



**Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on
Monday 25 June 2009 at 5.00 pm in Room 3F099**

Present: Alison Birkinshaw
Jennie Cook
Bruce Gilbert (Chair)
Carol Runciman
Terry Wolf

In Attendance: Richard Hinde, Clerk to the Governing Body
Chris Leng, HR Manager
Anne Tyrrell, Deputy Principal Resources

The meeting started at 5.05pm.

09.14 Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest

Action

Apologies were received from Peter Vaughan. There were no declarations of interest.

09.15 Minutes of Previous Meeting – 23 February 2009

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

09.16 Matters arising

a) Action Summary Sheet

The Action Summary sheet was considered and it was noted that the Search & Governance Committee was giving further consideration to the College's Governance self-assessment process.

b) Any Other Matters Arising

None.

09.17 Health, Safety and Welfare Update

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the Health, Safety and Welfare Report for the spring term 2009, which was considered by the Committee. The report included accidents statistics for the spring term 2009 and incidents reported to the HSE under RIDDOR; the results of Health & Safety Audits completed to date; feedback from the College's LSC Regional Health & Safety visit; and an analysis of the College's current position against the good practice identified in the HSE report on leading Health & Safety at Work.

In relation to the College's LSC Regional Health & Safety visit, it was reported that the overall assessment had been "good". This was an improvement on the last assessment which had been

“satisfactory”. However, it was noted that the College was now aiming to achieve an “outstanding” standard. Explanation was provided as to how the College had improved in this regard, and discussion took place about proposed future initiatives and measures to bring about further improvement. The Committee wished to record its support for the College’s drive to reach the “outstanding” standard. Members said that they would also welcome further explanation at a future meeting as to how the College was ensuring that these new measures were fully embedded and staff were adequately trained.

DPR

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

The HR Manager presented the minutes of the previous meetings on 19 December 2008, 30 January 2009, 27 February 2009 and 27 March 2009 outlining the key themes which had been considered.

Reference was made to the College’s new Decertification Policy, which it was explained would benefit individual students and the College itself.

Further discussion took place about other issues raised including tutor workload, prices in the College’s food outlets, use of inappropriate language by staff, and inappropriate use of the “Facebook” website by students.

(Carol Runciman joined the meeting at 5.40pm.)

09.19 Redundancy Proposals – Progress Update

This item was treated as confidential for which a separate confidential minute was produced.

09.20 Reports and Updates

a) Workforce Profile Information

The Personnel Manager presented the report on the College’s workforce profile as at 31 May 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 support staff had reduced significantly whereas turnover of management staff had increased. However, this increase was said to be consistent with the sector.

Sickness absence rates were reducing and compared favourably with other FE colleges and the education sector generally. This was partly attributed to increased vigour by the HR team in monitoring and chasing up sickness absences. Further discussion took place about these revised procedures, and it was felt that it would be useful to provide some analysis at a future meeting of the reasons for staff absence (other than long term sickness absence).

HRM

b) Tutor Utilisation – Termly Report

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the report showing that current planned utilisation across all Divisions was 94.72% compared to 94.13% in February 2009 and a minimum target of 93%.

This ranged from over 100% in the Maths & Numeracy, and Education & Training Divisions to 90.27% for Skills for Life. It was noted that this related only to staff on Tutor contracts and excluded learning assistants.

It was reiterated that there had been a number of changes to procedures regarding the approval of reduced class contact and data reporting which had impacted on utilisation. This was part of a drive to ensure efficient use of the College's staffing, which also included more frequent monitoring and action points. The guidelines for reduced class contact had also been revised as part of the College's planning for the 2009/10 budget.

09.21 Policy Updates and Developments

a) Recognition, Facilities and Procedural Agreement

The HR Manager presented the report and explained that the College had had a Recognition, Facilities and Procedural Agreement in place for the past two years. The current agreement was time limited and was due to expire on 31 August 2009. This updated policy was intended to replace the current policy, and was for a further two years until 31 August 2011.

