

Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting

Held 21 February 2024 by Teams

Present Mark Sterling (*Chair*), Raj Joshi (*Vice Chair*), Sarah Dawson, Aisha Benachour.

In attendance Jacquie Carman (*Principal*)
Craig Tucker (*Assistant Principal Quality and Standards*)
Jennifer Sunter (*Clerk to the Corporation*)

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| 1 | Apologies for Absence |
| | Apologies were received on behalf of Rachael Charles. |
| 2 | Declarations of Interest |
| | There were none. |
| 3 | Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held 11 October 2023 and Matters Arising |
| | The minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held 11 October 2023 were accepted as a correct record. Under Matters Arising from the minutes: Action 8a under Target Monitoring; the Ofsted survey outcomes in comparison with the College Pulse survey were provided under the agenda. |
| 4 | Strategic |
| 4a | People Strategy |
| | <p>Jacquie Carman presented the People Strategy, which underpinned the College's strategic vision and included the College being one community with one culture. A key focus was that the College should be seen to be a motivational place to work, in tandem with a set of core values that supported staff through the three Ws of workplace, wellbeing and wages.</p> <p>Key points drawn out from the approach were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to have and promote a clear College brand for recruitment and retention of staff • that a strong commitment to staff voice was being shaped • impetus to move forward with Equality and Diversity • greater use of measurable metrics to support the continued drive for the two stands of excellence and efficiency. <p>Governors welcomed the strategic approach and the importance of such a strategy. Governors asked questions and raised points for consideration, which were discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the rewards and benefits of working for Halesowen College could be more explicit within the strategy and how were benefits articulated and promoted to staff? <p>It was noted that this could be clarified in the strategy and that as of 31 July staff would be given a total benefit statement, which would begin to build on the picture of the whole package provided for staff.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Being more explicit in the source of targets used and how these were benchmarked. <p>Jacquie Carman explained that the targets used were from the FE Commissioner.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Following the data provided, understanding how the College staff reflects the learners and concern for areas of low declaration and how these could be improved. |

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| | <p>4. Stronger emphasis on CPD and measuring, particularly digital development of skills (staff starting and finishing position each year).</p> <p>Jacquie Carman explained that middle managers were being consulted about their training needs with Digital CPD at the forefront.</p> <p>5. What was in place to support managers?</p> <p>A Management Development Programme was a current focus and included the Insights Project, skills, knowledge and techniques needs and building leadership confidence.</p> <p>6. Does the strategy address career mapping and succession planning, specifically the College needs for future proofing through developing multi skilled staff, for example to teach across more than one discipline?</p> <p>Jacquie Carman responded that succession planning and risks regarding single points of failure was a burgeoning area of work.</p> <p>In summary the Chair asked for member agreement to take the strategy forward, noting that agreed areas would be updated, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying where targets came from • Explaining the challenges in reflecting the local community • Identifying the graphs • Comments about staff declarations importance in driving the strategy • Inclusion of importance of succession planning. |
| | The Personnel Committee approved the People Strategy subject to management making appropriate adjustments as discussed. |
| 4b | Insights Project |
| | <p>Jacquie Carman outlined how effective and impactful the use of the Insights Project survey had been for the Senior Post Holders and the College Leadership Team. The outcome had enhanced working relationships due to greater understanding of profiles. Moving forward development with middle managers was planned.</p> <p>Governors asked how this would be maintained with new staff and Jacquie Carman explained that this would be standard for management appointments and there would be an annual review.</p> <p>The report was received.</p> |
| 5 | Performance |
| 5a | HR Annual Report 2022/2023 and Equality and Diversity (Performance against 2023/2024 Annual Targets) |
| | <p>It was noted that the reporting of both HR information and Equality and Diversity were under review, with a new format to include data analysis and better reflect the new People Strategy.</p> <p>Governors agreed that shorter, sharper reporting with increased metrics and traffic light rating would be positive.</p> <p>Governors asked if the new flexible working directive, in force from 6 April, would increase demand. Jacquie Carman agreed that potentially requests could increase and management had discussed the use of end dates, to better manage processes.</p> <p>In considering the reporting on Equality and Diversity governors felt that clarity and focus on objectives and targets was needed.</p> <p>Jacquie Carman noted that the College was also beginning to collect wider source data and governors highlighted the importance of increased use of benchmarking.</p> <p>The report was received.</p> |
| 5b | Staff Absence |
| | Governors discussed the current challenges regarding staff absence levels which had increased, asking questions on strategy to address this. Governors recognised that staff absence through sickness was not the sole responsibility of Personnel. |

