

MINUTES of the MEETING of the HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 22 June 2023

PRESENT: Innis Montgomery, Chris O’Neil, Sally Blyth, Gillian Galloway
CHAIR: Innis Montgomery
APOLOGIES: Donald MacKenzie, Tina Stones,
ATTENDING: Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations
Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality
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 Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations advised that she had prepared an additional paper which would present the Committee with a significant confidential update in respect of funding reductions. The Committee agreed that the order of the agenda would be altered to ensure that sufficient time was available to discuss this paper fully.

The Professional Development Manager joined the meeting.

1. MINUTES

a.) Minutes of the Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 23 March 2023

Decision: The Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 23 March 2023 were **AGREED** as a correct record and were **APPROVED**.

b.) Confidential Note (CN-HR-032023) of the Human Resources Committee held on 23 March 2023

Decision: The Confidential Note (CN-HR-032023) of the Human Resources Committee held on 23 March 2023 was **AGREED** as a correct record and was **APPROVED**.

2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Professional Development Manager spoke to her report and provided the Committee with an update on Professional Development Activities, highlighting:

- That the first part of the Collaborative Leaders Programme has been undertaken and completed by 38 Managers/Team Leaders with the remaining sessions to be delivered within the first semester of the new Academic Year. The Committee noted that the feedback received for this programme has been exceptional and those who have been part of this programme have welcomed the positive impact on their practice.
- Changes to the GTCS Registration Regulations have provided an additional pathway to registration which enables those who are not currently eligible to apply for full registration. The Committee noted that the Professional Development Team are working with the HR Team to identify those who will be eligible to apply via this new pathway.

- 11 Lecturers have successfully completed their TQFE this year and 13 have completed their Professional Development Award – Teaching Practice in Scotland’s Colleges (Level 9 Award).
- Since the time of drafting the report our Staff Conference has been held. This conference had the theme Metaskills with a focus on how to develop these skills. The Committee noted that there were around 270 staff in attendance throughout the day with an emphasis being placed on communication and meeting colleagues face-to-face. The Committee noted that feedback from the Conference has been great and commended and thanked the Professional Development Team for all their work on this event as well as the training opportunities which they provide to staff.

The Professional Development Manager left the meeting.

3. CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION – IMPACT OF FUNDING REDUCTIONS

The Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations provided the Committee with a confidential update in respect of the impact of funding reductions (CN-HR01-062023).

Decision: The Committee **APPROVED** that the communication on the deficit budget and associated information be shared with staff ahead of the Academic Holidays.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

- Shared Finance Service – The Principal advised that we have been liaising with the Principal Designate for UHI North, West and Hebrides and are continuing to pursue clarification over the Shared Finance Service. The Committee was advised that in respect of the Shared Finance Service and the potential move to the ITrent System, it had been mutually agreed between relevant partners that we would not sign this contract. The Committee noted that the Shared Finance System is therefore back out for procurement.

- Committee and Chair Evaluation – The Governance Officer advised that as part of the June Chairs Committee meeting, membership of all Committees was discussed. The Committee was advised that the Chair would be liaising with a member of the LT&R Committee about moving to the HR Committee and in addition our new Non-Executive Member will join the Committee once their position is ratified.

Decision: It was **AGREED** that this item could be removed from the list.

- Employment Law Update – The HR Manager advised that gender was considered at a recent EDI Committee where it was agreed that this should be discussed throughout the staff group, and it was agreed that a regular employment law update will be circulated to staff from the beginning of the new Academic Year.

5. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

Supporting and Managing Performance Policy

The HR Manager advised the Committee that this policy had been due for review under its previous guise – Performance Improvement. The Committee was advised that the aim of the policy was to encourage staff improvement and to highlight the tools available to assist staff to fulfil the remit of their role. The Committee noted that additions to the policy were made in respect of definitions and responsibilities.

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Supporting and Managing Performance Policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

Flexible Working Policy

The HR Manager advised the Committee that this policy had been due for review and that it has been updated to ensure that it references all relevant legislation and related policies.

The Committee noted that the reasons why a business could refuse a Flexible Working Request was explained within the procedure.

The Committee advised that within 5.1 of the policy, the use of the phrase “timely manner” could be subject to different interpretations and requested that this be made clearer within the policy.

Decision: Subject to the amendment of 5.1 of the policy, the Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Flexible Working Policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

Maternity and Parenting Leave Policy

The HR Manager advised the Committee that this policy had been due for review and again it has been updated to ensure that it references all relevant legislation and related policies. The Committee was advised that NJNC are overseeing the development of a suite of national staff policies including family friendly policies. The Committee noted that the policy had been updated to ensure consistency around the definitions and different types of leave.

The Committee highlighted that a definition of split day was not included within the revisions.

