

MINUTES of the meeting of the People Committee 30 September 2025 9.30am on Teams

Present:	Committee Chair – Rachael Botley (RB) Ian Lomax (IL) Katie Kerridge (KK) Vicki Paterson (VP) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO)	
In Attendance:	Wendy Stanger – Director of Governance (WS) and Ann Wall Director of People and Wellbeing (AW).	
P/25/09/1	Membership and Apologies	Action
Apologies – Tina Ellis (TE) and leaving early Katie Kerridge (KK)		
P/25/09/2	Declarations of Interest	
There were no declarations of interest related to business on the agenda.		
P/25/09/3	To approve the minutes of the last meeting 7 5 2025 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the agenda	
The minutes of 7 5 2025 were approved as a true record of the meeting.		
P/25/09/4	To review the post meeting action log	
<p>The action log was reviewed. The Principal provided a verbal update on the internal audit of systems, which had now been completed. The resulting recommendations are currently with the Senior Team for review and response. This covered all systems and would be reviewed by the December Audit Committee. The Director of Governance advised that, where appropriate, the Audit Report would also be considered by other Committees to ensure relevant oversight.</p> <p>The Head of People and Wellbeing commented that the HR system was primarily designed as a payroll solution, with HR functionality added as a secondary feature. It could be improved, and the College has had to find work around solutions in some areas. There was, though, no perfect HR System that met all the sector needs.</p> <p>The Chair noted that there were no immediate actions required from the Committee at this stage. However, they emphasised the importance of maintaining oversight and ensuring the Committee continues to receive assurance that the People System was being developed to effectively meet the College’s needs.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report on the HR system will remain a standing agenda item, as part of the People Update, until the Committee is assured that it is meeting the College’s needs. 		AW
P/25/09/5	People and Wellbeing Annual Report	
<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the Annual Report, providing an overview of key areas and advising that the People Team had self-assessed as 'Good'. Staff absence levels remain high compared to pre-COVID years. While the number of absence occurrences has decreased, there has been an increase in long-term absences, particularly due to medical operations. Recruitment activity has been positive, supported by a more proactive approach; however, agency costs remain high due to the need to cover absences. The establishment review</p>		

<p>undertaken this year was more extensive than in previous years, and its impact was actively managed by the Team.</p> <p>Governors discussed the absence management systems and the proactive action taken, both at the informal and formal stages. The Director advised that the College was also providing support through the Employee Assistance Programme, the virtual GP service and flu jabs. The return to work interview process had been improved with a template introduced and coaching and advice provided to managers.</p> <p>Governors challenged the reason for the increase in grievances. The Director advised that this was partly due to the introduction of a new policy, alongside heightened management awareness and changing expectations. To support this, the one-to-one process has been revised to encourage open dialogue, and the People Team is working collaboratively with managers and unions to promote early intervention and informal resolution. Additionally, a Professional Standards letter is to be issued to ensure clarity around expectations and conduct.</p> <p>Governors discussed professional learning, including the scope, variety, and uptake of available opportunities. The Director advised that the offer had been developed in collaboration with the Deputy Principal, and advised that uptake among managers had been lower than expected. This is being addressed through a revised offer and the introduction of clearer expectations. The Staff Governor commented that the 'reset day' held at the start of term had provided a positive and consistent start to the academic year. It was well received by staff and helped reinforce a clear and unified message across the College.</p> <p>Governors queried whether the College had a clear bereavement policy. The Director advised that there were clear guidelines for compassionate leave. Absenteeism due to bereavement also covered those signed off by the doctor due to the bereavement.</p>		
P/25/09/6	Industrial Relations	
P/25/09/6.1	Background information - For info AoC Negotiations Briefing	
<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the update and advised that the College's Union Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC), which meets termly, was scheduled for 1st October. The national pay claim from the unions is a request for a minimum award of either 10% or £3,000. In response, the Association of Colleges (AoC) has recommended a 4% pay award. While there is a threat of industrial action across the sector, this does not currently include the College and College ballots held previously on taking industrial action had not met the threshold required. Voting thresholds, though, are being reduced under the forthcoming Employment Rights Bill.</p> <p>Governors queried the composition of the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC) and the extent to which union representation was reflective of the wider staff body. The Director advised that both local and regional representatives from the recognised unions attend the JNCC. The unions are not required to disclose membership numbers to the College. The College also engaged separately with staff through Engagement Ambassadors.</p>		
P/25/09/7	QD220 Draft Pay Strategy	

