

## Personnel Committee Meeting – APPROVED minutes

**Held 9 October 2024**

*Present* Mark Sterling (*Chair*), Raj Joshi (Vice Chair), Aisha Benachour, Jacquie Carman and Joanne Chilton.

*In attendance* Rachael Charles (Director of HR), Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*) and Jon Priest (*Director of Information Services*)

*Members agreed to take agenda item 5b as the first substantive item following which Jon Priest left the meeting.*

<b>1</b>		<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
		Apologies were received on behalf of Sarah Dawson.
<b>2</b>		<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
		All staff present declared their interest in agenda item 4a Confidential Staff Pay Update.
<b>3</b>		<b>Minutes of the Joint Personnel and Search Committee meeting held 12 June 2024 and Matters Arising</b>
		The Minutes of the Joint Personnel and Search Committee meeting held 12 June 2024 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.
<b>4</b>		<b>Staff/Strategic</b>
	4a	<b>Confidential Staff Pay Update</b> <p>The Principal outlined the report that had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee, which had made recommendations to the Corporation. The Committee were provided with the detail for their consideration.</p> <p>The Principal confirmed that the national position had not changed, with a less than 2% increase on the base rate of funding. The Association of Colleges had not yet made their recommendation and while there was much lobbying, the sector was at an impasse regarding funding in comparison to that provided to schools.</p> <p>The College had been open and transparent in its communications with staff regarding pay and was communicating with unions. The focus remained on affordability while considering the impact of pay on staff retention and recruitment and commitment to staff workload, well being and wages.</p> <p>Members raised a number of points for consideration including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management understanding of staff expectations and the level of risk in relation to industrial action.</li> <li>• Desirability of making one pay offer.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the College was taking a sensible approach and that the Corporation would consider the recommendations at the meeting on 23 October 2024.</p>

	4b	<b>Lead@HC Programme</b>
		<p>The Principal outlined the positive new programme to support the development of middle managers and the shaping of the College's culture. Strong leadership was key to meeting the College's objectives as directed through the Strategic and subsequent Annual Plans. The approach was motivational and inspirational and provided tools to shape a positive culture.</p> <p>It was noted that impact was apparent from the short period the programme had been running.</p> <p>Members asked about the delivery modes and Jackie Carman noted the use of guest speakers who were briefed on the context.</p> <p>Members noted that EDI was implicit but asked how the programme nurtured more explicit outcomes. The Director of HR outlined examples of training and focus on understanding impact, including behaviour at interviews, role modelling, and handling challenging and difficult conversations.</p> <p>Members commented on how positive the programme was and asked about measures of impact, discussing case studies, mentoring and coaching.</p>
	Action 4bi	Relating to the impact of the Lead@HC Programme, it was noted that managers would consider the target for improvement in relevant staff survey responses.
		<p>Members noted that the programme had indicated some polarisation of staff and how any negative impact for learners should be mitigated.</p> <p>The Lead@HC programme was commended.</p>
	4c	<b>Management Contracts</b>
		<p>The Director of HR answered questions about the revised management contract, which was provided to approximately sixty members of staff.</p> <p>The contract would be supplemented by a workload agreement and job descriptions would correspond with the Lead@HC Programme.</p> <p>Members also noted that standard of dress was addressed through the Staff Code of Conduct and had been highlighted to managers.</p>
	Action 4ci	The length of probationary periods was noted for consideration with regard to senior post holders.
		The Personnel Committee recommended the Management Contract of Employment to the Corporation.
<b>5</b>		<b>Performance and Assurance</b>
	5a	<b>Review of Performance against Targets and staff data/metrics</b>
		Having been provided with access to the Power Bi data dashboard for HR, members received a short presentation on its use by the Director of Information Services.
	Action 5ai	Members asked a range of questions on how they could access and drill down through data and it was agreed that it would be helpful to have the annual targets visible for comparison.
		<p>Key questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the data being used for forward planning?</li> <li>• How does monitoring data help in tracking information gaps? Is measuring gaps a good indicator of impact?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How could the College map the skills of its workforce?</li> <li>• Could the College do more on gender related health issues?</li> </ul> <p>The Director of HR and the Principal responded;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that data helped to be proactive on recruitment, particularly regarding hard to fill vacancies, and with regard to short term absences, staff were being provided with their Personal Benefit Statement which included the impact of sick leave,</li> <li>• the College was being more proactive in preventative measures around vaccines and hygiene and including gender related areas such as menopause,</li> <li>• new staff were completing data with fewer non disclosures and the College was communicating more about why the information was needed, particularly how the information could lead to positive benefits for staff, the reduction in non-disclosures could be a potential measure of impact.</li> </ul> <p>The use of the metrics data dashboard was commended as a positive way forward.</p>
	5b	<b>Safeguarding Monitoring</b>
		<p>The Director of HR highlighted the assurance provided in HR practices in relation to the standards required of Keeping Children Safe in Education.</p> <p>In addition to the Single Central Record and staff training, assurance on safer recruitment practices was provided. Members asked if the number of staff training for safer recruitment was of a high percentage and noted that this equated to nearly a quarter of all staff and enabled at least one, often two trained members to service appointment panels.</p> <p>Similarly members asked about staff training and noted that the percentage was high and was continually monitored and followed up.</p> <p>Members asked a wider question on how they were assured that performance was good and noted that in addition to being audited and being inspected, the governance lead was an important link to training and practice.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Monitoring report was accepted.</p>
	Action 5b	The Committee noted the proportion of new starters who had yet to complete their mandatory safeguarding training and asked for an update to be provided on the latest position.
	5c	<b>Staff Feedback and Distance Travelled</b>
		<p>The Principal was pleased to report that feedback was positive, particularly regarding communication, with the Staff Bulletin being very well received and used. However, moving forwards it was hoped to use more regular surveys and for these to not necessarily remain anonymous. This would support timely feedback that could be responded to. The Staff Forum would be consulted.</p> <p>Members asked about facilitating informal safe spaces to talk. The Principal noted the use of Leadership Focus Weeks, whereby a member of the College Leadership Team would attend team meetings and that the “you said we did” approach remained core. It was important to engage with all teams across the College and for the senior team to be visible.</p> <p>Members also suggested deep dives into areas of gravest concern and the Principal noted that this work had commenced.</p>

