

**The College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Employment Policy Committee
9 October 2019
8.33 am
Meeting Room, Principal's Suite, King's Lynn Campus**

Present:	Sharon Cambridge	Governor (Chair)
	Chris Ashman	Governor
	Andrew Cave	Governor
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)
Attending:	Nicky Rowland	Head of Human Resources
	Danny Huddleston	Health & Safety Officer (part)
	Stephen Halls	Clerk to the Corporation

1 Apologies

No apologies for absence were received. It was noted that Matt Walsh, Governor, was absent from the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting – 5 June 2019

The Minutes of the meeting on 5 June 2019 were agreed as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising

The Chair noted Item 10 from the minutes, Strategic Targets, specifically regarding staff turnover where the Head of Human Resources had indicated that the retention of support staff was becoming a concern. The Chair highlighted this, and confirmation was given that this matter was regularly reviewed by managers.

5 Election of Vice Chair

The committee agreed that Andrew Cave would continue to serve as Vice Chair of the Employment Policy Committee.

The Chair noted that 3 new governors had recently joined the Board and that 2 further prospective governors were currently being considered which could possibly lead to a new member joining the committee.

6 Policy Review – Implementation of Pay Review

This item was deemed “confidential.”

7 Curriculum Impact Report

This item was deemed “confidential.”

8 Annual HR Report

The Chair acknowledged that the report was very detailed. The Chair questioned the findings of the diversity information particularly as in a number of instances not all staff fully complete the questionnaire and prefer “not to declare” against certain questions asked. The Head of Human Resources advised that it was necessary to report the required statistics but accepted that sometimes the data collected was not fully available.

Governors reviewed the length of service information and asked, particularly with regard to the recent staff restructure, if an individual’s length of service was noted when restructuring proposals were to be considered. The Principal advised that on occasions some cost implications were highlighted, especially in relation to pension costs and indeed during the recent staffing restructure the costs were higher than those originally budgeted for. However, age and length of service were not targeted with the focus being on the overall cost-benefit solution for the college. The Principal added that some long-serving members of staff did leave the college over the summer period as part of the restructure.

Governors reviewed the age profile of the college, indicating an aging workforce. The Chair noted that for many, a career within further education tended to be an individual’s second career, particularly within the teaching function. The Head of Human Resources advised that over the last 5 years the college had seen a number of younger staff members joining. The Chair said that it was important for the older and more established staff members to share their skills and knowledge with the younger staff. The Principal highlighted the risk of an aging staff profile within small departments, especially if all key members of staff looked to take retirement around the same time. Governors asked if apprentices accounted for many of the younger employees at the college. The Head of Human Resources advised that there were only 2 apprentices currently employed by the college.

Governors reviewed the findings from the exit interviews carried out on staff who left the college during the year, paying particular attention to the percentage change movements on the responses received from the previous year. The Head of Human Resources advised that the feedback received from leavers suggested that employees felt their relationships with colleagues tended to be good, whereas pay was considered to be poor. It was noted that a number of staff who left the college sometimes returned in the future.

The sickness absence monitoring report was reviewed in detail. Sickness levels for 2018/19 were very similar to the previous year. Governors discussed the impact that sickness has on the quality of teaching and how absences affected both students and staff members. Mental health issues, causing the largest loss of days was discussed. The Head of Human Resources advised the committee that the issues causing the absence were not always work related and that personal worries, issues at home etc could result in a member of staff having to take time off work. Governors asked how occupational health services were utilised. The Head of Human Resources advised that these were provided through Cavell & Lind, based in King’s Lynn with the addition of other more specialist providers when appropriate. Discussion continued on how

best to manage the impact on students during a teacher's absence such as the redeployment of staff where possible, accepting that most were usually fully employed and the improved utilisation of teaching support staff. The Chair was concerned about the disruption to learning and the risk of reputational damage to the college if sickness was not reduced or managed effectively.

