

HR Sub-Committee Meeting

MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 15:00hrs VIA TEAMS

Present:		
Claire McLean (CM) - Chair	Susan McLellan (SMc)	Kate Glendye (KG)
Sue Irving (SI)	Ann Hill (AH)	
In attendance:		
Joe McGraw (JM)	Lorraine Grierson (LG)	Alexandra Elkins (note taker)
Apologies:		

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence | Verbal | C. McLean**

1.1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the meeting was recorded as quorate.

1.2. **Declaration of Interests/Connections | Verbal | C. McLean**

1.2.1. The Chair reminded Members to indicate any declaration of interest or connections as appropriate throughout the course of the meeting.

FOR APPROVAL

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising 13 Sept 2023 | Paper 2.1 | C. McLean**

2.1.1. The minutes from the meeting held on 13 September 2023 were approved.

2.2. **Action Log | Paper 2.2 | C. McLean**

2.2.1. There were no outstanding actions.

2.2.2. **The Committee noted the Action Log.**

FOR DISCUSSION

3. **People and Transformation | Paper 3.1 | J. McGraw**

3.1. **Workforce 2025**

3.1.1. Following approval by the Board of Management and the SFC it was agreed to open the Voluntary Severance Scheme. Discussion with Trade Unions resulted in agreement to

provide a short window for applications therefore the scheme would end November 2023. 4 formal applications had been received and at the recent meeting of the VSS Panel 2 were approved and 2 rejected on business grounds.

- 3.1.2. The Committee inquired about measures employed to support rejected applicants and the arrangement of the VSS Panel. The Chair advised that appropriate succession planning be established for all rejected roles and to look at future skills requirement, which was supported by the Committee.
- 3.1.3. Work was ongoing on the Workforce 25 Framework with a variety of options being explored by the Senior Leadership Team and these were being communicated to all staff through planned events. A review of some support areas had been undertaken and potential savings identified through the upskilling of staff eg digital and estates, and succession planning would be included in this work. A report would be provided to the Board of Management in December and the management's commitment to avoiding compulsory redundancy was re-iterated. The Workforce 2025 report will include options for financial sustainability through natural wastage, whether there is a need to refill or redeploy posts, look at a possible recruitment freeze and the development of commercial. The report will also identify possible risks.
- 3.1.4. It was advised that the Director of Business Transformation was now in post and would lead on progress of service re-design and enhancement of digital services. Initially iTrent and Power BI would be prioritised. Detail of planned collaboration with the Local Authority to support the development and enhancement of iTrent was provided. An explanation was given to members on what iTrent is used for and MidlandHR will be consulted to help upskill staff on its efficient use.
- 3.1.5. The Committee welcomed the collaboration and exploring further strategic alignment with UWS and other institutions.
- 3.1.6. **The Committee noted the report.**

3.2. National pay negotiations

- 3.2.1. Pay negotiations remain unresolved, 3 days of strike action was undertaken by trade unions in September and October 2023 with new ballots anticipated from both UNISON and EIS-FELA. Discussions were ongoing in respect of the proposed 3 year pay deal; however, issues around compulsory redundancy and The National Job Evaluation project were impacting progress.
- 3.2.2. The Committee advised that clear communication to staff regarding the local position be provided.

3.3. Sickness Absence

- 3.3.1. A target of a 2% reduction on the 22/23 figure of 5% (overall absence) has been set. Additional controls and monitoring of sickness absence has been implemented and approaches to reduce absence was being explored through staff training. Additional support was being provided to managers regarding staff who were subject to long term sickness absence through the return to work process and Occupational Health.

3.3.2. The Committee discussed a comparison of absence rates within the sector and elements of the return-to-work process. No disparity on absence was evident between Stranraer and Dumfries based staff and following recent manager training, increased consistency was anticipated by Managers.

3.4. Culture and Behaviours development

3.4.1. It was reported that a very positive meeting of the Values Group had taken place and detail regarding several initiatives and methods to further embed the Values was provided particularly to emphasise the values around Dumfries Campus. A discussion followed on the varied approaches to communications of the Values between the two campus' and the Committee recommended a Values update be provided to the Board of Management.

