

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of 15 March 2016

The meeting commenced at 1035 hours.

PRESENT: K Anderson, I Gossip, J Henderson, C Inglis (Chair), R McGregor, K Milroy, A Simpson, R Wallen

IN ATTENDANCE: D Duthie, E Hart, P May, P Kesson

OBSERVER: L Taylor

Ms Inglis welcomed Mr McGregor to his first meeting of the Committee, and welcomed Ms Taylor to the meeting as an Observer.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from S Brimmer and A Smith.

2. Minute of previous Meeting

The Minute of Meeting held on 26 January 2016 was approved.

3. Matters arising from previous Meeting

3.1 The Committee noted a paper providing updated information on matters arising from the meeting held on 26 January 2016.

3.2 Other matters arising

3.2.1 Investors in People (IiP) Report

Ms Hart said she would follow up the finalisation of the report from IiP with a view to the report being available for the next meeting of the Committee.

3.2.2 Staff Handbook

Ms Hart said that work was in progress on the new electronic Staff Handbook for staff and a demonstration would be given at the meeting of the Committee scheduled for July 2016.

4. Report by the Principal

The Committee noted a report providing information on: transfer of Animal Care to SRUC; zero hours contracts; pay award 2014-15; catering contract; and proposed changes to Corporate Homicide Law in Scotland.

Mr Wallen informed Members that no members of College staff are paid below the 'living wage' but noted that this was not currently the case with all of the College's contractors. A short discussion followed on proposals being considered to help meet the cost of the College's catering contractor paying the 'national living wage' to staff working at the College.

Mr Wallen also provided additional information on the proposed changes to Corporate Homicide Law.

5. Matters for Discussion

5.1 HR Priorities and Strategy Implementation

The Committee considered a paper on progress made with key HR priorities.

Ms Hart said she was still awaiting a definitive final response from Bond on the Payroll System's capabilities for automation. Ms Hart added that she believed that the current system does not meet statutory requirements, and noted that the administration of the recent pay award to staff had had to be carried out manually by payroll staff.

Ms Hart was requested to ensure that the full report from Investors in People, together with the Action Plan, be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

5.2 National Bargaining and Industrial Action

Mr Wallen informed the Committee that EIS Union members have rejected the pay award made to the lecturers' side and will begin a national campaign of industrial action which will take the form of strike action over 32 days, the first being on 17 March 2016.

Mr Wallen said that contingency arrangements have been made to ensure continuity of service within the College, and said that all students were being informed that the College will remain open during strike action. Mr Wallen commented that he believed some colleges had asked students not to attend on 17 March.

A question was posed on how strike action will affect "death in service" for pension scheme members and Mr Wallen said he would take advice from Colleges Scotland and the Scottish Public Pensions Agency. Members agreed that it was important for staff to be aware of the implications if they decided to take strike action. It was agreed that, if the matter required to be addressed, the Committee would be informed by email and asked to approve any required actions.

5.3 Voluntary Severance Scheme

The Committee considered an update of the paper on the Voluntary Severance Scheme presented at its meeting on 26 January 2016.

Members noted the guidance which had been issued by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in February 2016 and which discontinues the use of Settlement Agreements. Members also noted that the College has sought further clarification on matters from the SFC.

After some discussion, including the rationale for approval of applications for Voluntary Severance, the Committee agreed that the Voluntary Severance Scheme would be appropriate to help the College deal with the anticipated deficit for 2016-17 and adopted the revised Scheme as presented. Members noting that a business case will be undertaken for each individual application to the Scheme.

Mr Wallen said that management will implement the Scheme on behalf of the Board of Management. It was agreed that approval of the Committee would only be sought if the payback period would exceed one year's gross salary of the member of staff.

6. Matters for Information

6.1 Key HR Performance Indicators

The Committee considered a report providing information on key performance indicators for the period 01 October 2015 to 31 December 2015 (Quarter 4) as well as an Annual Overview of 2015 relating to the human resources function.

Information was provided on: quarterly statistics; annual statistics; actions to address issues highlighted; and absence statistics.

Ms Hart commented that, going forward, the system will differentiate between lecturers and support staff.

In referring to absence through anxiety and stress, Ms Hart said that the College has established a mental health group and this group will consider reinstating an annual staff 'well-being' survey.

In noting the information the Committee agreed that the information is useful in terms of future workforce planning.

6.2 Staff Equality Profile

The Committee considered a report providing information as to the equalities profile of the staff of the College by protected characteristic.

Members noted that the information is broadly in line with wider Scottish statistics.

Ms Hart said that the Equality Challenge Unit has advised that there is no obligation to report on race or disability issues by April 2017.

Following a discussion on Board membership, it was agreed that Board Members equality information would be collated and the issue of a Board Equality profile would be discussed at a future meeting of the Board.

6.3 Key Health and Safety Performance Indicators

The Committee considered a report providing information on key performance indicators relating to the Health and Safety function.

Information was provided on: accident statistics; work placement visits; approved contractor list; workplace dust monitoring; and food hygiene inspections.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and Ms Inglis commented it was reassuring to see the high profile health and safety has in the College.

6.4 Leadership Development

The Committee considered a paper providing information about how the College plans to undertake Leadership Development.

Information was provided on: McQuaig Psychometric Testing; preparing development plans; implementation and timescales; training interventions; future plans; and potential sensitivities.

Members noted the paper and commended the approach being taken to leadership development.

6.5 Report on Organisational Development Activity

The Committee considered a report providing information on the key activities undertaken by the Organisational Development Team.

Information was provided on assessor awards; verifier awards; a recent staff development day; and matters relating to the Prevent Strategy.

The Committee noted the paper.

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 17 May at 1030 hours.

The meeting concluded at 12 noon.