The Chair noted that the sickness summary table did not provide a split between teaching and non-teaching statistics and suggested that this may be a useful comparator to view in future reports.

ACTION-HoHR

The Principal would raise sickness as an item for discussion at a future College Leadership Team meeting, looking at best practice, sickness management, the impact to students and how to minimise disruption.

ACTION-Principal/HoHR

The report was noted.

9 Staff DBS Compliance / Safeguarding and Prevent Training

The Principal reminded the committee that the HR department was now being line managed by the Vice Principal Corporate Services. Governors reviewed the information in the report and concluded that all was being managed effectively. The new Governors who had recently joined the Board would be undertaking their safeguarding training in November 2019.

The report was noted.

10 Internal Audit Report - Safeguarding

The Clerk reported that an audit had been carried out by the college's internal auditors, RSM, to review the effectiveness of the college's management of safeguarding concerns. The report received had been reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2019. The Audit Committee had asked for the report to be seen by the Employment Policy Committee, for information.

The Chair noted that the auditor's report gave reasonable assurance that the controls in place to manage the risk were suitably designed and consistently applied. The actions and follow-up from the report would be managed by the Audit Committee. There were no concerns raised by the Employment Policy Committee.

The report was noted.

11 Annual Staff Development Review 2018/19

The committee noted the report and considered the section on Strengths and Weaknesses to be very useful. Governors appreciated the listing of various training activities, particularly where the positive impact to teaching and learning was identified. The Principal noted that this document provided useful evidence for staff development when needed, such as for OfSTED. The report linked to various targets within the strategic plan and was useful to the Staff Development Group when discussing future needs and activities.

Governors noted that in respect of teaching qualifications 86% of full-time teaching staff and 81% of part-time teaching staff held the required teaching qualification and asked how this compared across the sector. The Head of Human Resources considered that this compared favourably. The previous requirement was for teachers to gain their qualification within 5 years although this was now reducing to 3 years. The Chair asked if this applied to all existing staff in post. The Head of Human Resources

explained that this new requirement would only apply to new members of staff joining the college. Pay progression was now related to those attaining a level 5 teaching and learning qualification, and although encouraged, it did not form part of a teacher's contractual obligation. The contractual obligation remains at a level 4 qualification.

The apprenticeship levy fund was discussed with funds being used for the teacher training provided by the University of Huddersfield. For staff who did not wish to train through the apprenticeship route personal loans could be taken out to fund the course.

The report was noted.

Danny Huddleston joined the meeting at 9.40 am

12 Health and Safety Summary Report 2018/19

The Health & Safety Officer reported that the number of student accidents had dropped to 32 (66 in the previous year), most notably within the Technology faculty. Reasons for this reduction could include improved staffing and control during practical lessons, smaller class sizes resulting in improved supervision of students and perhaps, in some instances, some under-reporting. However, the control of first aid box supplies reconciled to the number and types of accidents being reported in the various areas.

Staff accidents had increased to 21 (19 in the previous year). Of these accidents, only 3 were deemed reportable to the Health and Safety Executive.

Governors asked about the training opportunities for staff in health and safety matters. The Health & Safety Officer explained the use of the on-line SafeSmart software that provided modular training to staff, such as in fire safety and manual handling. The software provided users with a reminder when training was due and reported to management when any required training was overdue.

Governors asked how training was monitored for its effectiveness. The Health & Safety Officer explained that observations were noted when visiting practical areas and when walking around the campuses. In addition, a review of the number and type of accidents detailed in the accident book would provide an indication of where training had been ignored or needed to be improved. The Chair stated that it was generally accepted in any workplace that health and safety was everyone's responsibility.

The Principal advised that all managers underwent a certificated training course in health and safety. The SafeSmart system was reasonably good at providing general training topics to high numbers of staff and that the reports received showed an improvement in staff members completing the modules and highlighted areas for concern. The Principal considered that the awareness of health and safety had improved over the last 2 years.

