

## THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

### MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 26<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021 at 16.00 (by Zoom)

Present: Mrs Ann Donoghue, Mrs Barbara Hobday, Mr Graham Lawrence, Mr Dan Lodge, Mr Paul Mittendorfer, Mr Will Power, , Mr Sam Uzzell

Apologies received: Dr David Skipp

In attendance: Mr Ian Dumbleton, Mr Rob Hussey, Ms Andrea John, Mr Steve Martell, Ms Nicola Whitehead

In the Chair: Mrs Ann Donoghue

*Members confirmed that they were content with the information provided and proposed consent items.*

2395. **Declaration of interests** None

2396. **Minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2021 were approved.**

2397. **Matters arising**

**Item 2383:** The Chair confirmed that the KPIs had been adjusted as requested.

**Item 2388:** (*Carried forward:* Project monitoring due for discussion at ESC on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021)

2398. **Pay**

*Papers: Gender Pay Gap report 2019-2020, Pay Policy 21-22, Finance options, Job evaluation*

Members noted the:

- **Final outcome of the national pay negotiations** during 20/21 with a staged pay award for support and teaching staff that totalled 2.42% in year against a budgeted pay rise of 2.5% from January 21 which equated to 1.46% in year.
- **Gender Pay Gap report** which showed similar data to the previous year. In response to a question on visibility, the Principal explained that the report was universally available on the College website. In future, he would also *signpost the gender pay gap report in the Principal's post-Easter update to staff and students.* (**Action: Principal**)
- **Pay Policy** which had no significant updates – mainly job titles, fine detail on procedures and explanation of the updated Job Evaluation process. In response to a question on variable pay and its transparency, the Principal explained the limited scope, for example, through the Support Staff Standards Payment (SSSP). In the light of further pay discussions planned for the forthcoming Remuneration Committee, it was agreed to *carry endorsement of the Pay Policy forward to the next F&GP meeting* (**Action: Clerk**). *Other amendments to consider included clarity on the definition of a 'good' honours degree.* (**Action: Principal**)

Discussion followed on the **Finance Options** and **Job evaluation context** papers showing how key aspects of the new Finance Strategy were being implemented whilst recognising staff as the College's key asset and some further improvement in the (relatively strong) financial outlook. In discussion, the following points were recognised:

- A policy of **no automatic replacement without evaluation was a prudent approach;**
- **Attrition** was a potential 'friend' in meeting a 5% savings target though the level was **difficult to predict and indeed maintain.** Very limited **staff churn** in 2019/20 had been **balanced out** over 2020/21. Savings were especially difficult in the light of further pay settlements. As such the approach was quite nuanced looking not only at posts but hours, seniority, etc. The demand for

teaching staff could be assessed quite scientifically (informed by predicted enrolment figures) but was more difficult to gauge with regard to support staff.

- **Potential savings should not impact on quality** so the appropriateness of the 5% target was important and might therefore not be evenly distributed across college activities. The Finance Director referenced the emphasis on more effective ways of working without negatively impacting on outcomes. The Principal referenced a similar recent discussion in the Risk Management Group;
- The benefits of increasingly **effective but practical routine tracking of any savings**;
- The importance of an **understanding across the organisation** so as to get buy-in/ encourage efficiencies;
- **ESFA guidelines on pay** as % of income i.e. 70% which most colleges found difficult to achieve;
- The **valuable discipline of an effective job evaluation process** with members noting the college's new approach and guidance focussing on a line manager rather than individual's request.

Finally members noted that F&GP would be consulted on the financial impact of the Remuneration Committee's recommendations on SPH, SMT and Clerk's pay at their June meeting.

