

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024 AT 17.30 via TEAMS.

PRESENT:

Dr Eileen Stewart, Chair
Mr Raymond Sloan, Interim Principal / CEO
Mrs Patrica McCaffrey
Mr Gary McMurray
Dr Laura Milner
Dr Thomas Moore

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs Ann Marie Hughes, Interim Director of Client Services
Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning
Mrs Petra McGuirk, Acting Assistant Director Human Resources and Development
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 17.29.

Dr Stewart welcomed parties to the second Staffing Committee meeting of the 2023/2024 academic year.

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 regarding matters to be discussed. No interests were declared.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 3 OCTOBER 2023

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 3 October 2023 for accuracy.

These were approved as an accurate record on proposal from Dr Moore and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the action log and advised that considerations regarding item 1 are ongoing.

She informed that in regard to item 2, a request for an Article 55 submission and the comparator tables have been received. Members were advised that a comparison analysis may now be undertaken and reported at the May meeting of the Staffing Committee.

Mrs Hughes advised that other remaining items on the action log will be addressed at the Autumn meeting.

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None to report.

**ACTION
by whom**

A06. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the request for a one-year career break extension and advised that this has been pre-approved by the Chair.

In response to a query from Mr McMurray, Mrs Hughes informed that career break requests are initially for one to two years, with an option for a further year extension.

Dr Moore enquired about seeking assurance that the skillset of persons returning after an extended leave remain appropriate. Mrs Hughes informed that line managers are required to engage three months prior to staff returning to the office. She advised that there usually is a period of handover, support from the pedagogy unit and a refreshed induction process.

All Members endorsed the Chair's approval on the extension of the career break.

A07. POLICY APPROVAL

- **Reasonable Force and Safe Handling**

Mrs Hughes referred Members to minor recommended changes to terminology in the Reasonable Force and Safe Handling policy. Mrs Hughes informed on risk assessment and training and development and advised that this is recorded within the HR portal.

- **Management and Employee Standards**

Members were referred to minor recommended changes within the Management and Employees Standards policy to reflect changes to policy titles.

Both policies were approved by Committee Members subject to minor suggested amendments.

A08. S75 ANNUAL EQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the Annual Equality Progress Report and advised the Committee on the College's statutory requirements to report to the Equality Commission. She informed that the submission was made in December 2023 after agreement was reached on deferment due to a SRC HRD staff absence.

The Committee reviewed the accomplishments across the College for the period April 2022 to March 2023, student union activity and examples from staff and students on developments and opportunities.

Members noted the submission Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans.

In response to a query from Mrs McCaffery, Mrs Hughes advised on interim arrangements in place to align to next year's submission date.

Dr Stewart thanked all parties for their input.

A09. KPI IN YEAR REPORT – September to December 2023

Mrs McGuirk presented the KPI in year report advising on staff grievances, staff discipline, formal counselling, harassment cases and career breaks.

Members were advised that sickness absence has since reduced. Mrs McGuirk committed to providing to the Secretary the updated figures for onward distribution.

Mrs McGuirk

Members were informed of some detail in relation to discipline and grievance cases and were advised that a further update will be provided at the May meeting.

Mrs Hughes stated that extended detail can be provided going forward.

The Committee noted the report.

A10. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE - September to December 2023

Mrs Hughes referred Members to the change of format to the infographic. She informed on an overall completion rate of 89% on the mandatory training programmes and 100% completion rate for appraisals.

Members noted that 110 employee development requests were approved in the period and 382 staff attended the SRC Corporate and Wellbeing Conference on 21 August 2023

Mrs Hughes referred Members to detail on management training and staff upskilling and advised on an investment of £91k in upskilling and college development activities. Dr Moore commented on additional costs incurred due to time away from the office.

Members noted the report.

A11. STAFF LEVELS & RECRUITMENT

Mrs Hughes presented the Staff Levels and Recruitment report with prior year comparator and advised on the age profile of staff.

Mrs Hughes

Mrs Hughes committed to providing further detail advising on vacancies and a breakdown of teaching and support staff.

Mrs Hughes commented that since retirement age is no longer obligatory and because of changes to pension regulations, staff are staying in employment longer.

Members noted that the College appointed three members of support staff in 2023 through agency recruitment.

A12. HEALTH & WELLBEING (HWB)

- **Good for Me, Good for FE update - September to December 2023**

Mrs Hughes presented the Good for Me, Good for FE report and advised on foodbank donations, the Christmas toy appeal and the Education Eats programme providing students with free breakfasts and lunches.

Members were advised that to date staff have raised £9095 for the NI Children's Hospice, 357 volunteer hours have been collated and £5744 social wealth generated.

Mrs Hughes informed that the nominated charity is refreshed every two years and voting is alternated between staff and the student body.

Members noted the report.

A13. CEF CIRCULAR

- **CEF 2023/01 Pay award Principals' and deputy Directors from 1 September 2021 and 1 September 2022**
- **CEF 2023/01 April 2023 Non-Teaching Staff Pay Scales and Rates**

Members noted the two circulars and were informed on annual leave allowance.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to report.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 18.30 in the Boardroom, Banbridge campus.

The meeting concluded at 18.39.



CHAIR

07/05/2024
DATE

