

Minutes of the Personnel Committee held on Thursday, 7th May 2009

Members Present: Mr L Avery (Chair)
Mr T Bagley
Mr M Hussain
Mrs B H O'Connor
Ms J Payne
Ms C Richards
Mr L Williams

In Attendance: Ms J Boardman (Clerk)
Ms H Jakovlevs (Director of Standards & Performance)
Mrs J Turner (Director of Personnel)

Item 1 Confirmation of quorum and apologies for absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence. The Clerk confirmed that a quorum was present.

Item 2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 All staff declared an interest in item 9 - Pay 2009/10.

Item 3 Minutes of the Personnel meeting held on 11th February 2009

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2009 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Item 4 Matters arising not otherwise on the agenda

4.1 Diversity targets In response to an observation by the Chair, the Principal confirmed that from next year the college's diversity targets would be based on its learner catchment area which included Sandwell.

4.2 Key vacancies In response to a question from Mr T Bagley, the Principal reported that interviews for the post of Head of Centre Engineering and Construction Industries had taken place but that no appointment had been made. The college had an acting Head of Centre, who was a self-employed consultant, and was not under immediate pressure to fill the vacancy.

4.3 Disciplinary/capability cases In response to a question from Mr T Bagley, the Director of Personnel confirmed that the six cases current in February 2009 had been resolved.

Item 5 PC Monitoring of CODP 2008/2009

5.1 The Principal summarised progress to April 2009 against the key performance indicators which fell to the Personnel Committee to monitor:

KPI 1 The number of staff performance reviews completed was below the target of 100% because the system had only recently been introduced. It was being piloted first with managers and would go live with staff in August.

KPI 2 Data was not yet available in relation to staff satisfaction.

KPI 30 and 31 Progress with the diversity and disability profiles of staff was slightly behind target. The college made appointments on merit and was working towards these targets naturally.

KPI 32 and 33 Progress with the percentages of full time and part time teachers qualified was slightly behind target.

KPI 34 Staff absence levels of 3.1 days per person (average year to date) against a target of seven days absence or less (annual average) were very good, particularly as the year to date included the winter months.

KPI 35 Investors in People re-accreditation had been achieved.

KPI 36 and 37 Accreditations for Charter Mark and Positive about Disabled People were current.

- 5.2 The Principal confirmed that the key performance indicators were moving in the right direction and that a number of yellow actions were turning green.
- 5.3 Mrs B H O'Connor asked for an update on the two red actions, the skills audit and skills plan for business support staff. The Principal explained that these would not be completed by the May 2009 due date but should be completed by December 2009.
- 5.4 The Chair asked how the targets for full time and part time teachers qualified could be achieved. The Principal explained that the issue was staff turnover. The majority of new appointments had industrial or vocational backgrounds and did not have teaching qualifications. Every member of the teaching staff was required to achieve a teaching qualification. However, when a member of staff left, the college lost a qualified person and gained an unqualified person. New members of staff required time to achieve the qualification.
- 5.5 **Resolved:** To note progress against the College Operational Development Plan.

Item 6 Investing in our People – Summer Term Report (including diversity)

- 6.1 Members considered the key points in the report.
- 6.2 Staff absence and short and long term absence The Director of Personnel commented that this year short term absence appeared to be higher than in the last three years. However, lower rates of absence would be expected in the summer months to come. Overall, staff absence was low. The Chair commented that he would usually expect short term absence to be higher than long term. The Director of Personnel explained that staff did not tend to take time off for short term illnesses. The Principal confirmed that the college had taken action to resolve some long term sickness issues. In response to a question from Mr Hussain, the Director of Personnel confirmed that she had compared the college's absence rates for the previous year with those of other local colleges, from which it appeared that the college had the second lowest absence rates.
- 6.3 Whole staff profile as at 21 April 2009 The Director of Personnel reported that the total headcount for the college had increased by eight from 850 on 28 January 2009 to 858 on 21 April 2009. During this period all vacancies had been considered by the Directorate. New staff had only been recruited to meet a specific need that could not be met internally, such as some posts relating to ITQ and Train to Gain contracts. The Director of Personnel reported that since the previous report to the committee, staff who had not declared their ethnicity

had been encouraged to make a declaration and more new staff were making a declaration on recruitment. This had led to more accurate information and an increase in the declared percentage of staff from black and minority ethnic groups, from 10.2% at 28 January to 11.09% at 21 April. The staff profile continued to compare favourably with the BME population of the Dudley Borough, approximately 7%. In response to a question from Mr Bagley, the Principal explained that the college had set a target of 15% of staff from BME groups to reflect the Sandwell BME statistic because one third of the college's learners came from Sandwell. The trend was improving towards 15%. The percentage of appointments into teaching posts was well above 15%.