#### 2399. HR Policies

*Papers: LGPS Discretions Policy, Performance Management and Appraisal Policy, Staff Probation and Capability Policies, Staff Development Policy, Appeal procedures (Staff).*

Members noted there were no changes to the **LGPS Discretions Policy** since the last review and only minimal changes to the **Staff Development Policy, Appeals Procedures (Staff) and Probation Policy** (to include more detail on induction and probation for temporary staff, and the extension of probation periods),

The **Performance Management and Appraisal Policy** had a moderate level of change since its last review in 2018 whereas the **Staff Capability Policy** had been substantially overhauled and aligned very closely with the SFCA recommended policy.

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

LGPS Discretions Policy,  
Performance Management and Appraisal Policy,  
Staff Probation Policy  
Staff Capability Policy,  
Staff Development Policy

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

#### 2400. HR report

*Papers: HR Report*

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal (VP) (Curriculum) and his team for the second iteration of a new comprehensive HR report to facilitate scrutiny across all key aspects of HR activity including any year on year trends. Members were invited to give feedback on the content to ensure it addressed priority information and was not too onerous to produce.

The VP (Curriculum) RJH highlighted a few points including:

- The **HR risk register's inclusion of Covid impacts** e.g. on staff workload with some impact too on completion of staff appraisal milestones and staff development activities although much of the latter had moved online with peer support a strong feature;
- **Sickness leave** – both short and longer term - was substantially **lower**;
- **Exit interviews were encouraging** with 93% of leavers considering the College a good employer and two thirds reporting excellent relationships with line managers and colleagues;

- **The E&D staff profile remained largely unchanged** with, for example, 89% of staff classified as ‘White British’, compared with 81% of course starters reporting as “white” (and 92.2% of Horsham residents according to the ONS census statistics from 2011).

Governors commented favourably on the **richness of information**, especially at the current time and with particular mention of the exit interview report. **Questions were raised as to whether:**

- *There should be **more challenge**, for example through the inclusion of data on sexual orientation and more powerful role models*, noting that these were thought to be available through teaching and enrichment opportunities;
- *With regard to age, there was **clear career progression and succession planning** which supported bringing on the younger staff demographic.*

*Discussion followed on whether the report, having provided well balanced but comprehensive information and raised questions, might be re-orientated to be a more **strategic action plan**. A key issue was, for example, whether there was demand and/or scope for greater working from home without damaging the community dynamic - to be informed by a forthcoming staff survey focussing on potential longer term benefits from Covid lockdown. In the meantime there was flexibility for some short-term arrangements e.g. to work on specific projects. **In summary, it was agreed that there should be an HR strategy in the future taking account of the context of current 2020-23 strategies and the complementary annual QIPs – whilst also avoiding unnecessary delay.** (Action: VP (Curriculum) in consultation with the Committee Chair).*

In terms of future HR reports, the VP (Curriculum) sought views on the most favourable date for the HR meeting to accommodate the most timely reporting e.g. covering a full year and therefore more representative and facilitating YoY benchmarking. Members recognised the **value of a full year picture (combined with any ad hoc reporting** of specific issues during the year) whilst being **concerned not to cause an unnecessary burden operationally**. This suggested a more **abbreviated report focussing on correlations and extrapolations and/or a deep dive approach** into priority areas of focus with the emphasis in either case. The co-optee also proposed some contextual explanation e.g. of the recruitment market would be helpful.

From a governance perspective, the Committee Chair concluded by **thanking the VP (Curriculum) and the HR team** for the **informative and very interesting HR report** whilst proposing the **focus now shifted to next steps and the overriding plan**.

Finally, members noted the notes of the recent **SMCG meetings**. **The Principal thanked Neil Kendall for his engagement** as the sole union representative, most notably in recent times in consultation on the reopening risk assessments. He hoped that a replacement UNISON rep might come forward in due course.

2401. **Any Other Business** None

2402. **Governance Quality Framework and Meeting assessment**

Members welcomed the comprehensive HR reporting and discussion of how this might evolve as the new meeting progressed its remit. The meeting was considered to have been well managed and inclusive of all including the new member.

2403. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 15.00.

The meeting ended at 17.35.

Chair.....

Date .....

NCW 07/06/21