

Belfast Metropolitan College Human Resources Committee 3.00pm Monday 6 December 2021 via Microsoft Teams Agenda Minutes FINAL approved 14 March 2022

Committee Members: Jim McCall (Chair); Catherine Burns; Sam Snodden; Brian Wilson, Louise Warde Hunter, Principal & Chief Executive.

Management: Gillian Magee, Director of People and Place; Stephanie McCormack, Head of Human Resources (HRM).

Clerk to the Governing Body: Gerry Crossan

HR11 21/22 Quorum, Apologies, Welcome, Conflicts of Interest, Notice of AOB and Leadership Culture

Chair

Quorum: The was quorate under the terms of Section 5.2 of the Terms of Reference for the Human Resource Committee (approved **GB04c 20/21 23 Sep 20**) (2 Governors).

Apologies: Apologies were received from Rebecca Roberts and Amy Carr. The Chair asked the Head of Human Resources to convey the Committee's best wishes to Rebecca Roberts and the Clerk to convey these to Amy Carr.

Welcome: No new participants at this meeting.

Conflicts of Interest: No **perceived, potential or actual** conflicts of interest under the terms of Paragraph 15.1 of the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body Standing Orders dated August 2015 were.

AOB: No further items of AOB at the meeting (6 December 2021).

Access to Meeting Pack: The Chair confirmed that all participants had had timely access to the Meeting Pack.

Leadership Culture: Chair noted our commitment to:

- i) brave leadership and meaningful dialogue;
- ii) simpler governance; and,
- iii) engaging in the right spirit.

HR12 21/22

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 - Draft (Proposed Final)

Chair

The Committee **approved** the **Draft (Proposed Final)** minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 without amendment

HR13 21/22

Matters Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021

Chair

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on 13 September 2021 not on this agenda.

Agenda Item	
HR14 21/22 Clerk	<p>Governance Guidance and Information</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that no governance guidance and information relating to the work of the HR Committee had been notified since the date of the last Committee meeting.</p>
HR15 21/22 Chair	<p>Chair's Business</p> <p>The Chair asked the P&CE to advise on any additional guidance in relation to the COVID-19 response. The P&CE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirmed that DfE had advised that no further requirements were being imposed but it was important that the FE Sector was using consistent approach; • advised that the objective remains that staff and students are on-site to the maximum extent possible within the requirements of the extant guidance; and, • all staff are achieving compliance and promoting compliance among learners. <p>The Committee noted the information provided by the P&CE in response to the Chair's query.</p>
HR16 21/22 P&CE	<p>Chief Executive Report – verbal</p> <p>The P&CE advised the Committee on the following key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the critical positive impact on all aspects of the College business of the visible presence and leadership of ELT and SLT colleagues across all campuses of the College; and, (b) procurement of services to support the recruitment to the Director of Curriculum role with a view to the executive search function being underway in December 2021. <p>The Committee sought confirmation of the approval process for staff who wish to work remotely. The P&CE confirmed that a sector policy was in place and that Management are currently reviewing this policy to support the College effectively. This is a continuous review which is taking feedback from Management and aiming to support College wide Management action.</p> <p>The Committee asked if there was an increasing risk around staff shortages arising from COVID-19 requirements and staff recruitment. The P&CE advised on the recent work to identify actions to mitigate the risks posed by a challenging recruitment environment and staff shortages. Management have established a Task and Finish Group across Curriculum Delivery to identify these actions.</p> <p>The Committee noted that staff availability in post-primary schools was leading to school closures. Management advised that the level of cases during 2021/22 (under social distancing requirements) was similar to that in 2020/21 (under remote teaching and learning).</p> <p>The Committee noted the information provided by the P&CE and the action taken by Management.</p>
HR17 21/22	<p>Performance Management Reports as at Q1 2021/2</p>
HR17A 21/22	<p>Management advised the Committee on the following key issues relating to HR Metrics:</p>