The proposed audit areas for 2019/20 were discussed and agreed, noting that other audits would be added in should they be required:

- i. Employee Engagement – where there was considered to be a low response rate to compliance;
- ii. Foundation Studies – a vulnerable area with recent staff changes;
- iii. Funding & Exams – low risk, but not previously audited.

Governors asked how new staff and students were made aware of health and safety issues when they joined the college. The Health & Safety Officer advised that all new staff received a presentation as part of their first-day induction and would then move onto the online training modules. All students were shown to the fire assembly areas

and were also given specific safety training briefings within their respective faculties. Attendance was recorded and so should a student be absent for the session it would be covered at a future time. For partnership working, appropriate checks would be carried out with the provider and information supplied for students to refer to as necessary. The Principal added that safety checks would be carried out as part of the due diligence process when engaging with a new partner and that visits to the partner's premises would also be carried out from time to time. Some of these visits would be unannounced.

The report was noted.

13 Health and Safety Policy Statement

The Health & Safety Officer reported that the policy had been reviewed and was considered to be relevant and appropriate. There were no amendments to the policy as a result of the review.

The committee approved the Health & Safety Policy.

Danny Huddleston left the meeting at 10.04 am

14 HR Self-Assessment Report (Draft)

Governors considered that the document was very comprehensive, thorough and informative and reflected well the performance and activities of the HR department.

On page 2 of the report under the heading of "General Effectiveness" it was suggested that a paragraph/headline statement was inserted summarising the effectiveness of the department.

ACTION-HoHR

Governors were concerned that there was a potential loss of £3k in unspent apprenticeship levy funds (noted on page 8). Although supportive of apprentices, the Head of Human Resources explained how difficult it was as a manager to have an apprentice within the department, providing training and support but also to allow them 1 day off per week for training activities. The Principal added that within organisations apprentices were generally used to fill a vacancy for an existing post, rather than as an additional training post within that establishment. The Head of Human Resources noted that in order to utilise the levy funds staff at the college were being encouraged to undertake qualifying training alongside their usual employment e.g. Level 5 teacher training. Regular meetings were held with Finance, Work Based Learning and HR to monitor the levy funds available and to look for new opportunities and ways to spend the funds for the benefit of the college and its staff.

The Principal explained that the draft report would be presented to the SAR panel for review and moderation in November 2019.

The report was noted.

15 JNC Summary Report 2018/19

There were no questions raised for this item.

The report was noted.

16 Review of Committee's Terms of Reference, Performance and Future Business Agenda Plan

The committee reviewed the committee review proforma as prepared by the Clerk and concluded that it provided a fair and accurate summary of the committee's performance during the past year.

Under Section 1a) the commissioning of the Pay Review by Susan Brady during the summer 2019 term would be included. **ACTION-CLERK**

Under Section 1e) Governors were surprised to note that the Disciplinary Procedure had not been reviewed since March 2013. The Clerk was asked to check this and if found to be incorrect, to amend the report. **ACTION-CLERK**

The committee reviewed the current terms of reference and performance and agreed that the frequency of meetings should be amended from a minimum of three meetings to two meetings per year. **ACTION-CLERK**

No changes to the proposed future business agenda plan were required.

The report was noted.

17 Any Other Business

There were no items of other business.

18 Chair's items for Briefing to Corporation

- The committee reviewed in detail the latest curriculum impact report, noting the staffing issues being experienced across the teaching departments and how the HR department was taking action to work with managers of those departments currently under Support to Improve.
- The committee discussed the Annual Staff Development Review for 2018/19, a very comprehensive document compiled by the HR team, evaluating the training undertaken last year and looking ahead to the training priorities for this new academic year.

19 Date and time of next meeting:

Wednesday, 4 March 2020 at 8.30 am *(if required, or)*
Wednesday 3 June 2020 at 10.30 am.

The meeting closed at 10.28 am