

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES (HR) COMMITTEE
HELD ON Wednesday 22 May 2024 at 16.30

Present: Teddy Bridges, Ann Donoghue, Graham Lawrence, Dan Lodge (Principal), Paul Mittendorfer (via Teams), Clare Ruaux (via Teams)

In attendance: Members of SMT – Ian Dumbleton (FD), Steve Martell (DP)
Olivia Blake (HR Director), Russha Sellings (Director of Governance/GD)

In the Chair: Ann Donoghue

1. Chair’s Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Barbara Hobday and Dominic Wakefield. Paul Mittendorfer and Clare Ruaux joined the meeting on Teams. The meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of Interests

None declared with regard to the agenda items.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

(not already covered on the agenda)

There were no matters arising to discuss.

5. HR Policies

Papers: Pay Policy, LGPS Policy, Staff Overseas Travel Policy

i) Pay Policy 2024-25

Received as a consent item due to routine updates. There were no further comments.

Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Pay Policy 2024-25

ii) LGPS Discretions Policy

The FD referred to the changes which were not significant. There was inclusion at the end of the policy covering members who left the scheme pre-1998, although this was not a new discretion.

Resolved: The F&GP Committee approved the LGPS Discretions Policy

iii) Staff Overseas Travel Policy

There had been limited use of the policy during the pandemic. Members emphasised the importance of safety over cost in terms of transport, especially in non English speaking countries and it was agreed to revisit the wording in section 7 of the procedure.

Resolved: The F&GP Committee approved the Staff Overseas Travel Policy subject to amends

The Committee Chair initiated a wider discussion on appropriate policy leads now that there was a HR Director in post and also where policies crossed over between two teams (Finance and HR) and it was requested this be clarified. The Scheme of Delegation annex would be presented under matters arising for the next meeting. ***(Action: FD/HRD/GD)***

6. HR Report

Papers: HR annual report, SMCG notes 07-03-24, 30-04-24

a) Annual Report inc:

The HRD presented the report which relied on retrospective data.

i) Performance Management

Members heard that the appraisal system was subject to some further refinements since the introduction of the new process.

ii) INSET day

This academic year there had been a return to in-house INSET days providing the opportunity to focus on staff wellbeing and develop the workload action plan. The Principal added the action plan was an operational working document; aside from the actions that could be implemented quickly, a number of other initiatives which required further exploration would progress to future QIP targets. It was also recognised that for some staff, especially SMT, some of the more substantial actions required an upfront investment of time.

Members enquired about the staff response to the action plan and whether they perceived it having an impact. The Principal responded that while it was still early days, SMT were hopeful by the end of the term, staff would feel that there had been some more tangible changes. The internal working party had met once so far and the Staff Governor reiterated the importance of the safe and open forum where staff would be more likely be receptive after half term when the exam season had finished.

A member asked about staff CPD opportunities from TES Develop. The HRD said that usage data was available, although was not yet tracked.

iii) Recruitment

There were a high number of applicants for key roles, although there remained some exceptions. In response to the report, members asked whether some recruitment challenges common to education settings may present organisational risk such as IT/Cyber security. The DP said the College had become more creative in recruitment planning and were pleased with the recent appointment of the new IT Manager. The temporary arrangement for the MIS Manager was working well and creating a more efficient approach. A member raised the levelling up premium for engineering and the Principal said it was not easy to recruit to a part time role at the start but agreed to revisit the eligibility criteria. **(Action: Principal)**

In respect of headcount, there was discussion on class sizes relating to growth and the potential impact on both staff wellbeing. There had been a focus on deployment over the past few years and modelling for recruitment for both teaching and support staff roles was explained. 5 new teachers being recruited for the start of the next academic year and the DP said there was also a reclassification of staff in some areas. The Estates Committee Chair had recently met with the Principal and VP (Curriculum) to understand the curriculum deployment and the Principal said SMT would be happy to extend the offer to any Governor wishing to triangulate the position further. The Committee Chair commented that it may be useful for the Committee to understand the wider context and suggested this be shared with the members or further to the Governing Body at a future meeting. **(Action: Principal)**

iv) Absence

The HRD explained that there was a marginal increase in absence rates, although when removing a small number of longer term support staff absentees, the average number of sick days per employee per year was 3.37 which members acknowledged was low. Members asked about benchmarking and it was confirmed that AoC reported an overall average of 6.3 days.

In terms of trends, members considered that 2018-2019 would be better comparative point as it was understood that homeworking during the pandemic would have impacted the data. Trends in type of absence was queried and it was confirmed that the reasons were varied.

v) Retention

There was an increase in total turnover to 20%. Members heard from the HRD that this included all casual staff who left in accordance with their working arrangements. They were included and tracked for safeguarding reasons, however the figure dropped to 13.6% when removed. This was still high when benchmarked against SFCA, although more in line with AoC data when adjusted. It was however more problematic to make a like for like comparison with other institutions where Collyer’s directly employed support staff such as security, catering and cleaners that were quite often outsourced. The Committee Chair suggested that data gathered from unexpected leavers as opposed to retirements etc would provide the most useful insight for Governors. **(Action: HRD)** The Staff Governor observed that the Directors of Faculty would be able to identify trends amongst teaching staff if there were any.

vi) Exit Interviews

In order to better understand the drivers for retention and in addition succession planning, members reiterated the importance of exit interviews and noted the low response rate. The HR team were considering the timing of the interview requests. The current data capture could also be improved.

vii) Wellbeing

The cross College represented action group had met that day. The staff community wellbeing response had been positively received.

b) People Strategy update

The HRD further explained the implementation of the strategy and members supported the wide range of initiatives to promote wellbeing including collaborative projects with S7. The programme also increased the employee value proposition. The Committee Chair referred to the integration of the strategy into the QIP cycle from the next academic year.

The College were pleased with the development of the People Strategy and thanks were recorded to the HR Director.

c) *SMCG latest notes (07/03 & 30/04)

It was noted that the College maintained good working relationships with the unions which remained important while a new pay settlement was still to be negotiated.

7. AOB

None to record.

8. Meeting Assessment

Those joining the meeting online were able to hear very clearly and were grateful for the opportunity given their extenuating circumstances.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee would meet again in just over a month on Tuesday 25 June 2024, 16.30.

The Principal wished to alert members to the new loan offer from the Mercers’ Company. The revised Heads of Terms were pending. It hoped that these could be presented for approval to the majority of Governors who were attending Strategy Day which included most of the Committee, in order to obtain DfE consent and members were in agreement.

The meeting closed at 17.45

Chair

Date

RRS 28-05-24