

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 2 MARCH 2021 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE.**

**PRESENT:**

Mr Scott Alexander, Chair  
Mr Brian Doran, Chief Executive  
Mr Gordon Gough  
Mr John Nugent  
Dr Eileen Stewart  
Mrs Nicola Wilson

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Andrew Saunders, Governing Body Chair  
Mr Raymond Sloan, Director of Client Services  
Mrs Ann Marie Hughes, Assistant Director Human Resources and Development  
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.32.

**A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**A02. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any conflicts with regard to matters to be discussed.

Mrs Wilson declared an interest as employee of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

**A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 6 OCTOBER 2020**

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 6 October for accuracy.

**A04. MATTERS ARISING**

Mr Doran relayed that the Department were not supportive of the proposal for the staff recognition award.

Mr Nugent recommended that an action be recorded in the minutes under A14 IOSH health and safety training provision.

Mr Sloan stated he was confident that arrangements could be made with Walter Marks to provide the training before the start of the next academic year.

The minutes of 6 October were approved as an accurate record on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Nugent, subject to the addition of the action point.

**A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

None.

**ACTION  
by whom**

## **A06. STAFF LEVELS AND RECRUITMENT REPORT**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the staff levels report and comparison data and informed on recruitment exercises undertaken. She advised the Committee on the robust approval process for new posts.

Following an enquiry from Mr Alexander, Mrs Hughes confirmed that the triannual Article 55 report will be presented at the next meeting of the Staffing Committee and will provide data on gender and religious staff composition.

A detailed discussion took place regarding the legislation concerning gender pay gap that was in operation in England but had not yet passed in NI. Mrs Wilson advised the Committee on work undertaken by the NI Civil Service to assess diversity and inclusion. She informed that their research identified perceived barriers that may be impacting upon females applying or for promoted posts.

Members requested that a detailed analysis of the number and percentage of male/female employees at each level within the College should be conducted and presented to the next Staffing Committee. The Committee was assured this would be done. Members also recommended that a more detailed analysis to address any gender pay gap inequality could then be conducted within the College in anticipation of the implementation of any gender pay gap legislation in NI and, although this would not be completed by the time of the next Staffing Committee, it should be undertaken regardless of the legislative position.

Mrs Hughes

The Committee agreed that the principle of merit should ultimately apply.

Mr Sloan advised that the Article 55 report will provide summary information. Mr Alexander advised that there may be barriers that prevent applicants applying for posts.

Members discussed decisive actions that may be taken to increase diversity and ensure successful succession planning should this be required.

## **A07. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS**

Mrs Hughes advised Members on the detail of two career break requests and advised that their line managers are supportive and arrangements are in place to backfill the posts.

The career breaks were approved on proposal from Mr Gough and seconded by Dr Stewart.

## **A08. KPIS IN YEAR REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2020 – DECEMBER 2020**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the KPI in year report informing on staff grievances, discipline, harassment cases and formal counselling.

She informed the Committee that 3 members of support staff are presently on career breaks and advised that sickness absence is well below target at 1.62%.

Members noted the report.

## **A09. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020 -2021 – IN YEAR UPDATE**

Mrs Hughes presented the Employee Development infographic and advised that the College was still able to deliver a significant element of online training development activity despite the challenges faced from COVID -19.

Mr Doran informed that the e-educator programme which was developed to provide support to lecturers on remote delivery has been well received.

Mrs Hughes advised on mandatory training modules released throughout the year, and informed on training programmes provided in house.

Dr Stewart informed that she enjoys the presentation of the data and recommended consideration of moving certain items currently recorded under the support staff section to health and safety training.

Mrs Hughes

Mr Alexander advised it may be useful to provide year end comparative data to gauge the impact of Covid-19 on employee development programmes delivered.

Mrs Hughes

Mr Sloan informed that the draft Employee Development Plan 2021-2022 will be presented to the next meeting of the Staffing Committee for consideration.

## **A10. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REACCREDITATION PAPERS**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the Investors in People report and advised that the recommended areas of high priority remain unchanged. She referred the Committee to the action plan and advised on the progression of implementation of the competence framework and how this will integrate with recruitment, probation and appraisal processes.

Mrs Hughes spoke to the benefits of the IIP framework and process, which provides staff with a level of focus. She further advised that the addition of an independent assessor encourages staff to share their views freely.

Mrs Hughes informed Members that the three year reaccreditation process is due to take place in May 2021 and advised on the difficulties that have arisen within normal business processes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She considered that the deployment of a staff survey in the current circumstances may not capture normal working opinions.

Mrs Hughes shared with the Committee the three options for reaccreditation as outlined by the IIP assessor and advised on the preferred option which was to embark on a full year extension and she informed on the costs to be incurred for this option.

Mr Alexander remarked this was a sensible approach. The preferred option was approved on proposal from Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Nugent.

Members noted the challenges that may arise in connecting with staff who are presently working remotely.

In response to a query from Dr Stewart, Mrs Hughes informed that the staff survey on remote working yielded a 32% return and advised that an analysis of the comments is currently taking place. She informed that the results will be reported to the Senior Management Team and thereafter to the Staffing Committee.

Mrs Hughes

Mrs Hughes and Mr Sloan relayed their personal experience of remote working. Members acknowledged that a hybrid working environment may probably be embraced going forward, noting that it has been proven that a significant number of staff are able to work productively remotely. The Committee discussed the impact this may have on the Estates Strategy.

**A11. CEF CIRCULARS**

- **CEF 2020-01 – Non Teaching Pay Award April 2020**
- **CEF 2020-02 – Principals and Deputy Directors Pay Award September 2019**
- **CEF2021/02 – Non Teaching Phase 2 of 2019-20 Pay Agreement**

Members noted the three circulars. Mrs Hughes confirmed that the second phase of the non-teaching pay agreement has been implemented, with a realignment of scale points within certain bands.

The Committee noted the circulars.

**A12. POLICY REVIEW**

- **Reasonable Force and Safe Handling**

Mr Doran referred Members to minimal changes recommended to the Reasonable Force and Safe Handling policy.

The policy was approved on proposal from Mr Gough and seconded by Dr Stewart.

**A13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**A14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee will take place on Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 17.30 via TEAMS.

The meeting concluded at 18.34.

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**CHAIR**

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**DATE**