

## **Policy & Resources Committee**

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### **Approved Minutes**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee held on Monday 21 November 2016 at the Thurrock Campus at 6.05 pm.

Present: Dr R Gray (Chairman)  
Mr D O'Halloran  
Ms O Buck  
Ms A O'Donoghue CBE

In Attendance: Mr A McGarel (Deputy Principal & Chief Executive)  
Mr R I Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)  
Mr S Smith (Vice Principal, Corporate Resources) - Item 6 only  
Mrs R Brooks (Head of Human Resources) Items 1-5 and 8  
Ms D Hurst (Director of Finance)

The Clerk took the Chair for the first two items on the Agenda.

Item 8 on the Agenda was taken after Items 1 to 5 had been covered and then item 7 was taken before item 6.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Burrell, Mr R Launder, Ms M West and Ms D Brown (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality).

### **2. Election of Chairman 2016/17**

The Clerk called for nominations for the position of Chairman for the academic year 2016/17. Rod Gray was the only nomination received and he was elected Chairman nem con.

Dr Gray then took the Chair.

### **3. Urgent Business**

SFA Financial Notice of Concern – this is covered in item 7 below

The Deputy Principal & Chief Executive informed the Committee of an incident which occurred in Grays adjacent to the College Campus. He had also informed the whole Board by email. Despite erroneous media reports, the incident did not involve the College or College students. College staff had assisted the victim with his injuries.

### **4. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 20 June 2016**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 20 June 2016 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

## 5. Matters Arising

The Clerk **REPORTED** that the Board had approved the following items on the recommendation of this Committee at its Meeting on 11 July 2016:

- Health & Safety Policy and Annual Report
- College Budget 2016-17
- College Financial Forecast to 2017-18
- College Fees Policy 2016-17
- Risk Management Policy (renewal)
- FRS102 Accounting Treatments

## 6. Strategic Developments in South Essex (Paper PRC.16.17)

*This matter was deemed to be a Confidential Item under the Instrument & Articles and a separate minute has been prepared, which is attached to these minutes.*

## 7. College Finances (Paper PRC.16.18)

*This matter was deemed to be a Confidential Item under the Instrument & Articles and a separate minute has been prepared, which is attached to these minutes.*

## 8. HR Matters (Paper PRC.16.19)

### Staff Absence and Turnover

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Report from the College's Head of Human Resources providing the Committee with information in relation to sickness absence and staff turnover enabling KPIs for both of these aspects to be monitored.

The Report provided a summary of last year's statistics, noting last year's KPIs had not been met, but had only just been exceeded. It also matched College figures against the most recently available sector data provided by the Association of Colleges.

The **absence rate** for the year to 30 September 2016 was 7.89 days (previous year 8.56) as against the AoC 2013 survey of 8.42 days. The KPI for this year is set at 7 days. This equates to eight days absent on average per person.

This reflects considerable and timely intervention when absences arise. There are some long term unwell staff and they are being supported. There has been capability hearings to address, amongst other things, absence and their frequency.

The **staff turnover** for September/October 2016 was 4.23% (2015: 2.31%) and if this rate is continued, then the KPI for the year of 15% will be exceeded. However, it is anticipated to decrease.

In respect of challenge by Members, the Head of HR and the Principal & Chief Executive responded as follows:

- Some staff turnover is good because it involves people leaving who are performing below par or their general role and attitude have not been adequately tackled in the past (e.g. regular 'sick' days off)
- Management intervention and support is given to staff both in respect of absence and to minimise turnover

- Agency cost is much lower this year than last year, it is being closely monitored and only used where there is an absolute need because keeping this cost down is essential to achieve the cost savings required this financial year
- KPI to be left as it is for the time being – it is stretching but the target is appropriate and traction is being gained

It was noted that natural wastage is occurring and replacement of those departures being carefully considered to ensure necessary.

The Committee was provided with data on the HR casework log at the current time. Sickness absence and turnover remain a high priority for the College. The Committee were pleased to see the progress being made in managing this area.

### Pay Award 2016/17

The Committee considered the AoC Pay Recommendation outlined in the paper provided to Members, which is 1% applied to all salaries or £250 pa where this is more beneficial.

The Committee were mindful of the need for the College to achieve considerable cost savings of £1.7 million in total this academic year and general affordability.

It is therefore the view of the Committee that, whilst the College would like to reward staff, it is not felt possible to make any pay award now for this year, but the matter will be kept under review. Any pay award this year must be matched by savings elsewhere.

If it proves possible to finance an award for staff this year, the Committee agreed with Management's view that a one off payment for staff was the preferred route so that any rise is not consolidated for the future into the pay rate for the individuals concerned.

Discussions are ongoing with the Unions and they will be told that the possibility of an award will depend on savings made elsewhere in the New Year.

Regarding the Living Wage, the College is compliant with the law (£7.20 per hour) but is not legally required to increase the Rate to £8.25 per hour. The College has a policy to pay a minimum hourly rate of £8.00 per hour (applicable since November 2015).

The Committee **NOTED** the Report and **RECOMMENDED** no increase in pay rates for the 2016/17 year with the matter being kept under review.

## **9. Committee Matters (Paper PRC.16.20)**

The Clerk presented Revised Terms of Reference for review by the Committee and a paper showing compliance by the Committee with its own Terms of Reference during 2015/16.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Terms of Reference be approved by the Board at its Meeting on 5 December 2016, without amendment, and **NOTED** its Compliance with the Terms of Reference.

He also informed the Committee that he had not yet had all the results of the Committee's own Self-Assessment for 2015/16 from Members and would report on this matter at the earliest opportunity.

**10. Forthcoming Events** (Paper PRC.16.21)

The Committee **NOTED** the schedule of forthcoming events provided by the Clerk.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 6 February 2017 at the Southend Campus at 6.00 pm.

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 8.25 pm.

Signed.....Dated.....