Personnel Committee

Wednesday 12th November 2025, 6:00-7:50pm
Block 1 Boardroom (1.204)

Meeting papers link: 12 November 2025 (GovernorHub)

Committee members:
Joanne Chilton
Sarah Dawson
Raj Joshi (Committee Vice Chair)
Mark Sterling (Committee Chair)

Officers in attendance:
Jacquie Carman, CEO & Principal (Items 1-9.1)
Heather Kelman, Director of HR (Items 1-8)
Steph Morley, Director of Governance
Kylie Penn, Head of Inclusion (Items 1-3)

APPROVED MINUTES

Item	Discussion	Action

1 Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance, in particular:
- H. Kelman, the college's new Director of HR
- K. Penn, the college's Head of Inclusion, attending for Item 3.1

2 Procedural matters

2.1 Apologies

There were no apologies as all members were in attendance.

2.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

2.3 Confidential items

It was confirmed Item 9 (Senior postholder appraisal) would be held in Confidential session.

2.4 Minutes of meetings and actions/matters arising:

The Committee approved the minutes of the following meetings as a true record:
- 30 June 2025 (both general and confidential session)
- 17 September 2025 (Special confidential meeting)

Updates to the remaining outstanding actions were provided as follows:
- Ref 7, Reviewing HR reporting: on this agenda for discussion
- Ref 8, Benchmarking:

All other actions were confirmed as completed/closed.

2.5 Actions/decisions taken since last meeting

There were none to report at this time.

3 Annual reporting

3.1 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion 2024/25

J. Carman presented the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion annual report 2024/25, a document that met the statutory requirement to report on how the college had met the Public Sector Equality Duty and also outlined the continued progress made over the past year.

J. Carman referred the Committee to the updated Equality Scheme, which she advised would undergo further revision following the engagement of an EDI consultant this year.

The Committee asked for further information about planned EDI training for staff in 2025/26. K. Penn advised college-wide training for managers had been factored into the consultancy work for this year, which would be developed following a discovery visit focused on college culture. She reported training would also be provided to the college's EDI champions, alongside support to build and empower staff networks.

The Committee referred to the performance report (Appendix C) and asked if benchmarking data was available for the measures. J. Carman advised there was no readily available benchmarking data but was hopeful that the work being carried out College West Midlands and AoC groups would help to address this. The Committee discussed the data produced by schools and national organisations, such as the Fisher Family Trust, and it was agreed S. Dawson would share the link(s) to the resources utilised by her school. **SD**

J. Carman spoke about the work being undertaken regarding intersectionality to help target improvement activity and triangulate between the key performance areas of behaviour, attendance and achievement. She explained the result of this work was the creation of 'warning indicator reports' that would highlight those students who would benefit from targeted support. The Committee welcomed this development and requested information be presented to all governors at the upcoming Corporation development day, and well as the inclusion of benchmarking data for where available in future performance reports. **JCa**

The Committee:

- **Noted** the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion annual report 2024/25 and **recommended** its presentation to the Corporation; and
- **Recommended** the approval of the updated Equality Scheme by the Corporation

K. Penn left the meeting at this point.

3.2 HR – future reporting requirements

The Committee discussed how it would like to receive the HR annual report going forward and the following was agreed:

- Although not statutory, an annual report was welcomed by the Committee
- Trends over time were essential, along with narrative and analysis

- There needed to be a clear link between the data and the risk register

The Committee **agreed** for H. Kelman to develop a structure for the new report, which would be presented at the next meeting. **HK**

4 Strategic/staffing updates

4.1 Nominations for awards

The Committee thanked J. Carman for sharing the presentation to the judging panel for the college's nomination as 'Employer of the year with the Black Country Chamber of Commerce and congratulated her and the team for the nomination. J. Carman confirmed the college was a finalist and had been invited to the awards evening on 20/11/25.

4.2 Workload monitoring

J. Carman provided a verbal update on the action taken to address the concerns regarding teacher workload raised by the UCU. She reported all Curriculum Directors had received a summary of teachers' contractual requirements and advised R. Franks was auditing how this was being carried out in practice, with any concerns referred to H. Kelman. She confirmed there were no concerns to report at this time and agreed a high-level report of the findings would be presented to the Committee at a later date. **JCa**

The Committee **noted** the update.