It was explained that the proposed updated policy was largely similar to the previous one. The proposed agreement specified that officials not employed by the College were not entitled *as of right* to attend JCNC meetings. This would have an impact on two academic trades unions; the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT). Because of the small size of their membership at the College, JCNC meetings were not attended by staff representatives. Instead, the unions had been represented by individuals employed outside the College.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the Recognition, Facilities and Procedural Agreement.

In relation to this series of policies generally, it was explained that consultation had taken place within College on the proposed policies either with internal groups, trade unions and/or the College Management Team (CMT). Presentation to the Committee for approval was usually the last stage of the process prior to the policies being posted on the College's website. Where necessary further explanation and training would be provided to College staff.

b) Probation Policy and Procedure

The HR Manager presented the proposed Probation Policy and Procedure. It was explained that although probationary periods were specified in staff contracts, the College did not have a formal Probationary Policy or Procedure that specified how probation would be managed. This policy set out the College's proposed approach.

It was explained that the College did have a policy review schedule and this meant that policies typically tended to be reviewed every two to three years, unless specific concerns arose in the interim. It was noted that this Policy largely codified the College's existing practice.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the Probation Policy.

c) Anti-Stress Policy

The HR Manager presented the College's proposed Anti-Stress Policy which was considered by the Committee. It was explained that this Policy had been drafted partly to replace the previous Policy, which had been in place since January 2004, and partly to address a commitment outlined in the College's Action Plan for Workplace Stress, which specified a review of the Stress Policy by July 2009. It was further explained that this Policy was largely an adoption of the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) model Anti-Stress Policy with some trade union input.

In terms of monitoring the impact of this Policy it was reported that the Health, Safety & Welfare Committee would report at least annually in this regard. Discussion also took place about the possibility of disability exacerbating stress and how this could be taken in to account in implementing the Policy. It was also acknowledged that it was essential to draw a distinction between workplace stress and other stress in the reporting arrangements pursuant to the Policy. It was noted that the College already used external counselling services and occupational health services for staff in this regard.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the Anti-Stress Policy.

d) CCTV Policy and Procedure

The Deputy Principal Resources explained that with the introduction of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in and around the College, it had been necessary to draw up a policy which set out how the College would manage and use its CCTV resources. Use of CCTV was subject to strict regulatory control, including the Data Protection Act 1998 ('DPA'), and the Information Commissioners Office CCTV Code of Practice (ICO Code). The

Security Industry Authority (SIA) carried out inspections of organisations to check that they complied with the Act and they would expect to see a formal policy. In addition, operatives were subject to the Private Security Industry Act 2001, and this was accounted for in the policy.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the CCTV Policy and Procedure.

e) Child Protection Policy

The HR Manager presented the report with the College's proposed Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy (Child Protection Policy) which was considered by the Committee.

It was explained that this was not a new Policy but that it had been updated and tightened up. This Policy had been supported by compulsory training for all College staff, and it was also a key element of staff induction. Governors had also received training, although a training update would now be required.

It was further explained that this issue was at the top of Ofsted's agenda and was therefore key. It was proposed to present the Policy at the October meeting of the Governing Body, after agreed amendments had been made.

HRM/Clerk

The Personnel Committee **resolved to recommend** the Governing Body to approve the Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adults (Child Protection) Policy, subject to final amendment.

f) Student Disciplinary Policy

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the report with the College's proposed Student Disciplinary Policy which was considered by the Committee. Concern was expressed about the clarity of the chart illustrating the formal stages and it was agreed that this would be revisited.

DPR

Discussion took place about how the College ensured consistency in the application of the Policy. It was explained that this was done by setting and reinforcing the values and standards that the College required. It was noted that the Principal met with all students and staff to set out these requirements to them. It was also noted that there was a second document associated with this Policy which gave examples of what would constitute (for example) misconduct or gross misconduct within the College. The need for this second document to be referenced within this Policy and for it to always accompany the Policy was also stressed.

