

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 5 MAY 2020 AT 17.30 VIA TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT:

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

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 17.34.

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. No interests were declared.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 25 FEBRUARY 2020

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 25 February 2020.

Mr Sloan advised that the planned training event for IOSH leading safety has been suspended due to the current health crisis.

The minutes were reviewed for accuracy and subsequently approved on the proposal of Mr Gough and seconded by Dr Stewart.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

• Disciplinary policy – Support Staff

Mr Doran referred Members to the tabled support staff disciplinary policy, updated following recommendations from the Chair to clarify rights of accompaniment and the addition of a Tier 2 manager on dismissal appeals (to create a panel of 3 members) to simplify matters in the event of a split decision. Members were advised that the document is a locally agreed policy and practices may vary across the sector.

Mr Sloan stated that the policy will not be sent to the Trade Unions for comment as management had already sought comment on three occasions but will be forwarded as the policy and procedure approved by Staffing Committee Members.

Mrs Hughes advised on the process for submitting evidence within the defined timeline and confirmed that evidence may be accepted beyond the period in exceptional circumstances.

**ACTION
by whom**

Members were advised that any considerations involving social distancing will be provided for in the workforce guidance being developed with management in line with good practice requirements.

The policy was approved on the proposal of Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Nugent.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None.

A06. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS

Mrs Hughes advised the Committee of a career break extension on the grounds of upskilling and supported by the line manager.

The request was unanimously approved by Committee Members.

A07. DRAFT EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020-2021

Mrs Hughes presented the Employee Development Plan for 2020-2021 and informed that managers are encouraged to engage remotely to conduct staff appraisal in line with the schedule.

Mrs Hughes advised that the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020 has presented challenges in how staff and students work and learn due to reduced face-to-face interaction and a greater reliance on the use of virtual platforms. She advised that work was progressing in supporting lecturers in moving to new delivery modes.

She informed of the six key areas of review: general (all staff), pedagogy, support staff, management and leadership, health & safety and health & wellbeing.

Mrs Hughes advised on a new Covid-19 online mandatory training programme being developed for staff prior to returning to campuses. Mr Doran advised of a meeting scheduled with the senior management team on 7 May to consider the College's approach to reopening buildings and preparing for the new delivery model in September.

Mr Nugent requested that management make enquiries about accessing and completing the IOSH Leading Safety training online.

Mrs Hughes

The Committee noted that the plans for re-opening may require further adjustments in line with Government guidance, difficulties associated with individual work plans, childcare responsibilities and adapting work patterns.

Mrs Hughes stated that staff have been provided FAQs factsheet and best practice remote working guidance.

A08. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS

Mrs Hughes presented the updated Continuous Improvement Action Plan and informed that some timelines may need revising and a level of fluidity required as priorities shift.

Mrs Hughes informed Members of engagement with the IIP Assessor regarding the results of the staff survey and agreed to enquire about good practice guidance in relation to remote working recommended by the awarding authority. She advised that the accreditation process will take place next year.

Mrs Hughes

A09. ANNUAL FAIR EMPLOYMENT MONITORING RETURN

Mrs Hughes advised that the Annual Fair Employment Return has been submitted and advised on an overall decrease in staff numbers, 28 females and 8 males.

She stated that in relation to community background, the results have seen minimum change with regard to shifts in percentages. Mrs Hughes informed of a triannual review to be progressed in the coming months.

The Committee noted the report.

A10. KPI IN YEAR REPORT

Mrs Hughes provided an update on grievance, discipline, harassment, career breaks and sickness absence for the period September 2019 to March 2020, provided comparisons from the previous year and advised on the status of current cases.

Mrs Hughes informed that the staff attendance target is on track.

Mr Alexander remarked on a CIPD report detailing a large percentage of HR managers concerned about the mental health impact arising from the current crisis.

Mrs Hughes informed that all college staff are receiving a full wage with the majority of staff able to work remotely competently. She informed that there may be a need to redeploy some staff and managers have been engaging with teams and promoting wellbeing initiatives from HRD.

A11. POLICIES

- **Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure – all staff**

Mr Sloan referred Members to the revised policy amended to reflect the competency process, refresher training and the removal of Governing Body representation on panel composition for Tier 3 posts.

Mrs Hughes advised that 14 posts are currently being recruited to, with many proceeding to shortlisting stage. She informed on challenges arising due to social distancing and conducting interviews and advised that the College are considering their options.

Mrs Hughes informed on a significant increase in people viewing vacancies on the NI Jobs webpage.

The policy was approved on the proposal of Dr Stewart and seconded by Mr Nugent.

- **Time Off for Dependants – all staff**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the Time Off for Dependants policy amended to clarify reasonable time off to deal with emergency situations and circumstances which are sudden and unplanned.

The policy was approved on proposal by Mr Gough and seconded by Mr Nugent.

A12. CEF CIRCULARS

None.

A13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Nugent enquired about the appointment process for the Health and Safety Manager vacancy and was informed that shortlisting will take place on 6 May.

Mr Doran advised that in relation to the Armagh new build, the College was considering employing the services of the WYG H&S Manager to advise on safety measures prior to resuming fit out. He informed of a departmental working group to be established to look at guidance for providers and confirmed that colleges would be represented on this group.

A14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee will take place on Tuesday 6 October 2020 at 18.30 in the Banbridge Campus.

The meeting concluded at 18.48.

CHAIR

DATE