3.4.2. A staff engagement survey will be launched in February 2023, implemented with the support from Hive HR, and a further update will be provided.

3.4.3. **ACTION: - A Values update to be provided to the Board of Management. JM**

3.6 Learning and Development update

3.6.1 Absence management, disciplinary and grievance, and performance management training had been provided to all managers. An ideation workshop had also been provided to support staff, facilitated by Jo Turbitt, CDN. This encouraged the forming of ideas, how to look at different ways to do things and develop action plans. Feedback had been positive and lots of good ideas have come from this.

3.5. Equality and Diversity

3.5.1. Progress updates towards the actions from the EDI Audit Report were provided to the Committee. The EDI Forum was planned for later in the month and the EDI policy would be tabled for review. This would be brought to the Committee for consideration before final approval by the Board of Management. The Committee supported the review and further inspection of the College's demographics and requested data be provided specifically for DGC.

3.5.2. **ACTION: - A report on EDI data for Dumfries and Galloway College to be provided to the Committee. JM**

3.5.3. **The Committee noted the content of the People and Transformation Report**

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

4. **AOCB | Verbal | C McLean**

4.1. No other business was discussed.

5. **Date of the Next Meeting | Verbal | C McLean**

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for 7 March 2024.

MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES SUB COMMITTEE
Agenda Item:	3
Paper No:	HRS1123-3.1

Date	02 November 2023
Location	MS Teams
Title of Paper	HR Sub Committee Update – People and EDI Update
Presented By	Joe McGraw
Recommendation	Discussion
Appendix Attached	NO
Disclosable Under FOISA	YES

Read Time:

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 The Committee is invited to note the paper and discuss any of the items presented.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 To provide the HR Sub Committee with an update on the people (staff related issues) at the College. The details contained within this report will be used as the basis for the Finance and General purposes Committee meeting. The paper covers: -

- Workforce 2025
- National pay negotiations
- Sickness Absence
- Culture and Behaviours development
- Learning and Development update
- HR audit update
- Equality and Diversity update

3. Context

3.1 Workforce 2025

- 3.1.1 At the Board of Management (BoM) meeting held on 2 October the BoM approved an extension to the voluntary severance scheme (VSS) to the end of July 2025. Confirmation of the request for this extension has subsequently been received from Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
- 3.1.2 Informal discussions were held with the trade unions following approval from the BoM and staff were notified on 12 October that a new window for VS applications was open. Initially this will run until the end of November 2023. At the time of writing this report, the College had received a small number of requests (four). Fortnightly VSS application panel meeting have been set up during November.
- 3.1.3 Our Workforce 25 framework process has been in operation as we look to identify potential savings and/or revised ways of working/utilisation of staff/different business models. A number of options are in the initial stages of being explored by the Senior Leadership Team.
- 3.1.4 A paper is being developed that will be submitted to the BoM at their December 2023 meeting, outlining a range of different options and scenarios as we look to continue financial sustainability of the College, whilst at the same time retaining quality of provision to the region and minimising risk of potential industrial action from the TUs.
- 3.1.5 The College is committed to avoiding Compulsory Redundancy, and this will only be considered as a means of last resort, and when all other options are exhausted.
- 3.1.6 Our newly appointed Director of Business Transformation is now in place and initial meetings have been held with the Digital team on areas of service redesign through better use of digital services to improve capacity and capability. One of the key strategic areas of focus will be to focus and refresh our use of iTrent and we are also looking to collaborate with the local council on how they can support us with this work via their development team.

