



**Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on
Monday 23 February 2009 at 5.00 pm in Room 3F099**

Present: Alison Birkinshaw
Bruce Gilbert (Chair)
Terry Wolf

In Attendance: John Cuthbert, Senior HR Adviser (Training & Development)
Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body
Chris Leng, HR Manager
Anne Tyrrell, Deputy Principal Resources

The meeting started at 5.05pm.

09.01 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest

Action

Apologies were received from Jennie Cook, Carol Runciman and Peter Vaughan. There were no declarations of interest.

(It was agreed to take agenda item 8.1 out of order.)

09.02 Policy Updates and Developments

a) Proposed Induction Policy and Demonstration of On-Line Induction

John Cuthbert, Senior HR Adviser (Training & Development) presented the report and explained that the College's HR department was in the process of formulating a formal induction policy which would be presented to the Personnel Committee at its next meeting on 25 June 2009.

Mr Cuthbert outlined the current induction arrangements at the College and explained that a good induction experience could be a very effective way of integrating new staff into the College very quickly. The College wished to ensure that all its new starters – including all part time variable hours staff - experienced a formal induction. The solution being proposed was to devise and implement an “online” induction which would complement the current “start of term” induction, but not replace it. New staff would be given the choice of attending the start of term induction, or completing the online process. Mr Cuthbert then gave a short demonstration to the Committee of the proposed online induction process. In relation to the induction policy, it was explained that it was intended that either attendance at the start of term induction or completion of the online induction would be compulsory for all new starters, and that they would be required to undertake one or the other within three months of commencing employment with the College.

Members considered the presentation and largely supported its introduction, but felt that it was still important not to undermine the importance of face-to-face induction wherever this was possible. Mr Cuthbert explained that the on-line induction would enhance, not supplement, face-to-face induction processes. In relation to existing employees, it was explained that any new or mandatory issues which arose in the induction would be identified and appropriate training provided to them. It was also acknowledged that the on-line induction would need to be tailored to make it suitable for all levels of College staff. The Committee thanked Mr Cuthbert for his presentation.

(John Cuthbert left the meeting at 5.20pm.)

09.03 Matters arising

(Alison Birkinshaw joined the meeting at 5.25pm.)

a) Action Summary Sheet

The Action Summary sheet was considered and the Clerk to the Governing Body presented the slightly revised Terms of Reference for the Committee which were **approved**. The HR Manager presented the College's Workplace Stress Policy Action Plan and explained that this would be a specific agenda item at the next meeting of the Committee. The HR Manager also presented an update on the re-organisation of responsibilities within the HR department in relation to staff absence management.

HRM/Clerk

It was **agreed** that the item carried forward on senior staff succession planning would now be the responsibility of the Deputy Principal Resources. It was also noted that the New College Project evaluation would be presented to the New College Strategy Group at its next meeting in March and then subsequently to the full Governing Body.

DPR

b) Any Other Matters Arising

There were no further matters arising.

09.04 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 11 November 2008

The minutes and confidential minutes were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

09.05 Health, Safety and Welfare Update

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the Health, Safety and Welfare Report for the autumn term 2008, which was considered by the Committee. The report included accidents statistics for the autumn term 2008 and incidents reported to the HSE under RIDDOR. The results of Health & Safety Audits completed to date were also presented together with an update on other Health and Safety activity within College.

Members considered the benchmarking information from data supplied by the Association of Colleges (AoC) and it was noted that the College's figures appeared high compared to many other colleges. However, it was stated that the College did not believe that this information indicated a higher risk of accidents but rather was the result of good accident reporting procedures accepted by staff. It was also queried whether like for like was being compared. For example, the College's information included the data for the College nursery and the very rigorous reporting regime that that entailed. The Committee felt that the College was setting and applying very high health and safety standards but it was acknowledged that the College should not become complacent and that it would continue to monitor reporting carefully. The Committee **agreed** that it would also be useful to ascertain whether any other relevant benchmarking data existed which might be more meaningful.

DPR

The Deputy Principal Resources also drew Members' attention to recent changes in legislation and guidance from the Health and Safety Commission, and this was considered by the Committee. It was reported that the College's Health, Safety & Welfare Adviser had been asked to check the College's practices against those outlined in the guidance. It was noted that the College undertook its own Health and Safety self assessment as part of the College's Self Assessment Report, and it was **agreed** that this comparison with the guidance should be carried out by the Health, Safety & Welfare Adviser as part of this process so that the outcome would (if necessary) feature in any resultant improvement plan going forward.

DPR/
HSWA

09.06 Employee Relations Update - Minutes of Latest Meetings with Trade Union Representatives

The HR Manager presented the minutes of the previous meeting on 14 November 2008 outlining the key themes which included discussions regarding learner behaviour; workload; concerns regarding the common application process; the payment date for the pay award; and other College issues including the College calendar and security cameras. It was also explained that a further meeting had taken place with members of the UCU trade union which had been very positive.