Agenda Item	
DPP	<p>(a) Management have introduced changes to the KPI reporting, with greater analysis of actions arising;</p> <p>(b) Sickness absence has increased by 1.3% compared to the previous quarter driven significantly by cold and flu – this trend appears to be contrary to population-wide statistics;</p> <p>(c) Work related stress remains a substantial cause of sickness absence – Management is conducting further analysis on the underlying distribution across the College and the FE Sector;</p> <p>(d) Establishment has increased by 4 posts – relatively high number of agency staff which are not in the College establishment, but are filling pre-employment gaps across the workforce;</p> <p>(e) the implications of the reporting received from the Occupational Health Service, noting that 16% of referrals were work-related;</p> <p>(f) the emerging information from the provision of counselling services;</p> <p>(g) the current profile of HR cases, including the closure of 11 grievances and 8 disciplinary cases since September 2021; and,</p> <p>(h) 72% of performance appraisals were completed by 1 November 2021 and the College is on track to close this process out during December 2021.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the changes to the reporting format and content in the reports being provided by Management. The format of the dashboard supports the Governing Body in effectively scrutinising key information and in fulfilling its governance responsibilities.</p> <p>Management is working to communicate the interventions that are available to provide mental health support and to increase employee access to these interventions.</p> <p>Management advised the Committee on the uptake of mediation approaches as a means of dispute resolution. The Committee welcomed the action being taken by Management.</p> <p>The Committee asked Management to consider a “lessons learned” review in the light of the recent closure of a long-running case. Management will communicate to Governing Body members the continuing indemnification of Governing Body members in such cases.</p> <p>Management advised the Committee on processes that are in place to manage potential and actual cases which may engage the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.</p> <p>The Committee noted the information provided by and the action taken by Management.</p>
HR17B 21/22	<p>Management advised the Committee on the following keys issues arising from HR Department Priorities:</p> <p>(a) Progress on the restructuring of the HR operating model, including the recent appointment of a Deputy Head of Human Resources;</p> <p>(b) Busines Partner Team is close to completion (4 out of 6 target roles);</p> <p>(c) HR Services Transaction Team will be fully in place in January 2022;</p> <p>(d) HHR is Chair of HR Managers’ Working Group for 2021/22 – this meets twice a month and works on employment relations issues and policy improvement and supports the work of the Principal’s Group;</p>

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	<p>(e) This Working Group are conducting an in-depth analysis on the factors affecting workforce change across the sector and this dovetailing with work of the recently established Task and Finish Group; and,</p> <p>(f) the ongoing work in relation to the resolution of number issues relating to the application the Working Time Directive across the FE sector.</p> <p>Management confirmed that the recent recruitments were part of a re-engineering of the HR capability within the College.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the opportunity to have sight of the current raft of policies that were moving through the sector bodies.</p>
HR17C 21/22	<p>Management advised the Committee on the following keys issues arising from HR Team Resourcing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recent procurement action to support the implementation of the Management Information System project; • coding and reporting standardisation is being implemented across the sector in anticipation of the system implementation; and, • these actions will improve integration and reporting across all areas of resourcing, with certain interfaces with, for example, Teachers Superannuation, starting in January 2022; <p>The Committee noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complex challenges that are facing Management and the HR Team; • that with the movement of HR policies on to the agendas of sectoral bodies there were opportunities for constructive discussions to take place on the replacement of policies that are not fit-for-purpose; and, • welcomed the consideration of a range of outreach actions – including an Employment Fair - o raise the profile of the College and communicate the College as an Employer of Choice for Talent. <p>The Committee welcomed the opportunity to have sight of the current raft of policies that were moving through the sectoral bodies and the current and target HR Team structure.</p> <p>The Committee noted the importance of business informatics going forward and asked to be apprised of progress on this as appropriate.</p>
HR17D 21/22	<p>Management advised the Committee on the following keys issues arising from College wide Resourcing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Significantly increased level of recruitment, 71 posts advertised in this reporting period – the majority of which were in Support roles; (b) Numbers of applicants are significantly down from previous years – average of 3 applicants per post, with many posts attracting no applicants at all; (c) the emerging work on the widespread implementation of the Apprenticeship Programme across all aspects of Support Services in the College throughout 2022.

