

**MINUTES OF THE ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**

**Present:** Joshi Jariwala (Chair), Clare Russell (Principal), Louise Myers,  
Pam Pye, Diane Bourne

**In Attendance** Tracey Croft (HR Director), Fatema Hussein (Head of Governance)

4.00pm

Meeting began

Meeting closed 5.30pm

Attendance 100%

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies to receive.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Governors / Members were invited to declare any direct, indirect, pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interest relating to any item on the agenda for the meeting

No interests were declared.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020**

**3.1 Approval of the Minutes**

Agreed that: the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

**3.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The action progress log was reviewed, and the Principal reported that following a three-stage selection process conducted both remotely and on-campus, Deborah Bamber had been appointed to the Director of Facilities role. College would shortly be advertising for the remaining CMT role to complete the management structure for this area.

The HR Director reported that all policies had been approved by the Unions and communicated to staff.

**4. ANNUAL REPORTS 2019/2020**

**4.1 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report**

The HR Director presented the report which confirmed that there had been a continual

improvement in a wide range of facilities, health and safety issues.

It was noted that:

- The COVID-19 pandemic had substantially affected the data due to the 4-month closure of the College, with just a small number of staff on campus during this time
- There had been less accidents as the campus had been closed from March to August
- This had also resulted in fewer audits taking place
- Over 300 risk assessments had been undertaken of which 60 were Covid related
- Following a return to work questionnaire which identified key staff with health issues, a further 120+ individual risk assessments had been completed for staff.
- All high-risk students had also had their current risk assessments reviewed and updated as required
- Five audits had been undertaken over the October half-term break
- Many health, safety and wellbeing training courses were offered and provided, some of which had been online
- Mental Health remained a key area of focus in 2019-20, with over 60 staff being trained as Mental Health First Aiders and 33 staff being appointed in the new role of Mental Health Champions

A Governor stated that it was important to identify if there were any trends in relation to the number of injuries that had occurred as a result of accidents.

The Committee requested that this data was included in the next report

#### **ACTION:**

Director of Facilities

## **4.2 Sickness Absence Annual Report**

The report summarised staff sickness absence rates for 2019/2020 and compared them to rates in previous years and against CIPD data and sector averages.

It was noted that:

- The overall lost time rate had fallen in the last four academic years from 2.98% in 2016-17 to 2.03% in 2019-20
- Short-term absence was particularly low at 0.98%
- It has been an exceptional year with COVID-19 and the national lockdown that required staff to work from home
- This was therefore not a typical year for data comparisons
- There may have been some under reporting due to people working from home
- Absence remained highest amongst manual staff (3.18%) and lowest amongst managers (0.27%)
- The latest AoC Workforce Survey was published in 2019, and completed by 127 colleges
- The results showed that the average sickness absence rate for colleges over the 2017/18 academic year was 5.5 days absence per employee, or 2.4% of available working time, and was slightly lower than 5.6 days and 3.0% in 2016/17
- Analysis this year has not been split between short and long-term absence but by category of staff and region
- Total lost time for the North West was 3.1% which was higher than Runshaw's figure of 2.35%

## **5. Update on Staff Return to College / Home Working**

The following update was provided by the HR Director:

- The key area of focus had been on making the campus Covid secure with significant expenditure on signage, hand sanitiser stations, perspex, gloves, face masks etc
- In addition to the risk assessment briefing, all staff had been required to complete an online prevent COVID-19 training course
- Significant training had also been delivered to support teaching staff to deliver online sessions, particularly on MS Teams and sharing best practice sessions, with Professional Tutors taking a lead on teaching and learning
- Amendments had been made to the staff absence reporting process with new codes to identify COVID-19 absences
- As at 3rd November, 23 staff had tested positive with COVID-19 which had resulted in a further 15 staff identified as being a 'close contact' and required to self-isolate
- There has been significant disruption to college activities due to staff being required to self-isolate, largely due to someone in their household displaying symptoms
- Short-term COVID-19 related absences were currently being exempted from Management of Attendance Procedures
- However, this exemption would not apply where staff have 'Long COVID' that resulted in long term absence
- More agency staff were being employed to provide short-term cover for teaching staff who were self-isolating
- Some new temporary posts had also been created to meet the increased demand as a result of COVID-19
- Supporting mental health for staff and students during these challenging times was a key priority
- More staff were leaving the College than normal as a result of the pandemic, with some particularly anxious and concerned about being on campus and others choosing to bring forward their retirement plans
- A student health and well-being facilitator had been appointed to provide additional support for students

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Had all clinically extremely vulnerable staff been notified when the second lock down had been announced?