09.07 Staff Survey 2008/09

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the Staff Survey completed at the end of the 2007-08 academic year. A comparison with the results from the previous two years was provided together with a summary of the key outcomes. It was noted that between 2006/07 and 2007/08 the responses to 36 questions had improved, 3 had stayed the same, and 1 (relating to staff workplaces being adequate) had got worse. Some key responses, including

education is central to the management strategy of the College and effective communication, had improved by 10% and 7.5% respectively. It was reported that an action plan in response to the outcomes of the survey had been produced and would continue to be monitored. This was considered by Members who acknowledged that the results of the survey were very encouraging.

09.08 Reports and Updates

a) Workforce Profile Information

The Personnel Manager presented the report on the College's workforce profile as at 31 January 2009, which contained details of College staff numbers and Full Time Equivalents (FTEs); turnover; sickness absence; ethnicity; age; and length of service.

It was reported that turnover of staff had remained stable over the preceding twelve months in terms of total numbers, but that for teaching staff it had increased whilst it had decreased for support staff. This was said to be consistent with trends reported by the Association of Colleges (AoC).

It was reported that the overall College sickness absence rate for full time staff to 31 January 2009 was 3.4%, which was an increase of 1.1% on the year to 31 January 2008. It was suggested that this was largely due to a more accurate reporting system and the fact that there were a number managers with long term sickness absence problems in the spring of 2008. It was noted that even with this increase the College figure was still below the national average of 4.08%.

It was confirmed that the ethnic profile of College staff was consistent with that for York and the surrounding area. It was also noted that in terms of age profile there had been a slight decrease in the number of appointees aged over 45 and a slight increase in the number of those aged between 16 and 24.

b) Staff Training and Development

The HR Manager presented the report which covered Training and Development activity; Compliance; and Budget Management.

It was reported that there had been a 35% increase in the level of training and development activity between 1 August 2008 to 30 January 2009 compared with the same period the previous year. Work was being undertaken with managers to assess the impact of how effective this had been and a full report on the 2008/09 academic year would be provided to the Committee at its meeting in November 2009.

HRM

With regard to teachers' qualifications it was reported that the College only knew that 58% of part time variable hours (PTVH) staff were actually qualified. 15% were not qualified or not enrolled on a

teaching qualification. Further work was being undertaken to clarify the position with the relatively large number of PTVH staff about whom the position was not known. Discussion took place about measures that could be introduced to improve the situation including making appointment conditional on undertaking the relevant qualification. It was noted that the introduction of performance review for PTVH staff had been delayed but was in the process of being agreed.

c) Tutor Utilisation

This item was treated as confidential and a separate minute produced.

d) Equality & Diversity Annual Report 2008/09

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the report which it was noted had already been considered by the full Governing Body at its last meeting. It was noted that in the College's Ofsted inspection, Equality & Diversity at the College had been viewed as strong, and that the two development areas agreed had been implemented. It was noted that the overall success rates for the College's BME learners were actually higher (81%) than those for their non-BME counterparts. The Committee wished to congratulate the Diversity Development Adviser on the production of the report and felt it would be useful in future for some more of these key points to be drawn out and highlighted.

09.09 Policy Updates and Developments (continued)

b) Management of Sickness Absence Policy

The HR Manager presented the report and policy which was said to formalise the College's approach to the management of sickness absence. It was explained that absence caused operational difficulties, placed strain on colleagues, undermined quality and efficiency and increased costs. The purpose of the policy was to minimise absence levels across the College, whilst also providing support for those absent sick and facilitating their early return to work. It aimed to ensure that all employees were treated fairly and consistently, taking account of individual circumstances.

Members advanced a number of minor proposed amendments and, subject to this, **agreed to approve** the College's Management of Sickness Absence Policy.

HRM

09.10 2008/11 Strategic Plan – Section Update on Progress

The HR Manager presented the report providing an update on progress with the human resources/CPD sections of the College's 2008/11 Strategic Plan and key targets.

It was noted that around 72% of College staff on full time or proportionate contracts had been issued with their personal performance review targets for 2008/09 against a compliance target

of 90%. This was said to be due to a greater need for the HR department to identify those College managers who were not hitting the compliance target with their own staff teams. For hourly paid staff, it was confirmed that generic performance review targets had now been issued for the 2008/09 academic year.

It was noted that the implementation of the Management Competency Framework had been deferred and the reasons behind this were considered. It was noted that a further meeting had been arranged for the following week to progress this matter forward. The Staff Recognition Group, chaired by the Principal, had been established and was currently considering the College's communication strategy.

09.11 Committee Effectiveness Questionnaire for 2007/08

The Chair presented the report with the summary of the Members' responses to the Personnel Committee effectiveness questionnaire for 2007/08. It was noted that it had been **agreed** that the questionnaire would be revised for issue next time. It was also acknowledged that a greater return rate by Members would have made the responses more meaningful.

Clerk

09.12 Any Other Business

None.

09.13 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 25 June 2009 at 5.00pm.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Signed:

Chair:

Name:

Date: