

**MINUTES of the meeting of the People Committee 9am 29  
November 2023 L6FC Board Room**

<b>Present:</b>	Chair – Jude Owens (JO) Kirk Lower (KL) and Tina Ellis (TE)	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Wendy Stanger – Director of Governance (WS) Ann Wall Director of People and Wellbeing (AW) David Blake (Corporation Chair) and Rob Lawson (External Board Reviewer)	
<b>L/23/11/1</b>	<b>Membership and Apologies</b>	<b>Action</b>
	Apologies Stuart Rimmer (CEO/Principal SR) and from Associate Governors Alan Debenham (AD) and Liz Howard (LH)	
<b>L/23/11/2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	There were no declarations of interest	
<b>L/23/11/3</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the last meeting 1 6 23 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the agenda</b>	
<b>L/23/11/3.1</b>	<b>To approve the Minutes of the joint meeting of the People and Finance and General Purposes Committee 5 June 2023 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda</b>	
	The minutes of 1 6 23 and the joint meeting with Finance and General Purposes of 5 6 23 were approved as a true record.	
<b>L/23/11/4</b>	<b>To review the post meeting action log</b>	
	<p>The action log was reviewed.</p> <p>L/23/06/7 – Succession Planning - The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that SMG have undertaken an operational review of the succession planning heat map for all managers within the College to identify if there was an immediate successor, successor not ready or no successor. Actions are now in place where internal successors have been identified as needing development. Where roles have been identified as no successor, this has been reviewed to see if recruitment will be difficult due to specialist nature of the role. Governors commented that there may be a need to consider alternative ways to fill roles or to carry out the role. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that this had been considered for the Systems Manager. a long term vacancy, where the job description was rewritten and the role filled remotely.</p> <p>L/23/06/6 – Senior Team’s visibility - The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that this would be reviewed in the staff survey and resultant actions set.</p> <p>Governors challenged what progress there had been on the Financial Recovery Plan and the need to budget for a sustainable annual pay review. The Director of Governance advised that this was an action agreed by the Board and included on their action log. This work had commenced with the Deputy Chief Executive’s Financial Position Paper considered at the October Board and the joint discussion to be held on the implications of remaining a Real Living Wage employer. The financial position set out in the Financial Position Paper included the additional Government funding and the VAT refund which had helped the College’s financial position.</p>	

L/23/11/5	People Update - Annual Review	
<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the Annual Review which included benchmarking data where available. In summary the workforce data demonstrated that the College's workforce was not a diverse one, absence had fallen, disciplinary and grievance matters have increased over the past academic year, the introduction of a new policy, increased management awareness have contributed to this and that recruitment continued to be challenging.</p> <p>Governors challenged if the College's workforce was reflective of the community. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that it was reflective of the local community but not of the sector or the national position. The College did not have the data for all staff and as part of the implementation of the new HR system staff were to be encouraged to update their diversity data.</p> <p>Governors discussed the absence data and agreed that this needed to be split between long term and short term absence as these required different interventions. The Director of People and Wellbeing commented that total absence levels had reduced in 2022/23 compared to the previous year but continued to be high. The top 5 absence reasons were; mental health, respiratory illness, COVID 19, Operations and back problems. Operations were high due to the backlog following Covid delays.</p> <p>Governors challenged what support the College offered to staff. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the College offered a supportive package including a Staff Wellbeing and Development Lead who provided individual support, an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which offers support on a wide range of topics and includes a counselling service, On-site over 40s health checks and a programme of training such as mental health first aiders, menopause and suicide awareness. The College's new EAP provider also offered a virtual GP service.</p> <p>Governors discussed recruitment and retention and commented that the staff feedback following the Pay Review demonstrated the positive impact of the Board's decision. The Director of People and Wellbeing commented that the pay review should help with recruitment as it maintained the College's pay levels at a competitive rate, which would help the newly appointed Recruitment Lead. It had also helped avoid any major industrial action with industrial relations currently seen as a strength at the College. Future messaging around the Real Living Wage needed to clarify that payment of this was not mandatory as there was confusion between the National Living Wage, which was mandatory and the Real Living Wage which wasn't. The rate for the National Living Wage was due to rise in April 2024 to £11.44 and the Board had agreed to continue paying the Real Living Wage implemented from 1 11 23 at £12.00.</p> <p>The Director of Governance reminded the Committee that a joint discussion on the implications of remaining a Real Living Wage employer was to be held between the People and Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Director of People and Wellbeing commented that the People Committee needed to consider its position on pay.</p> <p>Governors challenged if the current system for appraisals was working and whether consideration needed to be given to reviewing the system. The system used needed to be what was best for the individual and the College's development. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the appraisal window currently runs from June to October, appraisals were not all completed during this period and some of those completed were not of the quality expected. Consideration needed to be given if the same appraisal system should be used for all staff or a differentiated approach adopted, as for instance some managers acted more as supervisors than managers, whether the People Team should provide more support and if the paperwork should be simplified.</p> <p>The Senior Team had agreed to move away from the talent assessment 9 box grid to a 3 box grid of; does not meet, meets or exceeds expectations. The rationale for this change is that some managers misunderstand the 9-box grid and use potential ratings incorrectly. Potential can be captured in the succession planning tool in the HR system so will not be lost.</p>		

