

MINUTES of the MEETING of the HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 22 September 2022

PRESENT: Innis Montgomery, Chris O’Neil, Sally Blyth, Donald MacKenzie, Gillian Galloway

CHAIR: Innis Montgomery

APOLOGIES: Samantha Cribb & Jane Rhodes

ATTENDING: Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality
Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations
HR Manager
Professional Development Manager
Governance Officer
Mandy Armstrong, Anderson Strathern

The Governance Officer confirmed that this meeting was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest, statements of connections or transparency statements noted.

The Chair took this opportunity to thank Dee Bird for her contribution to the HR Committee.

1. MINUTES

a.) Minutes of the Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 09 June 2022

Decision: The Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 09 June 2022 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

b.) Confidential Note CN-01HC-062022 of the Human Resources Committee held on 09 June 2022

Decision: The Confidential Note (CN-01HC-062022) was **AGREED** as a correct record and was **APPROVED**.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST

- Board Induction Training – The Governance Officer advised that induction packs have been circulated to all new members and induction sessions have been scheduled throughout September.
- Shared Finance Service – The Governance Officer advised that due to the change of Audit Chair this meeting has yet to take place. The Committee noted that the Governance Officer will ensure this meeting is scheduled within October 2022.

The HR Manager joined the meeting.

3. DRAFT TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations spoke to the Draft Talent Management Sub Strategy. The Committee noted that it is intended that the strategy will be available on our website. The Committee was advised that staff had been consulted in respect of the Talent Management Framework, which the strategy was framed around.

The Committee discussed the Talent Management Strategy highlighting:

- That it did not identify attracting young talent into the organisation with the Committee being advised that this was a broad strategy and was not aimed at any group.
- How we are communicating with staff who may not be engaging with the strategy or the framework. The Committee noted that the updated PRD process is proving helpful in ensuring that all staff members engage with this at least once a year.
- KPI's and the potential to identify trend and sector data.
- The potential for this progressive talent approach to be rolled out within the partnership. The Committee noted that there has yet to be any discussions around talent management within the partnership.

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Talent Management Strategy be taken to the Board of Management for final approval, pending some amendments in respect of inclusion.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Professional Development Manager spoke to her report advising that following the development of the Talent Management Strategy, the Professional Development Team had set strategic objectives and highlighted the work that was being undertaken to achieve these including:

- The secondment of two teaching staff members to the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Project Team and the initiatives that the team are putting in place this year.
- The continued support provided to Lecturers who have begun the registration process with GTCS.
- Development of digital skills for hybrid/blended learning.

The Committee welcomed this work and discussions around the following took place:

- Research activity within teaching staff. The Committee noted that there has been an increase in interest from staff in respect of research. The Committee was advised that there has also been an increase in the number of staff looking to obtain additional qualifications which have an element of research within them. The Committee noted that the Professional Development Team are working with the Research Team to support staff.
- The Committee was advised that we have a Research and Scholarship Scheme, which has not yet opened for this year, which allows staff to bid for funding to undertake research.

The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality left the meeting.

- Climate change and net zero and how the Professional Development Team are supporting this.
- Virtual learning and the resources available to staff to deliver learning in a new way.

The Professional Development Manager left the meeting.

5. HYBRID WORKING

The Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations provided the Committee with an update in respect of the roll out of the Hybrid Working Pilot. The Committee noted that work rooms have begun to be adapted and that this can be reversed at the end of the consultation period if necessary. The Committee noted that offices have been provided with up-to-date flexible equipment, including standing desks and nooks have been installed within workrooms as additional confidential space for staff to use.

The Committee was advised that the pilot is due to move into the evaluation phase with a report expected to be available in the New Year on the consultation.

The Committee welcomed this update and discussed the following:

- The distinction between hybrid and agile working.
- How we meet the needs of both staff and stakeholders with the Committee noting that the student experience is paramount to all.
- The difficulties and benefits which have been encountered during the pilot.
- Costs which staff who are working from home could expect to incur with regards the rising cost of energy with the Committee noting that our Hardship Fund is still in place.

Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality joined the meeting.

6. NATIONAL BARGAINING

The HR Manager spoke to her report advising that we had received the Academic Staff Pay Claim for 22/23. The Committee was advised that the EIS/FELA claim

was for a consolidated flat rated pay rise of £5000 on all national salary scale points which equates to an approximate 9-14% increase. The Committee noted that there is a National Joint Bargaining Meeting being held today and that the sector will be updated following this meeting.

The Committee discussed comparison of salaries between public and private sector, the importance of attracting and retaining quality staff, inflation rises and the values of our organisation.

In respect of the Professional Services Pay Claim the HR Manager advised the Committee that this has yet to be submitted but that it is anticipated that it will mirror the Academic Staff Pay Claim with additional focus on the prospect of a 4-day working week.

