

**THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER**  
**MINUTES OF**  
**THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2019 at 16.30**

Present: Mrs Sally Bromley, Mrs Barbara Hobday, Mr Tom Cox, Mrs Ann Donoghue, Dr David Skipp, Mr Sam Uzzell

Apologies received: Mrs Patrice Mantey, Mrs Helen Smith, Mr Robert Yorke

In attendance: Mr Ian Dumbleton, Ms Andrea John, Mr Dan Lodge, Mr Steve Martell, Ms Nicola Whitehead

In the Chair: Mrs Ann Donoghue

2279. **Declaration of interests** None

2280. **Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were approved.**

2281. **Matters arising**

**Item 2240:** The Assistant Principal confirmed that the action point concerning guidance to students on possible financial support available for university visits had been passed to the Director of Progression.

**Item 2269:** The Finance Director confirmed that the mid-year update had been amended to include a key variances column prior to submission to the Governing Body.

**Item 2271:** The Principal confirmed that a further report on investment strategy would come to the Autumn meeting. In the meantime she reported that the College had been unsuccessful in receiving any **CIF funding for 2019/20**. A decision was awaited on the BFIG bid in relation to T levels.

2282. **Pay**

*Paper: Pay Policy*

- a) The Principal reported on the recent conclusion of the NJC pay negotiations for teachers which, as for support staff, was a differentiated agreement. This added 1% to responsibility allowances and the leadership spine with greater increases for those on lower teaching pay points (i.e. 3% increase on pay points 1 to 6 and 1.5% on pay points 7 to 9). A similar approach for support staff had been agreed at the end of March (i.e. 5.79% for the bottom pay point, 3.6% for pay points 15 to 20, 1.5% for pay points 21 to 28, a range from 1.4 to 1% for points 29 to 32 and 1% to those on pay point 33 and above). Both increases were back-dated to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

The cost for Collyer's had been in line with the budgeted increase of 1.5% with the average across colleges expected to be nearer 1.6%. The College was glad to have avoided industrial action though clearly those at the bottom of the pay scales were likely to be the most satisfied. The staff governor commented that differentiation was well understood by staff and that the slow progress in the talks had been well communicated by the Principal. Governors acknowledged that the delay into a new tax year could have some financially adverse impact on staff and created additional difficulties in calculations for HR.

- b) The Principal explained that changes to the **Pay Policy** were relatively minor e.g. dates and the introduction of the Remuneration Committee to determine the pay of SPH, SMT and Clerk salaries. One change had been made (para 7.2.10) in response to feedback favouring face to face communication of the outcomes of job evaluation reviews. The latter gave staff the opportunity to apply for and gain scale increases where this could be justified.

**Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the revised Pay Policy at their next meeting.**

- c) The Chair of the Remuneration Committee explained that the Committee had held its first meeting prior to the F&GP. Having studied performance against targets and benchmarked salaries across the sector, the Committee had agreed recommendations totalling c. £13k which it was hoped the F&GP would consider affordable. The Finance Director confirmed this to be the case whilst acknowledging that going forward a funding increase remained important.

## 2283. HR Policies

*Papers: Staff Disciplinary Policy, Staff Grievance and Bullying and Harassment Policies, Appeals Procedures (Staff), Sickness Management, Leave of Absence and Stress Management Policies, Performance Management and Appraisal Scheme*

*[The Deputy Principal, Steve Martell, joined the meeting.]*

The VP (Q&C) explained that the first three policies were brand new versions of previous policies, based almost entirely on the stock NJC template policies with some small additional points of detail added. He thanked the HR Manager for her considerable work on the documents to ensure compliance with ACAS codes as well as the Clerk for her contribution to ensure consistency with the associated appeal procedures.

- a) The **Staff Disciplinary Policy** contained broadly the same content as before but there was greater clarity on the procedural stages and updated examples of gross misconduct. Some minor reference errors had since been identified and would be rectified. Members asked whether there were any additional procedural notes to support the document, most notably in relation to investigation procedures and SPHs (where the Clerk commented on the associated terms of reference of the new Remuneration Committee and Special Committee). Members were particularly anxious to ensure that those carrying out investigations were competent so that the College were not vulnerable to challenge and the loss of any tribunal case.

**Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the new Staff Disciplinary Policy at their next meeting.**

- b) The VP explained that the former **Staff Grievance and Bullying and Harassment Policy** had been **split in two** in keeping with both the NJC approach and student versions. The procedural stages had been simplified in line with the Staff Disciplinary Policy. Members proposed that thought might usefully be given to training staff in mediation (either internally - and not just in HR - or, for example, in S7) and that mediation be added as a possible approach to the Staff Grievance Policy. Any assistance available to staff through schemes such as the Employee Assistance Programme might also usefully be added to the policies as such approaches were considered to be more likely to be effective than formal processes. **(Action: i) VP to consider changes and ii) Clerk to circulate revisions - prior to consideration by the Governing Body where appropriate).**

**Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the new Staff Grievance Policy at their next meeting subject to the enhancements proposed.**

- c) Turning to the **Appeals procedures (Staff)**, the Clerk explained that there had been relatively minor changes to bring the procedures more in line with those pertaining to non-staff and their associated policies, for example in terms of the timings of appeals and notice of hearings. In response to questions she explained that the description of a companion (i.e. workplace colleague or trade union representative) would not be expected to include legal representation. The procedures did allow for appeals in relation to redundancy either by virtue of the Staff Grievance Policy or, in respect of dismissal, the Change Management Policy.

**Recommendation: That the Governing Body approve the revised Appeals procedures (Staff) at their next meeting.**

- d) The VP concluded by explaining that the remaining five policies had been thoroughly reviewed but that changes were largely cosmetic and generally to correct small points of detail (e.g. job titles, names of other policies, formatting). There were no legislative changes that needed to be reflected and the SFCA had been consulted.

**Resolved: The F&GP Committee approved the:**

- i) **Staff Bullying and Harassment Policy**
- ii) **Sickness Management Policy**
- iii) **Leave of Absence Policy**
- iv) **Stress Management Policy**
- v) **Performance Management and Appraisal Scheme**

#### 2284. HR report

*Papers: Summary paper, Student retention report and SMCG meeting note of 29.3.19*

- a) The Principal explained that she, the VP and Clerk were continuing to review the operation of this relatively new **HR-focussed F&GP Committee** with a view to fine-tuning the content (e.g. E&D review (Staff), Gender pay gap reporting and feedback from staff surveys and exit interviews). The KPI update would be shared with the next meeting. In the meantime she reported on two capability issues, an ill-health retirement and two redundancies.
- b) The Deputy Principal reported on **student in-year retention** (defined as students who were kept by the college post-enumeration in any given academic year, completing a minimum of their core learning aim). The number of student applications was currently very encouraging – and significantly up on 2018/19– but the College needed to be mindful of potential losses given the subsequent impact on funding. This retention rate was used to calculate a lagged retention factor which affected the college’s funding from the ESFA. As such, funding for the 2019-2020 academic year would be based on in-year retention from the 2017-2018 academic year.

The DP assured members that the College would continue to look both at this retention factor as well as course retention where the dropping of a course would affect that course’s retention figures but not the overall in-year retention figures so long as the students still completed their core learning aim. He explained that the retention factor was affected by both Level 2 and 3 courses including mixed programmes and special cases but every effort was made – for example, through action around the key learning aim, to ensure that difficulties were ironed out as far as possible.

More broadly SMT was looking carefully at Year 1 to 2 losses including those who leave at the start of Year 2 as well as timing and any other correlation with those from out of area or for any reason vulnerable. This would help inform the timing of any interventions such as targeted 121s. There had been an increase in the number of students giving the reason of

'Not enjoying course' with some possible hoping for more vocational routes. One area of difficulty was the number of students who made double applications, enrolments and even course starts before making a final decision so students were encouraged to ask lots of questions to help avoid such scenarios. The College was also subscribing to the SFCA's Behavioural Insights Project from which some 30+ other colleges appeared to have drawn benefit in terms of retention.

Overall however the DP was pleased to report a decrease in student losses, including those owing to mental health issues which had previously been on the rise. The College felt too that it had much useful data on which to base further examination and action. Members thanked the DP for his comprehensive report.

- c) The Principal shared the minutes of the last **Staff Management Consultative Group (SMCG)** in March. These reflected discussion of pay negotiations and parking but above all the workload review. The feedback and action plan would be shared with F&GP at their next meeting along with the annual staff cross-college surveys and a staff utilisation report.

**2285. GDPR update**

The Principal reported that the recent internal audit review of the College's GDPR response had been encouraging with nothing significant raised in verbal feedback although the summary written report was yet to be received. One minor recommendation concerned a portability process in relation to CPD but Collyer's was generally deemed to be better prepared than most other colleges.

More widely, lots of training, both internally by staff and externally by the Principal, had been undertaken. An updated GDPR action plan included a new Archive Policy (including action by the IT Manager on mothballed devices) and action to ensure overseas agents were following the College's Privacy Notice and requirements when recruiting international students.

**2286. Governance Quality Framework and Meeting assessment**

Members considered the papers helpful and yet usefully succinct. They welcomed the review by the Principal, VP and Clerk on reporting to the HR meeting seeking, for example, to provide more annual reports and recognised that this might suggest an alternative timing of the meeting.

**2287. Date of next meeting:** Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 16.15 p.m.

The meeting ended at 17.50 p.m.

Chair.....

Date .....

NCW 13/05/19