- 6.4 Key vacancies In addition to the vacancy for Head of Centre Engineering and Construction Industries, there was also a vacancy for a Tutorial and Mentor Support Manager, for which interviews would be held the following week.
- 6.5 Employee relations procedures The Director of Personnel reported that a potential employment tribunal case relating to workplace stress had been settled prior to any case been submitted. There were no current disciplinary or capability cases.
- 6.6 Staff development The Chair emphasised the importance of evaluating staff development events, in order to ensure that the college derived a benefit from its investment. The Principal confirmed that an online evaluation process had been developed during the current year for internal events. In response to a question from Mr Hussain, the Director of Standards and Performance confirmed that there were processes to identify the development needs of staff including lesson observation, self-assessment and development planning. The skills audit might also identify staff development needs. The college would prefer to train existing staff for the college's future needs than to recruit new staff.
- 6.7 Investors in People The Director of Personnel reported that the college had been re-accredited with the Investors in People standard. In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Standards and Performance confirmed that it was useful to the college, particularly when tendering for work.
- 6.8 Staff development report - overview This table set out cross college events, local events requested by staff and the related expenditure.
- 6.9 **Resolved:** To note the contents of the Investing in Our People - Summer Term Report.

Item 7 Policy Updates

- 7.1 Flexible working The Director of Personnel explained that on 6 April 2009 the law had been changed to extend the right of employees to request flexible working when they had responsibility for children under the age of 16, whereas previously it had related to children under the age of six. The flexible working policy had been updated to reflect this change. In response to comments and questions from members, the Principal confirmed that the college wanted to be flexible around its staff's needs in order to recruit and retain good staff.
- 7.2 Policy and procedure on the use of restraint The Director of Personnel explained that this was a new policy and procedure. The Director of Estates and Capital Projects, who had responsibility for security in college, had worked with the unions to provide this useful guidance to staff regarding the use of physical restraint. Only authorised staff were permitted to use force. The relevant staff had been trained.

- 7.3 Procedure for screening and searching for weapons The Director of Personnel explained that the Director of Estates and Capital Projects had also introduced this procedure, to provide clear guidance to staff on what action to take when weapons were suspected.
- 7.4 The Principal advised members that generally students' conduct had been good in the current year and there had been no major incidents.
- 7.5 Sickness absence reporting The Director of Personnel reported that the sickness absence reporting procedure had been reviewed. Changes included the introduction of daily reporting to managers instead of only reporting to Personnel on the first and fourth day of absence. The updated procedure had not yet been presented to the JCC for union agreement.
- 7.6 **Resolved:** To endorse the Flexible Working Policy update, the Compassionate Leave Policy update, the new Policy and Procedure on the Use of Restraint and the new Procedure for Screening and Searching for Weapons.

Item 8 Skills Audit

- 8.1 The Director of Personnel gave a presentation on the skills audit, which would be undertaken by December 2009. (A copy of the slides is attached to these minutes.)
- 8.2 The Director of Personnel explained that the skills audit would identify skills needs, so that the college could take the appropriate action.
- 8.3 In response to a question from the Chair, the Principal explained that the skills audit would be updated once a year. The Director of Personnel explained that the skills report would relate to the college, not to individuals, and that the information would not be kept on the Personnel database. In response to a question from Ms J Payne, the Principal explained that further consideration would be given to the assessment of business support staff skills.
- 8.4 **Resolved:** To note the Skills Audit Report.

Item 9 Pay 2009/2010

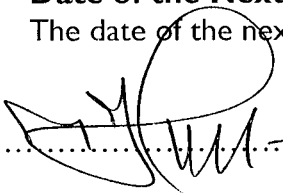
- 9.1 The Director of Personnel explained that all the major unions negotiated pay awards nationally with the AOC, after which the AOC would make a national recommendation to colleges. Negotiations were expected to start in the middle of May. The AOC recommendation would be reported to the committee. In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Personnel confirmed that it was currently the college's policy to adopt the AOC recommendation. The letter from the unions included in the paper set out their opening position. The negotiations would relate to teaching and business support staff.
- 9.2 **Resolved:** To note the contents of the Pay Award Report.

Item 10 Any other business

- 10.1 There were no items of other business.

Item 11 Date of the Next Meeting

- 11.1 The date of the next meeting would be in next year's calendar.

Signed  Dated 5/10/09