4.3 Industrial relations

J. Carman provided an update on the recent meeting held with the unions, which had been called to discuss workload and annual leave issues. She reported the meeting had helped to highlight differences between policy and teaching contracts that had subsequently been resolved.

The Committee asked if the identified difference had been to the detriment of teaching staff – J. Carman confirmed staff members had benefitted from this.

The Committee **noted** the update.

5 Delivering the strategic plan

5.1 H. Kelman referred to the PowerBi performance dashboard and highlighted the following:

- Headcount remained steady, with 48% on fractional contracts
- Turnover levels were not a concern and fell within expected patterns
- Approx 2/3 of the workforce had taken at least one day's sick leave over the last 12 months, equating to more than 4000 days lost
- The sickness profile was typical for the sector in terms of timing and reasons. For future comparisons, a rolling year of data would provide more meaningful insights

- Ethnicity pay gap reporting would be introduced at a later date. Initial review of this data had not identified any concerns
- Recruitment was a mixed picture, with 1900 applications for 130 jobs but very low interest for some roles
- Full review of the mechanisms for publishing vacancies was underway – continuing those that delivered positive results and discontinuing those that did not

The Committee noted the turnover rate of 11% and asked if this was considered normal for the sector. H. Kelman confirmed the college's turnover rate was below the sector average (15%) and hoped to be able to present in future the figures at departmental level.

The Committee asked if exit interviews were taking place. H. Kelman confirmed they were. She advised the interviews were now being driven by the HR team and more qualitative information was now being collated along with 'rated' experience. J. Carman confirmed exit interview numbers and themes were discussed by SLT at the weekly 'People' meeting.

The Committee asked, given the main reason for staff absence at this time of year, if staff members had been provided with flu jabs. H. Kelman confirmed flu jabs had been offered earlier this half-term and J. Carman advised more than 100 staff members had taken part.

The Committee asked if performance data could be presented based on contract type – H. Kelman confirmed this was possible for future reports.

The Committee thanked H. Kelman for the performance update and acknowledged the continued challenges with staff sickness and recruitment.

5.2 Committee allocated risks (2025/06)

H. Kelman presented the dashboard for the risks allocated to the Personnel Committee. She highlighted the following risks assessed as high and informed the Committee about the mitigating actions that had been taken:

- Recruitment of new staff
- Retention of existing staff
- Loss of key staff members

A copy of the action plan for the Personnel-related risks exceeding the agreed risk threshold had been shared within the meeting papers (dated September 2025). The Committee noted the action plan did not reflect the progress that had been reported regarding mitigating actions and requested it be updated. **HK & AW**

The Committee asked if the college had systems in place for assessing staff productivity. H. Kelman advised this was done for teaching staff through workload monitoring and observations/walkabouts. J. Carman explained how this was more challenging for support staff and the plans to introduce a rating and recognition system for this staff group.

The Committee welcomed the inclusion of the risk action plan with the meeting papers and requested the format of the template be reviewed, in particular to provide clarity regarding the meaning of the RAG-rating **SM & AW**

6 Compliance and policy review

6.1 HR policy review

J. Carman advised the college's HR policies were undergoing a comprehensive review and reported the disciplinary and grievance policies would be prioritised.

6.2 Policies for discussion

Sickness Absence Policy: H. Kelman explained the proposed new approach being taken to update the existing policy that would help to improve staff members' understanding and engagement, and clarify the role of the manager within the process. She highlighted the differences between the proposed new approach and the existing policy, in particular an adjustment to the triggers indicating high levels of absence.

H. Kelman confirmed the new approach would be in line with employment legislation and that there was a need to consult with staff and unions prior to presenting the policy for formal approval. She emphasised the need for an approach that was both supportive but robust when action needed to be taken.

The Committee welcomed the proposed new approach and acknowledged the need for an approach that was both supportive and robust.

The Committee asked about the proposed tigger change from 3 in 3 months to 4 in 6 months. H. Kelman advised this was based on her experience within the education sector where the college business cycle could typically miss triggers if the 3 in 3 model was in place.

The Committee welcomed a more consistent approach to return-to-work interviews and the involvement of HR support regarding identifying the triggers.

The Committee asked if there would be provision for women experiencing menopausal symptoms within the policy. H. Kelman confirmed this would be covered, with a focus on managers having the ability to address this on a case-by-case basis.

The Committee noted the importance of a two-stage approach to the policy's implementation following approval – its communication and launch; and training and engagement with managers.

