, communication with unions was positive.</p> <p>Members discussed the positive approach to wellbeing and asked how the proposed wellbeing days would be decided. Jacquie Carman confirmed that this was open for staff to decide collectively, although the first one would be 22 December 2023.</p>
	<p>That the Personnel Committee, with the support of the Finance and Resources Committee members present, recommend that the Corporation approve a consolidated pay award to staff of Halesowen College of 6.5% with effect from 1 September 2023.</p> <p>That this is conditional on the acceptance of the new contract for teaching staff and clarity that there will be no further routine non-consolidated awards for any staff moving forward from that currently proposed.</p> <p>That it is aimed to make payment in November, should this be agreed and given that the College is not in any industrial dispute with a recognised Trade Union.</p> <p>That the Corporation agree a flat rate non-consolidated, non superannuable award to qualifying staff of Halesowen College Group of £930 gross, to be paid in December 2023.</p>
	<p><i>Andrew Hanson, Joanne Chilton and Alison Jarrett left the meeting.</i></p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Teaching Staff Contracts</b></p>

	<p>Rachael Charles outlined the staff contracts addressing the Lecturer Contract, Trainee Lecturer Contract, Workload Allocation and Annual Leave Policy (Lecturers and Curriculum Management).</p> <p>The College had worked with unions on workload allocation and annual leave and worked with solicitors to incorporate elements into the contract. It was indicated that the contract is acceptable subject to minor amendments.</p> <p>It was noted that this was a modern contract that recognised flexible working, staff workload and wellbeing.</p> <p>Subject to approval the contract would tie in with the launch of the new HR Strategy and announcements on staff pay.</p> <p>Members asked if there was support, such as drop-in sessions for any staff needing clarification or support and it was confirmed that the College offered support mechanisms for staff.</p>
	<p>The Personnel Committee recommended to the Corporation the approval of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lecturer’s contract of employment subject to minor amendments</li> <li>• The Trainee Lecturer’s contract of employment</li> <li>• The collective agreement, titled Workload Allocation for Lecturer’s Agreement</li> <li>• Revised Annual Leave Policy for Lecturers and Curriculum Management.</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>Update on potential Industrial Action</b>
	Members noted as already discussed.
<b>8</b>	<b>Target Monitoring</b>
	<p>Rachael Charles reported on the two targets of sickness absence and staff satisfaction.</p> <p>Members asked several questions about the range of absences and how these were being managed, including support measures and reports received from occupational health. Rachael Charles noted that there remained a post pandemic change in attitude to sickness, which the College was closely monitoring, looking to patterns and highlighting to managers. There was dialogue with staff, seeking to encourage undertaking help and support for improved health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Members asked for future monitoring to indicate underpinning main reasons for absence, relevant historical trends and a comparison with external benchmarks.</p> <p>Members also noted that the strategy for positive attendance was appropriate and that support for ill health was in place. Jacquie Carman highlighted that this also related to the transformational project on student attendance as these were visibly connected.</p> <p>Winter planning relating to Covid and other viruses was raised.</p> <p>Rachael Charles reported that the staff survey outcomes had been compared to the results from the Ofsted staff survey, with points of increased satisfaction including points on staff development and College leadership. More data would be provided as part of the annual review.</p>

	<b>Action 8a</b>	Reference was also made to the recent survey undertaken by Ofsted as part of its review and it was agreed that this would be provided to the committee.
		The report on targets was received.
<b>9</b>		<b>Mental Health Policy and Strategy</b>
		<p>Rachael Charles explained that as a growing number of policies had been in place, it was sensible to draw these together in one policy underpinned by a strategy.</p> <p>It was agreed that a holistic approach was positive to support the College culture.</p> <p>Members discussed the very wide range of needs and supportive responses. It was noted that reasonable adjustments were made, but in some instances, these could not resolve complex cases.</p> <p>The use of the wellbeing resource signposted in one place, to support and manage issues was raised, particularly for self-help with access to support usage.</p> <p>The Personnel Committee received the key policy and strategy on mental health and wellbeing, the importance of which would be highlighted to all governors through their committee minutes.</p>
<b>10</b>		Any Other Business
		There was none.
<b>11</b>		<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting remains as scheduled for 21 February 2024.</p>

The meeting closed at 7pm.

<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 11 October 2023</b>			
Action 8a	<p><b>Target Monitoring</b></p> <p>Reference was also made to the recent survey undertaken by Ofsted as part of its review and it was agreed that this would be provided to the committee.</p>	Feb 2024	JCa/RC h