DPQA&S/
DPR

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the Student Disciplinary Policy.

g) Power to Search Policy

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the report with the College's proposed Power to Search Policy. It was explained that the Policy was intended to ensure that all staff knew what to do in the event that a search was required. Training would be provided to relevant staff. Members stressed that all students who were required to carry potentially dangerous equipment for their courses should be made to carry them in the appropriate way or (for example) in cases, and it was explained that this was already the position with lockers being provided.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the Power to Search Policy.

h) Use of Force Policy

The Deputy Principal Resources presented the report with the College's proposed Use of Force Policy which was considered by the Committee. It was stressed that force should only be used as a last resort. Training on this Policy would also be provided.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the Use of Force Policy.

09.22 Management Development

a) Draft Management Standards

The HR Manager presented the draft of the College's proposed Management Standards. It was explained that linked to each of the four standards was the agreed management behaviours and College values. This demonstrated that the Standards were consistent with these. Although this booklet was at the draft stage, the College did propose that there should be a set of management standards and that these should be accessible, readily understood, and integrated with the College's values.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the College's proposed Management Standards.

b) Management Development Programme 2009/10

The HR Manager reported that staff development activities for managers had taken place in previous years, but in an ad-hoc manner. The need for a comprehensive management development programme was well established, and HR had worked in consultation with SMT to produce the following proposal:

There would be a multi-stream programme in 2009/10 to accommodate the varying needs for existing middle managers; existing middle managers who aspired to senior management; new middle managers; and staff who aspired to a management role.

A copy of the programme for 2009/10 was presented. The

programme existed in draft form, and might change in some respects, especially in the use of external trainers. Once the level of the Training & Development budget was firmly established, a final decision could be made on the use of such trainers.

Discussion took place as to whether some of these proposed activities could be accredited. It was agreed that progress with this programme should be reported back to the Committee, and also felt that there should be a clearer distinction between what were mandatory and what were voluntary activities. The Committee warmly supported this development programme.

DPR/ HRM

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the Management Development Programme for 2009/10.

c) New Managers' Survival Guide

The HR Manager presented a copy of the New Managers Survival Guide which would be used as part of the induction process for new managers. It summarised the various acronyms and terms that were used at the College that an individual new to the College (or existing staff promoted to management roles) must be familiar with in order to perform effectively.

This was part of the College's wider review of induction which aimed to give a more effective introduction to the College for new starters, so that they became effective in their job roles as quickly as possible.

The Personnel Committee **resolved to approve** the New Managers Survival Guide.

09.23 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 the main problem had been the failure to achieve the staff performance review compliance targets that had been set. The reasons for this were explained and measures were now said to be in hand to address and improve this position. Overall, however, progress against the targets was said to be good.

09.24 2009/12 Strategic Plan – Draft Section Proposals

a) Section 9: HR and CPD

The Deputy Principal Resources explained that this year the relevant sections of the Strategic Plan were to be discussed by Governors' Committees prior to final approval at the Governing Body meeting on 16 July 2009. Governors were asked to discuss and comment on the draft Strategic Plan sections and recommend approval if this was considered appropriate. It was noted that the

financial implications of the Strategic Plan had been included in the 2009/10 Budget planning.

It was explained that these proposals for next year were a combination of taking forward any under-developed areas from this year and identifying new issues. It was noted that higher staff performance review targets had been set for next year for both full-time and part-time staff.

The Personnel Committee ***resolved to recommend*** the Governing Body to approve the HR and CPD sections (section 9) of the College's draft Strategic Plan for 2009/12.

b) Section 15: Health, Safety & Welfare

The Deputy Principal Resources reiterated what had been explained, and Members were asked to discuss and comment on the draft Health, Safety & Welfare section of the Strategic Plan and recommend approval if this was considered appropriate.

The Personnel Committee ***resolved to recommend*** the Governing Body to approve the Health, Safety & Welfare section (section 15) of the College's draft Strategic Plan for 2009/12.

09.25 Any Other Business

None.

09.26 Date of Next Meeting

12 November 2009 at 5.00pm, subject to confirmation.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Signed:

Chair:

Name:

Date: