

## **APPROVED Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on Tuesday, 13th November 2007**

Present: Mr Phill Brown (Acting Chair)  
Mrs M Hopwood  
Mrs J McAllister

In attendance: S Hooton (Assistant Principal – Learners and Learning)  
J Stott (College Administrator)  
S Shaw (Deputy Clerk)

Apologies: Mrs L Kent, Mr M Brannan

Meeting commenced: 18:30 pm

Meeting closed: 20:30 pm

Due to the absence of the Chair, the Clerk asked for a nomination to Chair the meeting. P Brown was nominated and agreed to chair the meeting.

### **14/07 Disclosure of financial and/or personal interest**

There was no disclosure of financial and/or personal interest.

### **15/07 To agree agenda and order of business as circulated**

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

### **16/07 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

The minutes were approved.

### **17/07 Matters arising**

- (i) At page 3, item 07/07, the Principal reminded members that the Corporation had agreed a pay rise of 2.5% backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 with a further 0.5% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008. It was noted that some colleges had not implemented a pay rise, pending the outcome of national negotiations.
- (ii) At page 5, item 10/07, the Principal drew Members' attention to the fact that the national ban on smoking in the workplace had been implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> July. Two "smoking areas" had been designated within College grounds. There had not been much adverse comment or complaint from staff or students about the implementation of the Policy.

### **18/07 Training item: A briefing on the Disability and Gender Equality Schemes**

The Principal introduced the item and presented an extract of both schemes for Governors' reference. She explained that the College intended bringing all Equality Schemes together into a single document by May 2008. She emphasised the importance of diversity monitoring.

Committee members expressed their support for this objective and noted that the commitment to equality was already deeply ingrained in the College's ethos of "every person counts" but emphasised that the key to success in this area was rigorous practice rather than lengthy documentation.

*(a) Gender Equality Scheme*

The Principal drew Governors' attention to their responsibilities under the scheme and made the following comments against each of these: -

Section 6 – Division of Responsibilities

6.1 – Governors' responsibilities

- (i) Gender balance of the Corporation – there was a generally good gender balance.
- (ii) A commitment to gender equality within the College's strategic plan – the Corporation and College has a strong ethos in this area. It was noted that gender equality incorporated the equal rights of those who are trans-sexual.
- (iii) Equality training – referred to in the Human Resources Plan.
- (iv) The responsibility of the Committee to oversee the function as an employer – the Principal reminded members that the function of securing gender equality as a service provider was considered by the Curriculum and Quality Committee.
- (v) The responsibility to receive and respond to the diversity monitoring, impact assessments and the Gender Equality Scheme objectives.

Section 7 – Key actions

The Principal drew Members' attention to the following areas incorporated within the Gender Equality Scheme:

- (i) Recruitment and Selection
- (ii) Career Development
- (iii) Harassment
- (iv) Dismissal
- (v) Maternity and Parental Rights
- (vi) Ensuring Equality between Women and Men
- (vii) Provision for those with Dependents
- (viii) Monitoring and Positive Action

(b) *Disability Equality Scheme*

The Principal presented key extracts from the scheme which identified areas for improvement.

It was noted that the entire scheme would be reviewed every 3 years by the Disability Equality Scheme Group.

It was noted that this was a sensitive area and that the College dealt with all disclosures in a confidential manner.

The Committee then received for information the draft Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan for 2006-07 and the draft Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan for 2007-2010.

**19/07 To consider a Diversity / Equal Opportunities Monitoring Report for September 2007**

The Principal introduced the item and asked the College Administrator to present the report.

- (a) The College Administrator commenced by explaining the different types of employment contract operated in College (Full Time, Proportional and Part-time Permanent contracts and Part-time Variable Hours Contracts - either fixed term or permanent depending on service).

He then introduced the very detailed report. The main points presented were as follows: -

- (i) Gender – the College retained a roughly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> male to 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s female gender split
  - (ii) Ethnicity – the number of staff from a minority ethnic background as a percentage of the total staff fell from 7.1% in September 2006 to 5% in September 2007. The decline in representation was replicated in every section of the workforce with the exception of the percentage of full time lecturers from a minority ethnic background which had increased to 7.5% in September 2007 from 4.9% in September 2006
  - (iii) Disability – the number of staff with a declared disability remained stable at 4.1% compared with September 2006.
  - (iv) Age – 9.1% of staff were aged under 30 in September 2007 compared to 7.9% in September 2006. The number of staff aged over 50 was maintained at 39%.
- (b) The College Administrator then presented the Equal Opportunities Monitoring of recruitments since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007. It was noted that only 70% of Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms had been returned at the recruitment stage so that the data provided was not a complete picture. It was suggested that one reason for this was the practice of using employment agencies, many of whom do not ensure that applicants complete the Equal Opportunities forms prior to interview. It was agreed that a way should be found to improve the return of this information.

The College Administrator informed the meeting that Lynne Kent wished to know whether it would be possible to provide information about which posts had been advertised within the period, together with a breakdown of the gender, disability, ethnic background and age of all those who had applied.

In response, he told the meeting that the information could be established from the records.

- (c) The College Administrator consulted members as to whether the requirement to disclose age and date of birth should be taken off the job application form and inserted instead into the equal opportunities form. The equal opportunities form would not be disclosed to the recruitment panel but would be retained for monitoring purposes.