		<p>The Principal also outlined developments in security with the deployment of a College Community Officer working together with the Head of Pastoral for a changed approach.</p> <p>The update on distance travelled, monitoring staff feedback was accepted.</p>
<b>6</b>		<b>Policy and Strategy Review</b>
	6a	<b>Feedback Policy</b>
		<p>Members noted that the policy was provided to state why feedback is important and the ways in which this can be provided. The Principal agreed that a reference to Whistleblowing could be included.</p> <p>In considering how useful policy statements are, it was also noted that work had been undertaken to animate some key areas such as the Single Equality Scheme and that the use of (summary/signposting) leaflets helped promote key policy.</p> <p>The new Feedback Policy was noted.</p>
<b>7</b>		<b>Governance</b>
	7a	<b>Membership, Recruitment and Appointments Report</b>
		<p>The Clerk to the Corporation reported on three key areas for action.</p> <p>Regarding current members;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two members whose initial terms of one year were being completed had indicated the wish to be reappointed</li> <li>• one co-opted member had also indicated the wish to become a full member</li> <li>• one application was provided for consideration of appointment as a co-optee to the Personnel Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Members discussed length of appointments to support the standard completion date of 31 July, where practical.</p>
		<p>The Personnel Committee recommended to the Corporation that subject to continuing to meet required declarations that;</p> <p>Anna Sutton and Kate Taylor be re-appointed commencing 22 January 2025 until 31 July 2028.</p> <p>Mark Hammond be appointed commencing 1 November 2024 until 31 July 2025.</p> <p>That Ian Jewkes be co-opted as a member of the Personnel Committee for one year in the first instance commencing 1 February 2025.</p>
		<p>Members considered the challenges in appointing to vacant additional roles (link/lead governors) and the wider approach to supporting these roles, not least better understanding of what they are.</p>
	Action 7ai	<p>It was agreed that vacant additional roles would be highlighted to the Corporation members at their next meeting.</p>
		<p>Members discussed the broader implications of succession planning and the timely preparations regarding the appointment of a Chair from August 2025.</p>

	Action 7a ii	It was agreed that close monitoring of membership terms of office should continue by the Personnel Committee, that a skills audit should be refreshed in 2025 and that the Corporation should discuss if the role of the Chair would be met internally.
	7b	<b>Corporation Attendance Report</b>
		Members noted the attendance data for 2023/2024 and that the areas of lowest attendance should not reoccur across 2024/2025.  Members discussed actions to support student governors, which were underway.
	7c	<b>Corporation Development and Training Update</b>
		The Clerk to the Corporation provided an overview of development and training offer, training undertaken by governors and the governance professional and updates against outstanding actions on action plans including that arising from the External Board Review.  Key internal training was underway with Finance and Audit already delivered and both Students and Quality and Digital to be scheduled.  However some members were due to complete the EDI module.  Members were engaging with external offer, in particular conferences/events.  Actions from assessment were noted as predominantly within timescale.  The update was accepted with ongoing actions noted to be progressed.
8		<b>Any Other Business</b>
		There was none.
9		<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>  The date of the next meeting of the Personnel Committee was noted on 21 February 2024.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

Actions from Meetings Update			
Ref	Agenda item and action	Review Date	
Personnel Committee 9 October 2024			
4bi	<b>Lead@HC Programme</b> Relating to the impact of the Lead@HC Programme, it was noted that managers would consider the target for improvement in relevant staff survey responses.	February 2025	RCh
4ci	<b>Management Contracts</b> The length of probationary periods was noted for consideration with regard to senior post holders.	February 2025	Rem Committee
5ai	<b>Review of Performance against Targets and staff data/metrics</b> Members asked a range of questions on how they could access and drill down through data and it was agreed that it would be helpful to have the annual targets visible for comparison.	February 2025	JPr
5b	<b>Safeguarding monitoring</b> The Committee asked for an update on completion of mandatory safeguarding training by new starters.	February 2025	RCh
7ai	<b>Membership, Recruitment and Appointments Report</b> It was agreed that vacant additional roles would be highlighted to the Corporation members at their next meeting.	October 2024	JSu
7aii	<b>Membership, Recruitment and Appointments Report</b> It was agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that close monitoring of membership terms of office should continue by the Personnel Committee</li> <li>that a skills audit should be refreshed in 2025; and</li> <li>that the Corporation should discuss if the role of the Chair would be met internally</li> </ul>	February 2025 Feb 2025 December 2024	D of G D of G C