

Preston's College

Draft Minutes of the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee Meeting held at 5.30pm on 23 February 2017 in the Board Room at Preston's College.

Present:

Mr J Taylor (Chair)

Cllr R Boswell

Mrs L Butler

Dr A Jones

In attendance

Mr S Fell (Clerk to the Corporation)

Mr P McMellon (Assistant to the Clerk)

Dr E H Smith (Principal and Chief Executive)

Mr S Nixon (Executive Director of Resources)

Ms G Thornton (Head of Human Resources)

Mr D Foy (Health & Safety Manager) – Items 48 – 52

Mrs B Mayer (HR Officer)

Mr D Campbell (Senior HR Officer)

48. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr J Boydell.

49. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

50. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 November 2016

Resolved: That the Minutes be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

51. Matters Arising

(i) Item 46 – Senior Postholders Performance Targets

The Committee noted Ms G Thornton's report on the further development of the agreed targets in the light of the Committee's suggestion that the targets be 'SMART'. Ms Thornton confirmed that Mr J Boydell has duly met and agreed suitably re-worded targets with the Principal/Chief Executive.

52. Health and Safety Policy – Revised Statement of Intent

Mr D Foy reminded the Committee about the College's obligations under UK health and safety legislation, including the operation of a Health & Safety Policy. Mr Foy then advised that a review of the 'General Statement of Intent' section of the current Policy was due and he drew attention to the current Statement which he considered to be still fit for purpose.

The Committee examined the current Statement and, whilst broadly concurring with Mr Foy's opinion, nonetheless felt that, by deleting the phrase 'in which learning can take place' from the first bullet-point in the Statement, the Statement would then more clearly cover all types of activity conducted at the College.

Resolved:

- (i) That, subject to the minor amendment requested above, the updated Health & Safety Policy – General Statement of Intent be approved;**
- (ii) That the Principal and Chief Executive be authorised to sign the General Statement of Intent**

In response to the Chair's enquiry, Mr Foy confirmed that, with three defibrillators now available, the campus should now be adequately covered.

53. Workforce Profile 2015/16 Annual Report

Ms Thornton presented the 2015/16 Workforce Profile Report. She confirmed that, in accordance with the Committee's suggestion, links to the Board's key performance indicators had been included. She also advised on the external factors which affected the timing of the Report's production and presentation.

The Committee then examined the full Report, referring particularly to the key points highlighted in the covering commentary provided by Ms E Pendlebury.

The following points were noted and/or discussed:

- (i) Sickness- an increase in in short-term absence but a slight decrease in long-term absences.
- (ii) Diversity – the spread within the 'below £20,000' earning category. Cllr Boswell asked how comparisons with other colleges in the sector might be achieved and Ms Thornton explained how the sector's Staff Individualised Record (SIR) could be used to some extent for such purposes. When assessed with the SIR, Preston's College's performance was quite impressive. The low percentage from ethnic minority groups at management level was discussed, and there was also discussion of the Board's own membership characteristics. It was noted that the Search & Governance Committee had recently considered in detail the Board's profile.
- (iii) Disability – the continuing 'declaration' challenges were noted and a number of initiatives were discussed. The use of 'staff 'case studies' was suggested as a device for encouraging greater participation/declaration.
- (iv) Religion – the particular categories currently used by the College in this context were discussed. It was agreed that future reports would benefit from identification of all 'options' (including those which had received 'nil returns')..

Ms Thornton then drew attention to the actions proposed in the Report. She confirmed that attention would largely focus on the 'socio-economic' protected characteristic.

The Chair noted Ms Thornton's update on the use of Vacancy Filler.

Resolved : That the Workforce Profile Report for the 2015/16 academic year be noted and that the proposed actions therein be endorsed.

54. Corporate Equality and Diversity Objectives

Ms Thornton reminded the Committee of the deliberations which had culminated in the Report and recommendations now presented to the Committee. She advised that no issues had emerged from consultation with members of the Quality & Standards Committee.

The Chair sought clarification of the extent to which the proposed development of the Objectives was consistent with improvements required following the recent Ofsted inspection. Ms Thornton

confirmed that addressing Ofsted outcomes had been very much in mind during the review of the Objectives.

Mrs Butler asked about the use of benchmarking. Ms Thornton advised on the use of 'Stonewall' and agreed that reports on performance in this context might usefully incorporate benchmarking data.

Resolved: That the following Corporate Equality Objectives for the period 2017 to 2021 be approved:

- (i) **Objective 1 – To develop and deliver action plans focusing on narrowing gaps in student performances; and**
- (ii) **Objective 2 – To actively target groups of potential students and staff to deal with under-representation of particular groups within the student and staff population.**

55. Development of a Health and Well-being Strategy

Mrs B Mayer presented the report which introduced the College's aim to develop a Health and Well-being strategy.

Mrs Mayer confirmed that although there were already many examples of how the College supported the well-being of staff every effort was being made to further enhance staff health and well-being and thereby contribute positively to the overall performance of the College.

Mrs Mayer confirmed that it was intended that use would be made of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter. She confirmed that the support of the College's recognised trade unions and staff in general had already been secured.

The Committee discussed Mrs Mayer's report and endorsed the spirit of what was proposed. It was noted that Mrs Mayer expected to be in a position to report on progress towards the end of the current academic year.

Resolved : That the report on the development of a Health and Wellbeing Strategy be noted.

56. Employee Engagement Survey 2016

Ms Thornton presented the second (of three) annual reports covering the College's work with 'Scancapture, an external organisation providing expertise in helping businesses to improve their performance by using questionnaires and surveys to measure employee and customer satisfaction. She confirmed that the increased levels of participation had qualified the College for 'Silver Recognition'.

The Committee noted the extent to which teams and areas of the College had contributed directly to the scrutinising of results and to the development of appropriate responses.

The scope for benchmarking was discussed.

The Chair confirmed that the engagement with 'Scancapture' had proved worthwhile with an expectation of improved engagement in the third year of the partnership.

Resolved : That the report on the Employee Engagement Survey 2016 be noted.

57. HR Policy Framework Action Plan

Mr D Campbell drew the Committee's attention to two policy developments which had been the subject of recent discussion and agreement with the recognised trade unions.

(i) **Recruitment of Employees and Casual Workers Policy – Revised**

Mr Campbell advised that the scheduled review of this Policy had been completed and that, other than a small number of minor amendments (shown in the 'tracked' version), the only substantive change now recommended was inclusion of an introductory section.

(ii) **Recruitment Supplement Policy**

Mr Campbell updated the Committee on the staff recruitment/retention challenges which lay behind the recommendation for introduction of the new Recruitment Supplement Policy. He explained in more detail how the Policy would be applied.

The Chair asked Mr Campbell to elaborate on the 'hard to fill' status and the Committee considered the particular areas of College where recruitment/retention had proved most difficult.

Mr Campbell noted Dr Jones's advice on the need for a degree of flexibility for negotiation earlier in the appointment process. In general, however, it was noted that the College's recruitment challenges broadly mirrored those within FE sector.

The Chair requested that college management ensure that all parts of the College's general 'offer' to potential new staff was as comprehensive as possible so as to ensure that the market had a positive impression of the College as an employer.

Finally, Mr Campbell accepted Mrs Butler's advice that, in Section 3.4 of the draft Policy, the word 'market' should be replaced by the word 'recruitment'.

Resolved : That the following policies be approved with effect from 1st March 2017

- (i) **The revised Recruitment of Employees and Casual Workers Policy; and**
- (ii) **The new Recruitment Supplement Policy**

58. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting would be at 5.30pm on Thursday, 6th July 2017.