<p>Governors commented that the risk of moving to the 3 box grid was that managers would assess all staff as meets expectations and that succession planning and development conversations would not take place at the appraisal. They challenged what was the impact of being rated does not meet. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that those staff rated as does not meet are subject to capability unless in a new role where they should already be subject to a developmental action plan. To help with consistency all ratings should be discussed and agreed with the managers manager prior to the appraisals and were discussed at the people performance management business planning meetings. Moderation had also previously been carried out by the Senior Leadership Group. A re-induction was to be carried out in December for the wider leadership group and appraisals and talent assessments would be covered in this.</p> <p>The Director of People and Wellbeing updated the committee on the staff professional learning offer and its impact. The focus in 2022/23 had been SEND and inclusive practice which had better equipped staff to deal with the increased number of learners presenting with additional needs. Teaching staff are now better at asking the right questions and identifying support for learners earlier. Support and development was also provided by the Advanced Teacher practitioners, introduced in 2021, who support teaching staff to improve the quality of their work and new academic staff joining the College. These roles also provide development opportunities for outstanding teachers who wanted progression without management responsibilities and was a two year secondment.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was important to celebrate our staff and noted the ways that the College did this and the huge increase in staff award nominations.</p> <p>In conclusion the Committee noted that the People Team had now self-assessed as good an improvement from the previous requires improvement and thanked the team for their work.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appraisal system to be reviewed (to include consideration of simplifying paperwork supported by the new HR system, whether there should be differentiated appraisal system used and how the People Team could support the process.)</b></li> </ul>	<p>AW</p>	
<p>L/23/11/6</p>	<p>Staff Survey 2023</p>	
<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the report and advised that The Best Companies Survey ran in March 2023 and resulted in a response rate of 77% which is the highest it has been in the past 6 years and 1% higher than the 2022 response rate. The results of the survey were that the College moved up in all three categories. The Senior Team has however taken the decision to move away from the Best Companies Survey. This is due to value for money, and more importantly the lack of access to staff comments and the inability to tailor the questions to better suit the College needs. The College will instead use QDP which is used by FE colleges nationally and therefore provides sector benchmark data and allows tailoring of questions and anonymised sharing of staff comments.</p> <p>Governors challenged how it could be ensured that there was a high response rate. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the survey will be promoted by the College leadership team and engagement ambassadors and for every survey completed the College will purchase an item for the local foodbanks Christmas treats bag campaign. The main challenge was to assure staff that the survey was confidential and this message would be reiterated in all communications.</p> <p>Governors challenged if leadership visibility was still an issue as management visibility needed to be seen as a core part of a manager's role. Visibility of management affected the culture of the College. If people don't see and know the managers it was difficult for them to engage with them or raise an issue. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that this would be assessed in the survey. Ideas discussed to improve visibility included looking at 'break and lunch duty' for all teaching and support managers, this would be in pairs to help managers feel safe and confident in carrying this role out. This would be in addition to the Duty Principal role and would not cover its</p>		