Members felt that it was not necessary to remove the reference to age in the application form since it could be established from dates provided for education. The Committee also agreed it was necessary to retain dates in the employment record as it was necessary to know about gaps.

- (d) The College Administrator then presented the Diversity Monitoring Report which included the analysis by Gender, Declared Disability, Ethnicity and Age of all staff receiving Promotions or Regrades during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007. It was noted that there had been 16 regrades or promotions during this period.
- (e) The College Administrator then presented the Leavers Analysis for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007. It was noted that there had been 40 leavers during this period. The top three reasons for leaving were: voluntary severance (9); New job / better paid job (8); Retired (7).

The Committee thanked the College Administrator for his very detailed reports.

- (f) A Governor questioned the need for twice yearly reporting. The College Administrator acknowledged that the report was time-consuming to produce. The Principal reminded members that it would be necessary to report on an academic year basis.

Following brief discussion, it was agreed that the November Human Resources Committee would usually consider an Annual Equality and Diversity Monitoring Report for the entire previous academic year.

## **20/07 To consider a Sickness Absence Report for 2006-07**

- (a) The Principal introduced the item, indicating that 5.94% of available working days had been lost due to sickness during 2006-07. This was up on 2005-06 (3.21%) and 2004-05 (3.63%).
- (b) It was noted that the top three (out of 18) notified reasons by working days lost were Depression/Stress (430 days); Hospitalisation/recuperation (401 days); Back/lumbar problems (373).

- (c) Members expressed their concern about the rise in stress related absences. The College Administrator explained that national trends were showing stress as a key issue. He then explained that if a staff member presents a doctors' note diagnosing stress at the second week of absence, the College asks the staff member whether they wish to be referred to occupational health. The College Administrator felt that the longer someone was off with stress the harder it would be to return.
- (d) The College Administrator then consulted the Committee as to whether they wished to receive a quarterly report on absence. Members asked the Assistant Principal and Principal for their views. They concurred that this would be useful for those with line management responsibility. A Governor suggested that managers might find it useful to receive a personalised report that detailed the absences by day of week, the number of days and the average number of days per person.

## **21/07 To undertake the annual review of the Human Resources Plan**

The Principal introduced the item which consisted of:

- (a) *The Human Resources Strategy 2006-09 and 2007 Progress Report on the HR Plan, in which it was noted: -*
- i. Procedures had been updated in respect of Age, Discipline, Fixed Term Contracts to Permanent Contracts and the issue of "un-rolled up pay".
  - ii. Implementation of a new Variable Hours permanent PTL contract.
  - iii. Briefing Sessions for managers in Equality and Diversity not yet held but briefing sheets prepared.
  - iv. Implementation and review of objectives relating to the Well-being at Work Policy – a priority for implementation this academic year.
  - v. In relation to Staff Development, it was noted that the Staff Development Plan was reported separately to the Curriculum and Quality Committee. Responsibility for staff development fell overall to the Assistant Principal (Quality and Operations) with involvement also of the College Administrator for Support Staff development. The Principal drew members' attention to the fact that the Quality aspects of the Human Resources Plan would be extracted and form part of a separate Quality Plan.
  - vi. Members noted that a great deal of effort had been expended by the Finance team in assisting the College Administrator with the technicalities of delivering the arrangements for un-rolled up holiday pay. Also, the issue of fixed term contracts had taken up much of the College Administrator's time. The new arrangements had been carefully implemented and the senior management team had considered them to be a priority due to recent legislation.
  - vii. The Principal explained the basis of the new permanent variable hours contract.

The Principal expressed the view that the progress on the Human Resources Plan had been commendable. She pointed out also that the College Administrator and the Secretary to the College Administrator had been commended in a recent CRB assurance visit for the way that they had managed the Criminal Records Bureau records and reporting process.

The Committee received the progress report on the Human Resources Plan.

*(b) The Human Resources Strategy 2006-09 and 2007 update of the HR Plan*

The Principal drew members' attention to the updated objectives for 2007.

She explained that a development objective during the year was for the Personnel database (PPS) and the staff development database to be integrated. She highlighted the following key elements of the plan: -

- (i) to implement, update and keep under review the Portfolio of Employment policies;
- (ii) to ensure effective procedures for "safeguarding children" and "vulnerable adults"
- (iii) to ensure effective Equality and Diversity policy and procedures
- (iv) to support the use of the well-being at work policy and procedure
- (v) to ensure effective induction of new staff
- (vi) to record teaching qualifications and CPD
- (vii) to maintain the commitment to Staff Development as an important investment to support the future strategic direction of the College
- (viii) to continue to support the drive for consistently high standards of teaching
- (ix) to continue to articulate the core values of the College

The Committee endorsed the Human Resources Plan for 2007-08.

**22/07**

**(a) To review the Terms of Reference for the Committee**

The Terms of Reference were agreed.

**(b) To identify any training needs for the Committee or individual Members**

Members agreed there were no training needs identified for the Committee or individual members.

**23/07**

**Any other business**

- (a) Date of scheduled meetings to December 2008
  - (i) Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at 6.45pm
  - (ii) Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at 6.30pm
  
- (b) The Principal reminded members that the College Awards Evening would be held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, commencing at 6:50pm in the Victoria Hall. All Corporation members were welcome to attend.