

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of 15 July 2014

The meeting commenced at 1030 hours.

PRESENT - I Gossip, K Gravells, C Inglis (Chair), M Melvin, K Milroy, A Smith, S Smith, R Wallen
IN ATTENDANCE – E Hart, P May, P Kesson

Ms Inglis welcomed Ms Gravells and Mr Smith to their first meeting of the Human Resources Committee.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from B Dunn and A Simpson.

2. Minute of previous Meeting

The Minute of Meeting held on 20 May 2014 was approved.

3. Matters arising from previous Minute

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports by the Principal

4.1 Report to the Committee

The Committee noted a report providing information on structural reorganisation; organisational and staff development; HR and Staff Development performance indicators; health and safety; catering contract; and equality and diversity.

In response to a query from Ms Inglis, Mr Wallen confirmed that targets will be included in future reports on HR and staff development performance indicators.

4.2 Scottish Funding Council 6-month Post-merger Evaluation

The Committee considered the letter received from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) detailing the outcomes of the College's 6-month post-merger evaluation.

Mr Wallen commented that the oral feedback to Board Members on the day of the visit had not covered some of the aspects mentioned in the letter.

Ms Inglis commented that it would be beneficial for the letter to be considered at a full Board Meeting.

Referring to the statement that a hierarchical approach now existed at Fraserburgh Campus Ms Inglis commented that she understood how this could be perceived at the Campus as in the past a more paternalistic approach had been adopted at Banff & Buchan College. Ms Inglis said the letter from the SFC was very positive.

Ms Hart commented that there was a highly accessible HR team at Fraserburgh Campus and that a member of staff had spent a disproportionate amount of time dealing with staffing issues there.

In referring to the perception by staff at Fraserburgh Campus that "Aberdeen structures, culture and processes were being imposed on them", Mr Wallen commented that established practices which had all worked well in Aberdeen College

were being adopted at the Fraserburgh Campus. Mr Wallen added that he felt the pace of change had been measured and there was therefore no reason why such practices should not be adopted throughout North East Scotland College.

The Committee noted the letter from the SFC and the positive overall conclusion of the evaluation.

5. Matters for Discussion

5.1 HR Priorities

The Committee considered a paper providing details of progress on key HR priorities.

Ms Hart provided additional information on the proposed replacement of the current HR/Payroll system and it was noted that the suggested timescale for this project may be too ambitious.

Ms Hart summarised the proposed structure for the College's HR team.

Ms Hart advised that work on support structures is on-going and that the structures already in place are functioning well and roles have been accepted.

Members were informed that Mr Mike Wilde, who had previously worked in the College as an employee of MITIE, has now been appointed as the College's Estates Monitoring Officer with responsibility for contractors working in the College.

5.2 Implementation of New Staffing Structures Progress Report

The Committee considered a report giving details of the progress of the implementation of new staffing structures in the College.

Ms Hart and Mr Wallen provided additional information on the job evaluation process.

The Committee noted the good progress being made with the implementation of new staffing structures across the College.

5.3 Report on the Proposed North East Scotland Weighting

The Committee considered a paper providing information on the initiative from public sector employers in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire to lobby the Government for an Aberdeen "weighting" (similar to the London weighting) due to difficulties of recruiting and retaining staff in the North East.

Mr Milroy commented that it was good to see that the discussions had been widened to also incorporate a number of other key strategic elements, e.g. affordable housing, in addition to a proposed weighting.

Mr Wallen said it was important that the College had flexibility in determining salaries due to the economy of North East Scotland and related difficulties in recruiting staff.

Ms Inglis commented that it might be worthwhile considering the College undertaking its own research in relation to this matter if the proposed report is not commissioned by the working group.

The Committee noted the report.

5.4 Investors in People Reaccreditation

The Committee considered a paper providing information of the outcome of the Investors in People (IIP) Assessment at Fraserburgh Campus and the next steps that need to be taken for the College as a whole. Information was provided on the background to the IIP; Bronze Standard Assessment at Fraserburgh Campus; quality and continuous improvements; change management; areas for development; and outcome and next steps.

Ms Hart summarised key issues noted as part of the IIP reaccreditation assessment.

Members noted that the Assessor had acknowledged that the College had been experiencing a significant period of change.

It was agreed that an initial draft of an action plan to address areas for development would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee requested Mr Wallen to thank Fraserburgh Campus staff on their behalf for their contribution to the successful reaccreditation.

The Committee agreed that options for delaying the reassessment of the Gold Standard for up to a year should be explored and updates on the progress of actions for implementation would be given at future meetings of the Committee.

6. Matters for Information

6.1 Report on Staff Development and CPD Activity

The Committee noted a report providing information on Staff Development and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities.

Information was provided on Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE); assessment and verification qualifications; introductory teaching qualifications; induction refresh; training activity; achievements; and plans for the future.

Mr Wallen provided additional information on flexible hour contracts and on staff development issues at Fraserburgh Campus, arising from staff having been informed that certain training is mandatory.

Ms Inglis asked how the College assures the quality of the teaching provision. Mr Wallen said that lesson observation had previously been carried out in Aberdeen College but that Mr Cowie, Vice Principal Organisational Services, was currently considering a new approach which will be standard across all Campuses.

It was agreed that Mr Cowie will be requested to attend the next meeting of the Committee to further discuss the evaluation of teaching staff.

7. Summation of Business and date and time of next Meeting

The Secretary gave a summation of the business conducted. The next meeting of the Human Resources Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 16 September at 1030 hours.

Ms Gravells and Mr Smith left the meeting at this time.

8. Reserved Item of Business for Information

8.1 Recognition and Procedure Agreement

The Committee noted an oral update provided by Mr Wallen in relation to the Recognition and Procedure Agreements (RPAs).

Mr Wallen confirmed that the RPA for support staff had been signed by all the relevant trade unions. He informed Members that the EIS are refusing to sign the RPA for teaching staff. Mr Wallen added that interim arrangements were in place due to the teaching staff RPA being unsigned.

9. Reserved Items of Business for Discussion

9.1 HR Policies

9.2 Progress towards Harmonisation

9.3 Report on the Usage of Protocol National Staff and the Supply Register at Fraserburgh Campus

9.4 Update on Voluntary Severance Scheme

The meeting concluded at 1155 hours.