

Board of Management – Human Resources

Minute of the Meeting of the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Management, Dumfries and Galloway College held on Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 14:00, remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Present: Janet Brennan (Chair) Ros Francis
Ian White
Delia Holland

In attendance: Helen Cronie, Interim Head of Human Resources
Sue Livermore (Item 7 only)
Lorraine Grierson, Secretary to the Board
Keith Ross – HR Consultant

Minute Taker: Dorothy McMinn, PA to the Principal (Note taker)

1 Welcome and apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular to DH on her first attendance at the HR Committee Meeting.

Apologies were offered on behalf of JC and RO.

Members agreed to indicate declarations of interest as appropriate throughout the meeting.

2 Minute of Previous Meeting of 16 June 2020

The Minute of meeting held on 16 June 2020 was approved and there were no matters arising.

3 Terms of Reference

The Chair reported that a full review of Committee Terms of Reference was required to ensure consistency across all Board Committees. The Committee considered agenda item 3, which contains suggestions for changes, written by the Chair.

Various suggestions were discussed and considered, but the only change that was agreed was that Committee membership would be amended to read “**at least** three non-executive Board members, two of whom will be non-executive”. This is necessary in order to reflect the number of non-executive members now on the Committee. All other possible changes will be considered when the full review takes place. Committee members were invited to consider the ToR further and convey their views to the Chair before the full review.

Disappointment was noted at the lack of Executive Leadership Team presence at today’s meeting
ACTION: PD will carry out a full review of Committee Terms of Reference, with input from Board Committee Chairs.

4 Committee Self Evaluation

It was reported that individual appraisal meetings for Board members were being scheduled. LG advised that a self-evaluation questionnaire had been sourced and this would be distributed to board members for completion. Once all completed questionnaires had been returned, these would be presented to the Board. The information gathered from the questionnaires would be aligned to an external review which is due to commence in January 2021. The ELT would be asked for input.

ACTION: LG will distribute the questionnaire to members, collate the completed documentation and findings will be presented to the December 2020 Board Meeting.

5 People and Culture Strategy

KR advised that the draft People and Culture Strategy had been presented to the Local Joint Negotiating Committee “LJNC” and feedback had been requested. The Committee discussed the draft strategy and key points arising from the discussion were:

- The strategy seems inward facing
- Annual operating plans would be developed for each function and these were to align with broader plans
- Aim for digital rather than paper documentation
- Tackling poverty, whilst considered laudable, seemed unachievable
- KPIs required further development and should be consistent
- Each strategy would link in to a Board Committee
- Acknowledgement of overall accountability for the Principal should be included.
- There was mention of the College Risk Register within the strategy and this was not considered appropriate
- Removal of ‘by 2025’ before statements e.g. “by 2025 the College will be safe”.
- “Be in top 30% of colleges, might not be achievable
- Pages, 4, 5 and 6 – content descriptor required to be toned down and the language to be more positive and supportive.
- Typo at point 5 to be rectified (‘an ethos’, not ‘and ethos’)
- All five strategies being developed would be interlinked and delivery of the aims would be cascaded by line management. The Board of Management would also be aligned to the strategies and further discussion would take place

The Chair stated that the next meeting of the HR Committee would be her last, as her current tenure was due to end in June, therefore there would be a need to appoint a new Chair. The improved engagement between the HR department and the HR Committee was duly noted.

6 Employment Policies for Discussion

It was noted that the Disciplinary Policy had been re-drafted in order to bring the policy up-to-date. This would be presented to the LJNC and feedback would be requested. The Harassment and Hate Crime Policy had been developed in line with new regulations. The HR Policy Overview would provide staff with a summary of all College Policies and what they were aiming to achieve, as currently there were over 400 pages of documentation available and it was considered that very few staff would take the time to familiarise themselves with the content of the documentation.

Members were asked to provide any feedback to KR, although it was noted that the HR Committee should not be changing policies written by experts and agreed by LNJC.

ACTION: HR Committee members to provide feedback on the updated policies to Keith Ross.

7 Equality and Diversity Update

SL, Equality and Diversity Officer, joined the meeting and spoke to the report which provided a summary of equality and diversity activity. Sue reported that the Gender Action Plan had produced excellent results nationally. Equality Impact Assessments, for both staff and students were being worked on to ensure that no-one would be disadvantaged. Similarly, the “I Will Care” would endeavour to ensure that all staff were treated equally.