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| | <p>The role of line managers and effectiveness of occupational health were discussed, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and refresher sessions for line managers, to support understanding and confidence in management of absence. • A new system for absence reporting, making it easier for managers to identify trends. • Early understanding, through recruitment processes, of what staff support needs would be, to avoid later difficulties. • Imminent tendering for occupational health service provision. <p>The use of metrics and some considerations of the Bradford Factor were also noted, including that trade unions were not keen on the use of the latter.</p> <p>The monitoring update was received.</p> |
| 5c | Ofsted Survey - Distance Travelled |
| | <p>Craig Tucker reported on the higher number of responses to the survey of staff taken by Ofsted, as part of their inspection of the College, autumn 2023. Successes were professional development and recognition of staff with the Staff Bulletin being key to driving communication and increasing a sense of community.</p> <p>Governors asked if results were communicated back to all staff, noting that both feedback and ensuing actions were reported back.</p> <p>Governors also asked how participation could be widened. Craig Tucker responded on plans to build on the positivity and to increase participation through the communication systems, including use of quick votes using QR codes in staff briefings.</p> <p>The information was received.</p> |
| 5d | Staff Development Report (compliance and impact) re Training and Development of Staff for Safeguarding and Prevent |
| | <p>Craig Tucker reported on mandatory staff training.</p> <p>Succession planning was an area of focus, particularly in professional development of staff to grow into roles and support needs and in retaining staff. Examples given included staff taking qualifications that enabled them to teach across multiple disciplines.</p> <p>In moving forward the College planned to do more work on the impact of development. The Staff Development day in April was focused on the craft of teaching and looking to exams. This would lead to consideration of impact on student exam grades.</p> <p>Governors asked key questions on more rigour in triangulation of information looking at impact.</p> <p>Governors also asked about clarity of strategy for investment in staff on recruitment, for example through a golden handshake incentive.</p> |
| | The Personnel Committee recommended to Corporation the Staff Development Report for monitoring and assurance. |
| 6 | Compliance |
| 6a | Update on Minimum Service Levels |
| | <p>Governors received an update on Minimum Service Levels in relation to education providers. Currently, Government leaning was for College's to determine their own Minimum Service Levels. The College was working with other Colleges and the Association of Colleges.</p> <p>Governors noted that this remained a complex area, that the College wished to maintain good relations with unions and employees, while looking to address the primary role regarding students and particularly the greater obligations towards those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>The current position was noted.</p> |
| 6b | Updated Settlement Agreement Policy |

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| | | <p>Governors noted the updates to the revised Settlement Agreement Policy, specifically those stemming from the reclassification of colleges to the public sector.</p> <p>Governors discussed the appropriate provision for an employee to take independent advice.</p> |
| | | <p>The Personnel Committee recommended the updated Settlement Agreement Policy to Corporation for approval, subject to the wording on provision for an employee to take independent advice, being checked and appropriately adjusted.</p> |
| 7 | | Any Other Business |
| | 7a | Verbal Abuse of Staff |
| | | <p>Jacque Carman reported on an emergence of increased verbal abuse towards staff both in person, and across telephone and email. Staff were increasingly caught between disputing parents, which were complex and time consuming to address, often with need to seek legal advice.</p> <p>The College had consulted with West Midlands Police to address staff training and had advised staff.</p> <p>Governors noted this position and that abuse of staff remained unacceptable. Governors would share any supportive policy, procedure, techniques or best practice directly to management.</p> <p>The position would be monitored.</p> |
| 8 | | <p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The date of the next meeting was noted as Wednesday 24 April 2024.</p> |

The meeting closed at 7:02pm