**A.** It was confirmed that they had

Governors agreed that the report demonstrated the importance that College placed on staff health and well-being.

The Committee requested that their thanks were passed onto all relevant staff for implementing all the health and well-being initiatives and agreed that they were a credit to the College.

## **6. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019/20 MONITORING REPORTS**

The Committee considered the monitoring reports which set out key actions required to meet targets contained in the Strategic Plan and indicated progress to date with them.

The following points were noted:

## 6.1 Chapter 9 – Staffing

- Remote working and the need to focus on ensuring a COVID secure campus had delayed the implementation of the HR Portal
- The staff benefits portal was being promoted via the Staff bulletin
- A green car salary sacrifice scheme was being considered

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Would there be any increases in the cost of supplying the HR portal due to the impact of Covid?

**A.** It was confirmed that there would not

## 6.2 Chapter 10 – Equality & Diversity

- Mental health remained a key focus given the current pandemic and the blended learning model
- A new Mental Health and Wellbeing Facilitator had been appointed in August, and had begun to progress the mental health agenda for both staff and students
- The College had celebrated World Mental Health Day in October
- Students had established an LGBT group

## 6.3 Chapter 12 – Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Good progress was being made in all areas and extensive additional projects were being completed following receipt of ESFA grant funding. The grant had to be spent by March 2021 and 102 projects had been completed within a 16-day period.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Director of Facilities for his efforts in ensuring that the improvements works were completed over the half-term break.

## 7. RISK REGISTER

The Committee reviewed the relevant section of the register, and it was noted that no recruitment processes had been delayed as a result of Covid. College had used recorded video interviews for recruiting teaching staff, and this had worked well.

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Had there been any extensions to probationary periods?

**A.** The probationary period could be extended by 3 months in exceptional circumstances and no concerns had been raised about this

The Staff Governor stated that candidates did not want to put the process on hold and had appreciated that it had not been delayed.

## 8. POLICY REVIEWS

The proposed amendments to each policy were highlighted to the Committee.

### 8.1 Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy – Verbal Update

The Committee discussed the feedback that had been received from the external consultant and whether any amendments were require in view of these comments.

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Had there been any issues with the miss- use of alcohol?

**A.** It was confirmed that there were no issues

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Committee **Agreed** that no further amendments were required to the policy as a risk-based approach had been adopted by the College, and the disciplinary procedure would be implemented if there were any breaches of the policy.

### **8.2 Disciplinary and Capability Procedure for Senior Post-holders**

A Governor suggested that covertly recording meetings or proceedings was classed as gross misconduct and included in the relevant section of the policy

Governors also agreed that the number of Governors required for the disciplinary/capability panel was amended from two to three.

#### **ACTION:**

HR Director to amend

#### **RESOLVED:**

The procedure was approved, subject to the amendments proposed and consultation with the recognised trade unions.

#### **RESOLVED:**

### **8.3 Grievance Procedure for Senior Post-holders**

The procedure was approved, subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions.

### **8.4 Probation Policy**

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Probation policy was approved, subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions.

### **8.5 Procedure for Dealing with Grievances Against Senior Post-holders**

The procedure was approved, subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions.

#### **RESOLVED:**

### **8.6 Sick Pay Policy**

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Were staff entitled to sick pay if they were absent as a result of having to self-isolate?

**A.** College had decided to pay sick pay to encourage staff to self-isolate but would only be paying this for short-term absences

## **RESOLVED:**

The Sick Pay policy was approved, subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions.

## **9. COMMITTEE ANNUAL REVIEW**

### **9.1 Committee Annual Performance Review**

The Committee completed the self-assessment exercise the results of which would be used to assess the Committee's performance and promote continuous improvement.

The Chair suggested that it would be useful for the Committee to review what other items it may need to monitor / review at a future meeting.

### **9.2 Committee Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference were reviewed, and it was agreed that they were re-adopted for this academic year.

## **10. GOVERNANCE IMPACT STATEMENT**

- Governor request for additional data on the number of injuries to be included in the health and safety report
- Suggested amendments from Committee members on the Senior Postholder disciplinary and capability procedure
- Discussion on staff safely returning to the College campus
- Governor use of annual reports to provide scrutiny/ monitoring of accidents and sickness absence rates

## **11. RESERVED BUSINESS**

### **11.1 Approval of the Reserved Business Minutes 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Agreed that: the minutes are approved as a correct record.

### **11.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 4.00pm