P/25/09/9A	Summary Report for People Policies	
P/25/09/9	QD022 Capability Policy and Procedure	
P/25/09/10	QD023 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure	
P/25/09/11	QD024 Grievance Policy and Procedure	
P/25/09/12	QD120 Recruitment Policy and Procedure	
P/25/09/13	QD201 Flexible Working Policy	
<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the People Policies and advised on the changes, and confirmed that all policies were compliant with ACAS guidance, and it was noted where they did form part of the employment contract.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed and discussed each policy.</p> <p>The Director advised the Committee that trade unions had expressed concerns regarding job advertisements closing before the closing date. It was noted that this practice had been formalised through the recruitment policy review. The Committee agreed that this approach was acceptable, provided that any potential for early closure was clearly stated within the advertisement.</p> <p>Governors challenged how it was ensured that managers followed the policies. The Director advised that the policies had been updated following feedback from managers, and in addition, guidance notes have been produced on the processes to be followed and the support available.</p> <p>Governors queried who carried out investigations and whether external investigators were used. The Director advised that only staff who had completed the required training carried out investigations, and they were supported by the HR Team.</p> <p>Governors discussed the risk of staff using their own laptop. The Principal advised that the majority of staff had been issued with a work laptop, and those using their own were not allowed remote access to the College systems.</p> <p>The People Committee reviewed the people policies and approved the adoption of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD022 Capability Policy and Procedure • QD023 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure • QD024 Grievance Policy and Procedure • QD120 Recruitment Policy and Procedure • QD201 Flexible Working Policy <p>with notification to the Board that they have been adopted in the Committee's report to the Board.</p>		
P/25/09/14	QD105 Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy	
<p>The Committee reviewed the staffing aspects of the policy.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to approve the QD105 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy and recommend its approval to the Corporation.</p>		
P/25/09/15	Review of Risk Register	
<p>1. Has the risk register been reviewed – Yes, September 2025.</p> <p>2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated – Yes.</p>		

<p>3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated – Yes and the summary report set out the changes.</p> <p>4. Where a red risk is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken - High levels of staff absence was red risk and the Director of People and Wellbeing had set out in her annual report action being taken on absence.</p> <p>5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns – The Committee was concerned that the College could be subject to industrial action and this risk would be reviewed.</p>	<p>P/25/09/16</p> <p>People Committee Annual Report</p>	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the report and advised that Annual Reports were produced by all committees and were published to help with transparency. These included a review of the year and the Committee’s self-assessment.</p> <p>The Committee considered the areas identified as potential opportunities for development and explored whether to engage directly with groups of staff through dedicated discussions at the Committee, or to utilise existing staff voice mechanisms, with governors participating in those activities. Whichever method used it needed to add value to the Committee’s work.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to approve the People Committee Annual Report, its submission to the Corporation, and its subsequent publication.</p>		
<p>P/25/09/17</p>	<p>Agenda Planning</p>	
<p>None in addition to that already minuted.</p>		
<p>P/25/09/18</p>	<p>Review of Meeting</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidential Items – none 2. Were Learners prominent in discussions – effect on learners discussed. 3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment: None 4. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment – None 5. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact – policy considered and approved 6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment None 7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media: None, need to prepared for media interest if there is industrial action 8. How did the meeting go? Worked well on Teams and kept to time 		