The Committee **acknowledged** the hard work undertaken so far to review and update the policy, and **agreed** to the commencement of formal consultation as part of the policy's further development and finalisation.

6.3 Policies for information
J. Carman referred the Committee to the following policies provided for information and explained the rationale for their inclusion:
- Substance Misuse Policy
- TU Facilitation Time Policy

The Committee referred to the section of the policy regarding when a staff member could be sent home due to substance misuse at work and requested the policy be updated to include ensuring staff members used an alternative method of transport to driving (in line with an employer's duty of care). **JCa & HK**

The Committee **noted** the policies provided for information.

7 Governance update

7.1 Committee annual report 2024/25
The Committee agreed for the inaugural annual report's presentation to the Corporation, subject to the incorporating of monitoring risk within the introductory section. **SM**

7.2 Governor attendance 2024/25
The Committee noted the attendance for the previous year and acknowledged the improvement on the previous two years, including overtaking the national average for FE colleges.

7.3 FE Governor data collection 2024/25
The Committee noted the college's submission for DfE's annual data collection.

7.4 Corporation development and training
The Committee noted the update provided and welcomed the approach from the Director of Governance to incorporate training sessions into existing meetings and events.

The Committee acknowledged the need to ensure a manageable workload for governors and the use of certificates for relevant training in governors' paid employment or other voluntary roles as evidence of training completed was welcomed.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of governors not only undertaking training and development but also maintaining their governance training record (on GovernorHub) and agreed this would be reiterated at the upcoming Corporation meeting.

7.5 Skills audit refresh
The Committee noted the work undertaken to refresh the Corporation skills audit and **agreed** the following:
- There would be no substantive changes made to the skills audit **SM**

- Governors who had previously completed the questionnaire would be asked for any updates rather than re-answer all questions
- New governors would be asked to complete the full questionnaire

7.6 Membership, recruitment and succession planning

The Committee noted the update provided within the report, in particular regarding the recruitment support being provided by Governors for Schools.

The Committee noted the upcoming end to M. Sterling's term of office on 09/01/26, which by this time would be 4 years served.

The Committee **recommended** the re-appointment of M. Sterling for a further two years (10/01/26 to 09/10/28) to the Corporation. **P.Comm**

7.7 Corporation Succession Planning Policy

The Committee reviewed the policy and approved its incorporation into the existing Corporation Appointments & Reappointments Procedure, rather than being a standalone document. **SM**

7.8 Link governor guidance

The Committee reviewed the document and agreed its introduction as the link governor guidance for both governors and staff.

8 Any other business

There was no further business for discussion and the Chair advised the meeting would now move to Confidential session.

H. Kelman left the meeting at this point.

9 CONFIDENTIAL – Senior postholder appraisal update

A separate minute of this item was taken.

The Chair closed the meeting at 7:50pm.

2025/26 meeting calendar:

- ~~17 September 2025 (special meeting)~~
- ~~11 November 2025~~
- 04 March 2026
- 13 May 2026

Actions from this meeting:

Personnel Committee – 12 November 2025				
Ref		**Action**	**Owner**	**Deadline**
1	3.1	EDI: Share data/performance links used by schools	SD	ASAP
2	3.1	EDI: Provide information on intersectionality and benchmarking for student/staff data	JCa	Jan 2026
3	3.2	Annual reporting: Develop the framework for future annual HR report and share with governors (inc exit interview themes)	HK	Next mtg
4	4.2	Workload monitoring: Present high-level summary of audit findings	JCa	When complete
5	5.2	Risk: Update content in risk action plan to reflect progress made	HK & AW	Next mtg
6	5.2	Risk: Update format of action plan, including RAG description	SM & AW	Next mtg
7	6.3	Substance Misuse Policy: update to include ensuring staff used an alternative method of transport to driving if sent home	JCa & HK	ASAP
8	7.1	Governance: Update Section 1.1 in annual report re risk	SM	30/11/25
9	7.5	Governance: Send skills audit to new governors and ask existing governors for updates	SM	10/12/25
10	7.6	Governance: Recommend MS appointment to Corporation	P.Comm	17/12/25
11	7.7	Governance: Incorporate Succession Planning Policy into the existing Appointment & Re-appointment Procedure	SM	30/11/25
	9	SPH appraisal: Implement requested updates	JCa	30/11/25