<p>remit, security or estate roles. Curriculum areas have also been asked if there are any Christmas events a member of the Senior Team could attend and show support.</p> <p>The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the survey results would be reviewed by the Senior Team and shared with the Committee and the College and an action plan drafted for areas identified at needing to be improved. This would be reviewed at the February People Committee.</p>		
<b>L/23/11/7</b>	<b>To review the Risk Register</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the risk register been reviewed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, November 2023</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, and discussed as part of the agenda items.</li> <li>• Level of unfilled vacancies had gone down and resultant risk S04T07 reduced.</li> <li>• Risk S04T08 had reduced as the risk of industrial action had been mitigated by the pay review.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, and discussed as part of the agenda items.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Where a red risk is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The red risk was S04T06 High levels of staff absence through sickness, this was red due to the impact the absence had. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised the Committee on the actions taken to help manage absence including the monitoring and absence triggers used. Actions taken were different for short term and long term absence and also included supporting staff when they were off and on the return.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risks of industrial action and recruitment and retention had been the Committee's main concerns but this risk had reduced following the pay review. Though could be detrimentally affected when the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Report was published and this risk would need to be managed.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>The Director of Governance explained how the risks were split in the description into risk, cause and effect and that the scoring was affected by likelihood and impact.</p>		
<b>L/23/11/8</b>	<b>Committee's Annual Report and Review of Terms of Reference</b>	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the report and the review of the terms of reference. The terms of reference had been amended to include the introductory section that all Committee's terms now included and the purpose tabled with the delegation level.</p> <p>Governors queried the attendance levels. The Director of Governance advised that this had been reduced by the attendance of the Associate Governors and CEO/Principal with the independent governor's attendance above target, this would be updated for the report to the Board.</p> <p><b>The Committee resolved to recommend to Corporation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>the Committee's annual report.</b></li> <li>2. <b>the People Committee's revised terms of reference.</b></li> </ol>		
<b>L/23/11/9</b>	<b>Policies for Approval</b>	
	<b>QD126 Family Friendly Policy</b>	
	<b>QD132 Recruitment of ex-offenders Policy</b>	
	<b>QD079 Staff Code of Conduct</b>	

<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the policy updates, advised of changes and confirmed they had been reviewed and agreed by the Unions.</p> <p>Governors discussed the changes in the Staff Code of Conduct and agreed the changes around clothing, addition of not entering into financial interactions with learners or instigating physical contact with learners were sensible changes.</p> <p>Governors queried staff safety training and how it was ensured staff felt safe. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that an additional De-escalation Training session was to be run, the Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience had offered individual coaching and joint College walk rounds, the Duty Principal meeting had considered levels of actions, the College had two Security Rangers and the staff were advised to call the Police rather than intervene if there was a fight. Governors noted that as well as personal safety staff also needed to feel physiologically safe.</p> <p><b>The Committee resolved to approve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>QD126 Family Friendly Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD132 Recruitment of ex-offenders Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD079 Staff Code of Conduct</b></li> </ul>		
<b>L/23/11/10</b>	<b>Agenda Planning</b>	
<p>Joint discussion with Finance and General Purposes on the Real Living Wage 11 12 23.</p> <p>Staff Survey results and action plan.</p> <p>New HR System and the data reporting.</p>		
<b>L/23/11/11</b>	<b>Review of Meeting</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confidential Items – None</li> <li>2. Were Learners prominent in discussions? Impact on learners of staff CPD, recruitment, retention and absence discussed. Security and all feeling safe discussed</li> <li>3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment: Absence risk to be reviewed</li> <li>4. Health &amp; Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment To be reviewed following staff survey results that included questions on safety.</li> <li>5. Equality &amp; Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment Noted that staff demographic reflective of community. Revised draft Strategy to consider targets and actions related to diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment To be reviewed following staff survey results that included questions on this.</li> <li>7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media None</li> <li>8. How did the meeting go Well chaired and thank you to the Director of People and Wellbeing and her team for all their work.</li> </ol>		