A Memorandum of Understanding with EHRC was now in place and it was reported that a project was underway to determine national priority outcomes and this may in turn alter outcomes that the College are required to produce.

DH asked how the College were tackling remote working and the impact this would have on staff. HC advised that line managers were being asked to encourage flexible working whilst working remotely.

8. Disputes Procedure

No conversation required in connection with this procedure. It was agreed that policies should be presented to the HR Committee for approval.

9. RPA Signing of Final Agreement

KR presented paper 9 and explained that the LJNC had not been able to meet as planned last week.

10 Employment Policies for Approval

All policies detailed in Item 10 would be presented to the LJNC for feedback.

11. Baseline Staffing Update

KR advised that Phase 2 of the Transformation Plan had commenced and work was being undertaken to align all systems. A full review of staffing, to fit with the new organisational structure, was being carried out and the data would then be input to the HR, Payroll and Finance systems, allowing robust real time reportage.

12. Academic Year 2019/20

HC presented data related to sickness absence and turnover information. Management had been unable to access the HR system at the commencement of COVID and therefore some absences may not have been entered. Further analysis of the data would be undertaken. RF asked for monitoring of the number of individuals in addition to instances and cost.

HC confirmed that there are only a handful of zero hours contracts within the College and that these are mutually beneficial (e.g. exam invigilation) and never imposed.

13. Staff Wellbeing Update

It was reported that there was increased concern relating to staff wellbeing whilst working remotely. The HR Team were being proactive in their planning to support staff and had spent time coaching line managers on how best to support their teams. It should be remembered that management are people too and some have struggled to cope. COVID Risk Assessments had been carried out for all staff, in order to implement the return to work. There had been 6/7 referrals to occupational health during the current situation.

HC formally thanked the HR team for their hard work during this difficult time and particularly during a time of much increased workload.

The importance of empowering staff to deal with their own mental health was being worked on and online resources were being offered to staff. RF asked whether managers had been given time to deal with staff morale and HC confirmed that no specific time had been given but managers were being encouraged to keep time aside.

It was confirmed that further discussion would take place with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure the appropriate support was provided to teams, particularly the longer remote working continues. Trade Union catch ups had been reinstated to allow collaboration between management and trade unions to ensure staff were being adequately supported.

The HR team would launch an “I Matter” forum on 13 November 2020 and this forum would focus on longer term plans for staff wellbeing. Staff volunteers were being sought to drive the project forward and the forum would look at a variety of events to support wellbeing of staff. The Board of Management, ELT, SLT and Student Association would be encouraged to participate.

The Committee commended the good work being carried out by the HR Department and thanked HC and KR for their hard work.

14. Staff Development Update

HC provided a brief update on development and training for staff:

- Academic staff were being supported by Blended Learning Advisers around online teaching
- 12 members of staff had completed the TQFE qualification
- Risk Assessment, Customer Care, First Aid Mental Health, IOHS and Food Hygiene training had been offered to staff.
- A bid submission for funding for the next academic year was being developed.

HC reported that a disappointing Learning and Development Audit draft report had been received but this was being used as a development tool moving forward. AW had re-joined the HR team in the role of Learning and Development Officer and would drive learning and development of staff forward. A detailed action plan would be developed and be regularly reviewed and updated.

During the current situation, staff had been very dependent on the use of Microsoft Teams and it was confirmed that no monitoring of staff usage was currently in place. HC would discuss monitoring of staff usage with MW, eLearning Manager.

15. Health and Safety Update

KR presented highlights of the Health and Safety Update provided by BC, Head of Corporate Services:

- ...
- IOSH training was now mandatory for management
- An online workplace risk assessment (POSTURITE) was available to staff and board members and this process was managed by BA, Estates Team Leader

HC was asked to convey thanks to BC for his update.

16. Strategic Risk Register

A Risk Register, with items relating to the HR Committee had been tabled for information.

There was currently no succession plan should a member of ELT contract COVID-19. An appropriate plan should be considered.

17. Any Other Business
No other business was raised.

18 Date and time of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 2 March 2021 at 15.00