

Date: 15 January 2020
Venue: TG04 Boardroom, City Campus, the Sheffield College
Present: Stephan Hollingshead (Chair)
 Gwyn Arnold
 Peter Brooks
 Angela Foulkes
 Beri Hare
 Seb Schmoller

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In attendance: Rosheen Hodgkiss-Bernard, Head of HR (for item 2 only, 08.30 – 09.00 am)
 Kate Platts, Executive Director Finance and Resources
 Paul Simpson, Executive Director HR and Organisation Development
 Alison Shillito, Governance Advisor and Clerk to the Governing Body

Action
 by whom by when

20/1/1 Welcome, Introduction and apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Saleem Rashid. The meeting was quorate.

The Chair welcomed Rosheen Hodgkiss-Bernard, Head of HR.

20/1/2 Themed Presentation – HR Advisory

2.1 Rosheen Hodgkiss-Bernard, Head of HR, gave a presentation on the remit, activities and impact of the HR Advisory team. The main points covered in the presentation were:

- **Approach and priorities** – the team aligns its approach and priorities to the College’s visions and values. These inform not just what the team does but also how it works to support and achieve the People Strategy;
- **Safeguarding students** is a high priority for the team and there has been significant work (as noted by FEGP at the previous meeting) to ensure that all staff are subject to full pre-employment checks and DBS checks are routinely refreshed. HR Advisory deals with any queries arising from these processes.
- **Health and well-being of staff** – promoting staff well-being, reducing sickness absence and supporting staff with long term health conditions are important areas of work for the team. The College recently achieved Level 3 Disability Confident Employer status – one of only three employers in the Sheffield City Region and six colleges in

the UK to have achieved this level. The award is generating interest from employers, which enables the team to contribute to the College's reputation and employer engagement strategies.

- **Organisational design and restructuring** – the team supports the College to ensure its structure is optimal for achieving college strategies. The team recognises that the College is working in a turbulent external context and welcomes the strong management vision to improve the student experience, so supporting change processes is a vital element its work.
- **Impact** – the Head of HR gave a number of examples of individuals being supported to improve their performance or return to work after long term sickness. The College was also starting to see the benefits of a more efficient policy framework, supporting managers to address staff absence more promptly and continued improvements to staff communication, engagement and recognition that reflected the College's values.

2.2 Committee discussed the main points as follows.

Staff retention – the Committee had previously queried the turnover rates for staff particularly those within 12 months of starting at the College. The Head of HR said that the team are continuing to follow-up the reasons why people leave with individuals and their managers to identify common or role specific issues. This was also being addressed through other employee engagement activities to ensure that the causes of dissatisfaction for all staff were understood and action taken where possible.

Employment cases – governors noted that the number of employment cases mentioned in the presentation cover the whole range of HR issues including performance management; occupational health; managing absence; and reasonable adjustments. Some staff might have record multiple cases for different issues. The College was tackling issues proactively and this was reflected in the data.

Impact on different sites – members asked how staff on different sites perceived the HR team and how accessible HR support was to staff at other sites. The Head of HR said that the team had staff based at Hillsborough Campus and the team made regular visits to Olive Grove and Peaks. Senior HR staff had improved their visibility by participating in 'meet and greet' sessions and SLT and ELT+ meetings, which were held at different sites.

How the HR function had changed with the changing strategy – governors were pleased to hear that the the team welcomed the high level of challenge brought to the College by the current Executive Leadership Team. The HR Advisory team appreciated having a clear vision and strategy for improving student experience and outcomes. HR Advisory staff shared the College's appetite for achieving this via its work on the People Strategy.

The Committee noted the presentation and thanked the Head of HR, commenting that they had been encouraged by her obvious enthusiasm for the challenge and pride in supporting the College and its students.

20/1/3 Declarations of Interest

The Committee noted that there were no new declarations and there was no action required for this meeting to address the standing declarations previously noted.