Decision: Pending the addition of a definition of split day, the Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Maternity and Parenting Leave Policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy

The HR Manager advised the Committee that this policy had been updated following an internal audit to encapsulate the recommendations made within this audit. The Committee noted that the policy statement had been updated to reference the probation periods for new starts and that the policy links to our Supporting Probation Policy.

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

TOIL Policy

The HR Manager advised the Committee that we have TOIL guidance in place for staff and the Committee noted that the update ensures that our policy links into the nationally agreed guidelines via NJNC.

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the TOIL Policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information Policy

The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality advised the Committee that this policy relates to staff PVG information and how this information is handled. The Committee noted that the policy now includes reference to the new Student Criminal Data Policy. The Committee was advised that an annual update report on retention and disposal will be taken to the Audit Committee.

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Information Policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

Gender Based Violence Policy

The Vice Principal – Student Experience and Quality advised the Committee that this policy had been subject to review at the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee as much of the policy relates to students with the focus on the White Ribbon Campaign and our commitment to the Emily Test. The Committee noted that the policy is also relevant to staff, and it seeks to outline our position clearly.

The Committee discussed the background to this policy and the culture of gender-based violence within the area.

The Committee welcomed this policy but highlighted that approval by the HR Committee would require to be added to the policy.

Decision: Pending the above update, the Committee **RECOMMENDED** the Gender Based Violence Policy to the Board of Management for final approval.

6. NATIONAL BARGAINING/JOB EVALUATION

National Bargaining

The HR Manager spoke to her confidential report which provided the Committee with an update on the latest developments in national bargaining pay and conditions and highlighted the communication which Colleges had been requested to release to staff.

The Committee discussed the challenges which the sector was facing in terms of funding cuts and flat cash budgets and the HR Manager provided the Committee with information on the nationally bargained pay offers for both Academic and Professional Services staff.

The Committee noted that this had been a difficult year of negotiations and that it was not expected that an agreement will be reached within this Academic Year.

Gillian Galloway left the meeting.

Actions Short of Strike (ASOS)

The HR Manager provided the Committee with a confidential background to ASOS and highlighted that we have taken legal advice prior to circulating a communication to all staff in respect of partaking in ASOS.

The Committee discussed the expected impact of ASOS within the College and the mitigating actions which are being put in place.

Job Evaluation

The HR Manager shared with the Committee the update which had been published by NJNC in March 2023. The Committee noted that there was a divergence across rank orders and that in the sectors view this is not currently implementable. The Committee was advised that a further update from NJNC was expected in April 2023 but noted that this has yet to be released.

The Committee noted that due to the length of time that has elapsed since the start of this exercise that some of the data collected is now out of date as college staff and profiles change over time.

The Committee noted that a Job Evaluation Review Group had been established on a pilot basis to work with 3 colleges, to provide quality assurance. The Committee was advised that this work would be undertaken concurrently with the negotiations on a revised collective agreement.

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

7. CONFIDENTIAL UPDATE – FUNDING

The Vice Principal – Operations and External Relations spoke to her confidential report and reiterated the impact from recent funding announcements.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES – QUARTER 3 REPORT 2022/23

The HR Manager spoke to her confidential report which provided the Committee with an update on the key measures surrounding turnover and absence. The Committee was advised that the report included a summary of teaching staff FTE and contract type. The Committee noted that in respect of PRD, the completion rates remain a quarter behind as the report is up to the end of February 2023.

The Committee was advised that the HR Team had ran a session during the Staff Conference which allowed for the exploration of staff strategies and policies that support staff including a new staff wellbeing policy. The Committee noted that the feedback received will be taken forward by the Staff Wellbeing Group in August.

The Committee thanked the HR Manager for this update.

9. BUSINESS CASE – EMPLOYEE RELATIONS – CONFIDENTIAL

The HR Manager spoke to her confidential report in respect of the Employee Relations Business Case (CN-HR02-062023).

Decision: The Committee **RECOMMENDED** the business case go to the Board of Management for final approval.

10. EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Mandy Armstrong, Anderson Strathern joined the meeting.

The Chair apologised to Mandy advising that due to a full agenda there was insufficient time available for her to provide an employment law update to the Committee. The Committee thanked Mandy for being available and advised that a full update would be welcomed at the September 2023 meeting.

Mandy Armstrong, Anderson Strathern left the meeting.

11. COMMITTEE AND CHAIR EVALUATIONS

The Governance Officer advised the Committee that the Committee and Chair Evaluations are being conducted via JISC survey and that an online invitation has been sent to all members. Members were requested to carry this out by 27 June 2023.

The Governance Officer advised that outcomes and actions from these evaluations will be brought to the Board of Management in October 2023 and feedback will be provided to Chairs as part of their own Evaluation Process.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 14 September 2023 at 08.30am.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. M. Khan', is centered within a rectangular box.

Signed by the Chair:

Date: 14 September 2023