Agenda Item	
<p>HR17E 21/22</p>	<p>Management advised the Committee on the following keys issues arising from Centre for Excellence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the action being taken to refine the technological and skills support for teaching and learning; (b) 2-day staff conference in February 2022 and then the event will move to August and support all aspects of individual and team preparedness for the incoming year; (c) College has signed up to Diversity Mark NI and this is driving a range of actions; (d) Staff Awards event had to be postponed and another date is being identified; (e) Teaching, Learning and Assessment Team is continuing to provide wrap-around training to teaching colleagues at all stages of their careers; (f) the work underway to support the changing use of technology in assessment and the impact on teaching and learning skills; and, (g) Self-Evaluation Review Timetable is being brought forward to June of each year, again to support preparedness for the incoming year. <p>The Committee welcomed the ongoing programmes supporting health and wellbeing and the communication of the positive impact</p>
<p>HR18 21/22</p> <p>Chair</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>(a) <u>Feedback on quality of reporting into the Committee:</u></p> <p>The P&CE referenced the upcoming RSM internal audit work planned that was due to include Management Information and the DfE Governing Body Self-Assessment report which was circulated recently. Both gave an opportunity to consider the quality, timeliness and accuracy of reporting to support Management action and governance processes.</p> <p>The P&CE has established a monthly report in order to keep Governing Body members in touch with the ongoing Management action across all 5 Strategic Plan core objectives. This highlight actions and is complementary to, and not a substitute for, the scrutiny, challenge and support provided at governance bodies in response to quarterly Management reporting.</p> <p>The Committee advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reporting was clear and helpful and the move to dashboard reporting and the use of data analytics supported scrutiny and challenge by the Committee; • the conduct of the meeting supported Governors in asking questions; • the nature of reporting supported Management in managing and the Governing Body in meeting its responsibilities; and, • the work programme for the year as set out in the Committee TOR should be flexible enough to enable Management to report on emerging current risks and issues, including deep-dives specific areas of the business; and, • notwithstanding any challenges around collecting and reporting soft-issues about the perceptions of learners and staff, this is important information to support both Management and the Governing Body and a focussed discursive narrative approach to reporting this might be appropriate in the P&CE report.

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	<p>(b) <u>The communication of the COVID-19 response in the FE setting:</u></p> <p>Committee discussed with Management the approach to communications that had been taken across the College, the Sector and the NI economy regarding the response to COVID-19. Management noted that the College's role as an Arm's Length delivery organisation working to a clear programme of timetabled service delivery gave Management primacy in responding and to communicating this response. The responses were driven by COVID-19 and teaching and learning advice from DfE to the FE Sector, using the skills and experience of learners and staff to manage risk while supporting the delivery of much face-to-face teaching and learning as possible.</p>
HR19 21/22	<p>Meeting evaluation – Leadership culture</p> <p>Committee members advised the Chair that they felt that the conduct of the meeting evidenced the commitments made by the Governing Body.</p>
HR20 21/22	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>Governance Programme 2021/22 Cycle 3 2021/22 The next meeting of the Human Resources Committee will be held at <u>3.00pm on Monday 14 March 2022</u>. The Clerk confirmed that this meeting has been diarised in colleagues' Outlook Calendars.</p> <p>Governance Programme 2022/23 Cycle 2: The second meeting of the Human Resources Committee in 2022/23 will be held at <u>3.00pm on Monday 5 December 2022</u>. The Clerk will diarise this meeting in colleague's Outlook Calendars after this meeting.</p> <p>The meeting ended at <u>4.00pm</u>.</p>

Chair of Belfast Metropolitan College
Human Resources Committee

J McCall

Signature



Date

14/03/2022