The HR Manager reported to the Committee that an update in respect of the National Job Evaluation had been published and advised that the project team are continuing to undertake work on quality reassurance. Following the conclusion of this work rank orders of the evaluation process will be circulated to each HR Dept for feedback and then ratification by the NJNC. The Committee was advised that stage 3 of the project is still behind schedule and will require a robust set of job evaluation outcomes before the pay model can become part of the project. The Committee noted that no updated timelines in respect of this have been provided to the Sector.

The Committee held a further lengthy discussion in respect of budgets, flat funding, rising costs and noted that the UHI Partnership Conference had allowed us to analyse overheads and Executive Office Top Slice.

7. SHARED FINANCE SERVICE

The HR Manager advised that the Shared Finance Team Restructure has been completed. The Committee noted that job descriptions for the team have a focus on progression and the evaluation grades reflect the knowledge and specialisms for each role. The Committee noted that the new structure allowed for more efficient lines of reporting.

The Committee discussed the developments with regards the rural merger and the implications from this in respect of the Shared Finance Team.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES – QUARTER 4 REPORT 2021/22

The HR Manager spoke to her report providing the Committee with an update in respect of staff turnover, average head count, leavers and starters, PRD completion and sickness absence.

The Committee noted that following a CIPHR update there had been some post upgrade issues for the HR Team. The Committee was advised that the HR Team are continuing to liaise with CIPHR Support to correct these issues.

The Committee highlighted that our staff numbers are rising and noted that we have increased the number of permanent assessors as a result of the growth of our apprenticeship programme. The Committee noted that the Staff Resource Panel ensures that a strong business case is made prior to the recruitment of any staff member.

9. EXTERNAL SUPPORT ANNUAL REPORT

The HR Manager spoke to her report which provides the Committee with an update in respect of our external support. The following was highlighted to the Committee:

- Our Occupational Health Service has improved with a quicker turnaround time being evidenced.
- That free flu vaccines are not being offered from our Occupational Health Service this year.
- Our formal contract with Anderson Strathern in respect of legal matters has been extended and we are exploring options on how to take this forward.
- That our Employee Assistance Programme continues to be promoted to staff.
- It was reiterated to the Committee that we had undertaken a CIPHR upgrade and that we are currently working through the post upgrade issues. The Committee noted that we are continuing to look at the HR systems available to us and that a possible move to integrate the HR and Payroll system is being considered.

10. COMMITTEE AND CHAIR EVALUATION FEEDBACK REPORT

The Governance Officer spoke to her report on the Committee and Chair Evaluation Feedback. The Committee noted that although membership had been boosted through the previous recruitment drive, changes made to the roles of Chairs has meant that we have had two members stand down from the Committee. The Committee was advised that we continue to meet our membership as set out in the Terms of Reference.

Action: The Governance Officer will ask for expressions of interest from members to see if anyone would like to join the Committee.

11. EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Mandy Armstrong, Anderson Strathern joined the meeting

Mandy joined the meeting to provide the Committee with an update in respect of two issues – gender and holiday pay. The Committee noted that these rulings were likely to have implications for employers in all sectors.

With regards gender, the Committee discussed recognition of gender identity, inclusion within the workplace, key points of the equality act, potential ties into disability provision and use of pronouns.

Donald MacKenzie left the meeting.

The Committee welcomed this update and acknowledged the changing landscape around gender.

With regards holiday pay the Committee was advised of a recent ruling in respect of holiday accrual and holiday payments.

Donald MacKenzie joined the meeting.

The Committee was provided an update in respect of the formula for working out holiday hours for those who do not work a normal working week, the previous ACAS formula and the outcome of the recent ruling and where and how this is expected to impact the sector.

The Committee discussed retrospective applications for holiday pay and noted that these are capped at 2 years.

The Committee thanked Mandy for this interesting and useful discussion.

Action: The HR Manager will liaise with Anderson Strathern over an online training session for staff in relation to gender and for members of the Staff Resource Panel in respect of the implications of holiday pay.

Mandy Armstrong left the meeting.

Donald MacKenzie left the meeting.

12. UPDATE TO COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF CONFIDENTIAL HR MATTER

The Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations provided the Committee with a confidential update in respect of the HR Matter. The Committee noted that we are in the process of rolling out new fixed term contracts, where appropriate. In respect of the EIS query in relation to our casual contract pay calculation, the Committee noted that we are content that the calculation being used is correct and we will meet with EIS to discuss this further.

13. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS – CONFIDENTIAL

The Committee noted the contents of the minutes of the JCC meetings held on 03 May 2022, 31 May 2022 and 21 June 2022.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 24 November 2022 at 08.30am.

Signed by the Chair:



Date:

24 November 2022