

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES (HR) COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 16.30

Present: Mr Stephen Avery, Mr Teddy Bridges, Mrs Barbara Hobday, Mr Dan Lodge (Principal), Mr Paul Mittendorfer, Mr Will Power, Mr Dominic Wakefield

In attendance: Members of SMT - Mr Steve Martell (DP)
Mrs Russha Sellings (Clerk)

In the Chair: Mr Stephen Avery (Acting Chair)

1. Chair's Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The meeting opened as scheduled. Apologies were received and accepted from the Chair Mrs Ann Donoghue; the Committee's Deputy took the chair in her place. Apologies were also received and accepted from Mr Graham Lawrence and FD Mr Ian Dumbleton. Ms Olivia Blake, HR Director, who had recently taken post was warmly welcomed to the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

None declared with regard to the agenda items.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

Financial forecast assumptions (carried forward to the next meeting for presentation with the draft budget)

The Principal gave a brief update on the summary requested by the Committee at the last meeting in consideration of the unfunded pay award, which for teaching staff was not yet agreed. Approximately £200k of savings would be required to meet a 5% award; the STRB had recently advised 6.5% although the Government appeared steadfast in response to teaching strikes which members were informed may continue into the late summer and autumn terms. Some expenditure costs such as utilities remained uncertain but were trending downwards. There would be further updates on the quantum and planned strategies for the next meeting, presented alongside the draft budget.

Against the backdrop of financial challenges, the Principal was pleased to report that the College has been successful in a recent CIF bid for replacement roofs (with an £83k contribution from the College) and had also received two grants of £80k each from The Mercers' Company for mental health support.

5. Pay Matters

Papers: Gender Pay Gap report, Pay Policy 2023-24 (consent items)

a) Gender Pay Gap report

The Acting Chair requested the Principal provide brief updates. The Gender Pay Gap report had been prepared as usual, by the Finance Manager. The challenge remained with respect to predominantly female staff, especially in part time support staff roles and the lower quartile pay grades, affecting the median. In education, the sector trend was female dominated and benchmarks were often not meaningful. One member raised the importance of addressing diversity in pay including ethnicity pay reporting and encouraged the College to actively consider addressing the gender pay gap, if possible via the new HR strategy. The Principal agreed to seek the views of S7 colleges in the first instance. **(Action: Principal)**

b) Pay Policy 2023-24

The annual review of the policy was presented with track changes which included some clarification on additional payments (section 6). There was discussion on 6v, what this might be comprised of and whether overtime should be included. An example was provided. The Principal suggested overtime pay was an operational matter that wasn't usually included in the policy, instead HR could respond to individual overtime queries where they arose. To avoid any confusion, it was agreed 6v would be removed from the policy.

Recommendations: The Governing Body approve the Pay Policy at their next meeting, subject to the agreed amendments.

It was noted the Remuneration Committee meeting was deferred to 09-06-23 and the composite pay report on SMT and Clerk pay carried forward to the next meeting.

6. HR Policies:

Papers: ECT policies and Staff Code of Conduct

i) Early Career Teacher (ECT)

The Principal advised this was complete redraft replacing the NQT Policy and taking into account statutory guidance. There were no comments raised.

Recommendations: The Governing Body approve the ECT Policy at their next meeting.

ii) Staff Code of Conduct

The document review included input from the EDI Officer. There was a particular focus on section 16 from a safeguarding and freedom of speech perspective. Members asked if this was compared to others and the Principal responded that was generally good practice to look at exemplars.

There was a question raised around conflicts of interest in particular related to family relationships. It was noted this was adequately covered off under section 10, however it was agreed to make reference to the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Resolved: The Committee approved the updated Staff Code of Conduct subject to the agreed amend.

7. HR Report

Papers: HR annual report, SMCG minutes (07-03-23)

a) Annual Report inc:

Mr Martell introduced the report and provided some commentary by section.

i) Performance Management

It was pleasing to note the refreshed appraisal system was working well.

ii) INSET day

No further updates.

iii) Recruitment

Recruitment remained strong, however there were pockets of challenges in some areas such as specialist support staff where the College were in a competitive market against private sector salaries.

iv) Absence

Absence was overall higher than pre-pandemic, however strike days arising from industrial action were lessening over time.

v) Retention

Members discussed attrition rates which appeared very low this year; Ms Blake attributed this to seasonal factors impacting teaching staff departure dates with the data provided only up to March 2023.

vi) Exit Interviews

Job dissatisfaction had not been cited as a reason for leaving to date this year. It was observed that the return rate was low, this was largely due to not being enforceable. The factors captured under the 'other' category with the highest number of responses at 62% could benefit from being explored further. One member observed that defining retirement in the current climate was challenging.

vii) Wellbeing

Members heard of the progress via the newly formed College Action Group.

The Committee thanked the staff responsible for drafting the report which provided useful insights.

b) Pay award update

The Principal advised members that the HR team has worked hard to implement the interim 5% pay award before the end of March, bringing it in before the end of the tax year. Following on from the earlier update, the settlement was still under negotiation. The Principal cautioned that industrial action may become more concerted especially in schools where headteachers may also strike, causing complete school closure. It was uncertain whether this would coincide with teacher strikes. The funding increase next year for colleges was 2.2%, which as rehearsed meant the pay award would not be fully funded for colleges by the Government.

c) People Strategy development

Thanks were recorded to Mrs Sue Gardiner who had stepped in while the College recruited a new HR Director. Mrs Ann Donoghue was also thanked for drawing together the main basis of a future People strategy started by the former HR Director. This would be taken forward by Ms Blake once she had settled in and the Principal advised this should be ready for the Autumn term Committee meeting. The Acting Chair emphasised the importance of this strategic driver and how this demonstrated the commitment to staff.

c) SMCG meetings (07-03-23)

The Principal was hopeful that the NASUWT would be available to provide some teaching staff insights. Academisation was a topic at the meeting and open and transparent communications helped allay some individual concerns which centred around changes to terms and conditions.

8. AOB

Nothing to report.

9. Meeting Assessment

The Committee benefitted from the input of HR professionals. Members observed positively the efficient running of the meeting and the meeting pack.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 28 June 2023 at 16.30. The Principal was hopeful the meeting could take place in the new Shelley building.

The meeting closed at 17.29

Chair

Date

RRS 25-05-23