

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023 AT 18.30 IN THE BOARDROOM, BANBRIDGE CAMPUS.

PRESENT:

Dr Eileen Stewart, Chair
Mr Raymond Sloan, Interim 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 Petra McGuirk, Acting Assistant Director Human Resources and Development
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting convened at 18.28.

Dr Stewart advised that she has taken up the role of Chair of the Staffing Committee for the 2023-2024 academic year and welcomed new Members, Gary McMurray and Patricia McCaffery.

Dr Stewart congratulated Mr Sloan, Mrs Hughes and Mrs McGuirk on their recent temporary promotions.

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 2 MAY 2023

The Chair referred Members to the minutes of the meeting of 2 May 2023 for accuracy. These were approved as an accurate record on proposal from Dr Milner and seconded by Dr Moore.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Dr Stewart referred Members to the action log and noted that item 1 is pending review due to other factors awaiting progression.

Mrs Hughes advised that an Article 55 submission is due Autumn 2023, and will allow for comparison with the previous report. She advised that the Equality Commission (EC) is yet to release the comparator tables which enables the College to provide detailed analysis on the community composition of the economically active population by District Council areas and the travel to work areas. Dr Stewart commented that the EC has not raised any concerns in relation to religious balance at the College.

Mrs Hughes advised that a glossary of abbreviations has been incorporated into the Organisational Development Plan. Dr Moore recommended producing a brief infographic

**ACTION
by whom**

to advise on examples wherein investment in training or otherwise has directly benefitted the organisation. Dr Milner remarked on the attractiveness for recruitment.

Mrs Hughes

A05. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

None to report.

A06. STAFFING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Dr Stewart referred Members to the Staffing Committee Annual Report 2022-2023 detailing membership, meetings attended and scheduled, items monitored and approved throughout the year and additional areas of work.

Members reviewed the self-assessment outcomes. Mrs Hughes clarified that any major departmental changes to structure will be brought before the Governing Body to approve, however advised that smaller restructuring of areas will be decided upon as an operational matter.

The Committee were informed that the Chair and Vice Chair have determined the desired skillset in which to fill the co-optee vacancy.

Members agreed that better reasoning should be provided by Governors on their self-assessment returns to clarify any comments made.

Miss Armstrong advised that the Department will be running its Effective Governance training in the Autumn term aimed primarily at Governing Body Members and further consideration is being given to facilitate audit committee training.

For the benefit of new Members, Mr Sloan recommended conducting a review of past papers to familiarise themselves with the Committee's practice.

The Committee Annual Report was unanimously approved.

A07. STAFFING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

In line with good practice, Committee Members conducted their annual review of the Terms of Reference.

In response to a query from Mrs McCaffery, Mrs Hughes advised that the Committee is not provided with granular detail on approval of vacancies or appointments and informed on the internal process and policy where all posts are approved by CEO. Mrs Hughes advised that significant strategic restructuring proposals are progressed via the Staffing Committee and/or Governing Body.

She advised that senior staff rely on line manager engagement to advise on any trends to staff turnover.

The Committee determined that the Terms of Reference remain appropriate subject to a minor addition to ToR 5;

*Monitor the staffing structures operating within the College, to consider any proposed changes from senior management and to bring forward any **significant strategic** changes to structures to the Governing Body;*

A08. CAREER BREAK REQUESTS

None to report.

A09. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2024

Mrs Hughes presented the Organisational Development Plan (ODP) for 2023-24 and advised on the inclusion of a glossary of abbreviations. She informed that given the budget pressures that the College is facing, the HRD department will ensure that all commitments and spend for organisational development activities will match the agreed priority areas.

Mrs Hughes informed that the ODP addresses six key areas including general matters, pedagogy, support staff, management and leadership and health and safety.

Mr McMurray commented on the breadth of areas covered and recommended a change to wording under 3.3.

Dr Milner enquired if there was any scope to use the JISC tool to skill assess Governors. Dr Stewart reminded Members of the inhouse mandatory training.

Mrs Hughes informed Members of College developments around sustainability and advised that suitable training will be reported in next year's draft Plan.

Members approved the Organisational Development Plan 2023-2024.

A10. KPI ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Mrs McQuirk presented the KPI Annual Report and referred the Committee to detail around sickness absence. Members noted that the College has imposed a target of 3.5%, that sickness has steadily increased over the years and currently sits at 4.3%. Mrs Hughes clarified that the figure is greatly impacted by long-term sickness absence and post operative recovery.

In response to a query from Mrs McCaffery, Mrs Hughes agreed that there is merit in conducting an analysis on the age profile of College staff.

Members were advised that sector sickness absence is 10.19% and NICS 12.3%.

Members noted that a spell of absence due to a mental health illness such as anxiety, stress or depression had affected 1 in 11 staff members in the 2022-2023 academic year. Mrs Hughes informed on various services staff may avail off to discuss or address emotional health concerns.

Members discussed the impact of an aging workforce, post Covid complications and the increasing difficulty in accessing medical assistance in a timely manner.

Mrs McQuirk referred Members to detail on recruitment activity and employee relations. Mrs Hughes provided information to the parameters for salary review requests and categories qualifying for responsibility allowances.

Members noted the report.

Mrs McCaffrey left the meeting at 20.03.

Mrs Hughes

Mrs Hughes

A11. HEALTH AND WELLBEING (HWB)

- **Summary of HWB activities 2022-2023**
- **HWB calendar of events**
- **Charity calendar events**
- **Good for ME, Good for FE**

Members noted the infographics detailing Health and Wellbeing activities.

A12. SUMMARY OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 2022-2023

Members noted the various subject areas of staff development in 2022-2023.

Dr Stewart remarked on a good summary linked to the previous year's development plan.

A13. CEF CIRCULAR

- **Pay award Lecturers from 1 September 2021 and 1 September 2022**

Members noted the lecturers pay award and non-consolidated payment.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None to report.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee is scheduled for 17.30 on Tuesday 30 January 2024 via TEAMS.

The meeting concluded at 20.04.

signature redacted

19/03/2024.
DATE