3.2 National Pay Negotiations

- 3.2.1 Pay negotiations for Lecturing or Support Staff continue to remain unresolved at a national level.
- 3.2.2 Strike action was taken by EIS-FELA, Unison and Unite on 7 and 21 September, with an additional day of action from Unison on 9 October 2023. The college remained open and learning continued either face to face or via direct study.
- 3.2.3 Discussions remain ongoing and a 3-year deal is currently being explored.
- 3.2.4 EIS-FELA failed in a ballot to extend current industrial action as they fell short of the required 50% turnout. The turnout was 49.55% when asked to vote in favour of strike action and Action Short of Strike Action (ASOS). As a result of this ASOS has now been removed from 12 October 2023.
- 3.2.5 It should however be noted that EIS-FELA are expected to issue a new ballot in late November 2023.
- 3.2.6 Unison are advising it is issuing a new ballot for industrial action with ballot papers due to be dispatched on Monday 30 October 2023 with the ballot closing on Monday 4 December 2023.
- 3.2.7 The National Job Evaluation project remains ongoing across the Scottish college sector. There is still a significant amount of ongoing dialogue between College Employers Scotland and the Strategic HR Network and Unison about the direction of travel for implementation. Further updates will be provided once known.
- 3.2.8 A project is underway to review existing job families/salary structures, benchmarked against some other colleges in preparation for additional work on this matter.

3.3 Sickness Absence

- 3.3.1 A challenging target of a 2% reduction on 22/23 figure of 5% (overall) has been set. There is now some additional temp support within the department, and this is assisting in providing additional control/monitoring of absence. This includes planned absence training for line managers and staff working more closely with managers to reduce absence. Review of our RTW process along with a review/update of the absence procedure. Work will also be undertaken as part of the focus and refresh of iTrent around improved data related to sickness.

3.4 Culture and Behaviours

- 3.4.1 A meeting of the Values ambassadors was held on 6 November 2023. A verbal update will be provided at the HR sub-Committee meeting.
- 3.4.2 The Values ambassadors will have a clear link as part of our workstream on culture and behaviours.

- 3.4.3 This will involve People & Transformation leading on a project that supports:
- Being role models for driving and supporting values across college, with support from value ambassadors.
 - Highlights the work that is done across college to support values and supports students/staff and to embed the work that we do as being meaningful.
 - Consider how we can embed values into new/revised policies and procedures.
 - Staff engagement survey. Date to be confirmed but looking to launch early 2024.

3.5 Learning and Development Update

- 3.5.1 Line manager training is now scheduled to take place on 13 and 14 November. The training was delayed due to industrial action. The training will focus on Discipline & Grievance, Absence management and Performance Management.
- 3.5.2 40 members of support staff attended an Ideation workshop held on 18 October 2023. Ideation is the process of forming ideas using a variety of strategies and methods to support conceptual and divergent thinking leading to effective implementation. It encourages staff and their colleagues to think differently about tasks, projects, challenges, and to not always do the same thing in the same way every year. It's about developing ideas leading to change in development of systems/policies and approaches, encouraging innovation. Feedback has been positive, and we hope to get people back together early in 2024 to create their action plans.
- 3.5.3 The Flexible workforce Development Funding has been utilised to assign 20 staff on Excel courses. Work is continuing on developing course content around 'having difficult conversations, with a view to a course being held in the new Year. Course content is also being developed on 'Minute-taking' aimed at Administrators, HR, Executive PA/Assistant, Secretary to the board.

3.6 HR Audit update

- 3.6.1 The findings of the HR audit conducted by RSM was reported to Audit committee on 19 September. Details of the findings and progress against the audit findings are shown in Appendix 1.

3.7 Equality & Diversity

- 3.7.1 The findings of the Equality & Diversity audit conducted by RSM was reported to Audit committee on 19 September. Details of the findings and progress against the audit findings are shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.7.2 As identified in the audit finding, the EDI forum lapsed following the departure of the EDI Officer early in 2023. The Vice Principal People and Transformation will become the new chair of this forum and a meeting is scheduled to take place on 28 November 2023.

4. **Strategic Implications**

- 4.1 This links into Strategic Priority 2 – People and Culture.

5. Risk

Risk	Mitigations
7 Failure to achieve effective Industrial Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Constructive formal and informal communication channels ➤ LJNC (Local Joint Negotiation Committee) ➤ Representation at Employers Association ➤ Attendance at Strategic HR Network

6. Implications

Financial	Yes	
Legal	Yes	
Learning and Teaching	Yes	
Equalities	Yes	<p>A full Equality and Diversity role is available under a separate agenda item for the Committee.</p> <p>The College Equality and Diversity webpage can be accessed here.</p>

Joe McGraw

VP People & transformation

2 November 2023