20/1/4 Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 November 2019

The Committee approved the open and confidential minutes as a true record of the meeting held on 27 November 2019

20/1/5 Matters Arising and Action Record

5.1 The Committee considered matters arising and action tracker items (not elsewhere covered on the agenda) as follows. Some of the discussion is recorded in a separate confidential minute.

5.5 Minute 19/4/14.2 refers: Capital Projects

The EDFR reported that Stewart Alexander, the new Head of Estates and Facilities Manager, had started work at the College and his arrival would enable the team to make more rapid progress with its new projects and other targets. The Committee agreed to reschedule the action to allow time for the new manager to address these.

5.6 Minute 19/5/10 refers: Marketing and recruitment update – HE income position

It was noted that the current and forecast income for HE and its impact on the three year plan would be addressed as part of the discussion of the HE Strategy at the Governor Strategy Event on 29 January 2020 and therefore this action and agenda item 13 were deferred.

5.7 The Committee approved the removal of actions reported as closed other than Minute 19/5/10, which was marked in progress and given a new due date of 29 January 2020.

20/1/6 HR and Organisation Development update

6.1 The Executive Director of HR and Organisation Development (EDHROD) presented an update on the College's progress on achieving its 'People' strategic aim. In terms of the impact of the activities implemented, the EDHROD commented on the following in particular

- **Reward** – a new high performance pay scheme had been launched to encourage and reward staff going 'above and beyond' their role to serve the College and its students. Senior managers continued to negotiate with staff representatives on how best to use the funds available to improve staff satisfaction within severe budget constraints.
- **Engagement** - the two staff development days at the end of last term, including one on curriculum planning for teaching teams, had been well-received as had the Winter

Celebration. The College would be conducting a short pulse survey later this month to gauge the impact of these activities on staff engagement and satisfaction.

6.2 The Committee noted the report.

20/1/7 Staff Development Activities Report (Term 1 2019/20)

- 7.1 The EDHROD presented an update on staff development. Members noted that the report included more detail on CPD for teaching staff in response to members' comments in October.
- 7.2 The Committee considered the main developments as follows
- **Teaching Innovation Centre** – the Committee welcomed improved monitoring of how the resources were being used and the engagement of staff as part of support plans. [Post-meeting note: TLQSE Committee were to visit the Centre on 22 January 2020].
 - **Training team leaders** – it was noted that the College had provided formal training to team leaders in using and structuring team meetings to make sure the CPD at team meetings was likely to be effective. Again members welcomed the introduction of tracking attendance at team meetings as part of monitoring progress against support plans to ensure that training was having a positive impact.
 - **Mandatory training** – members supported that the College was maintaining high completion rates and that it was keeping under review the frequency of refresh to ensure staff knowledge remained relevant and up to date.
- 7.3 The Committee noted the update.

20/1/8 Apprenticeship Levy update

- 8.1 The EDHROD presented the first formal report to governors since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy on how the College was using its own levy funds. It was noted that the College was not yet fully utilising the funds accrued and that unspent monies were subject to clawback on a month by month basis. The EDHROD explained that the College was pursuing two routes to use funds better in future:
- **New apprentices** – via business planning, senior managers continued to encourage managers to consider appointing an apprentice to vacancies and using higher value standards such as the new teacher training standard and other higher technical standards. This would continue to be done with integrity, i.e. where there was an opportunity for the apprentice to be employed at the end of the programme.
 - **Training for existing staff** – using funds to encourage existing staff to improve their training and qualifications. This could include teacher training and there were ongoing discussions with Sheffield Hallam University about this. The off-the-job training requirement was a challenge for some areas as levy funding could not be used to backfill

the teaching of an apprentice teacher.

8.2 The Committee considered the report as follows.

- Members were keen for the College to utilise its Levy funding fully, in the medium to long term. Members supported use of higher level apprenticeships to do this and considering opportunities to fund apprentices in other companies, using College provision. To be successful, this relied on College provision having high levels of apprentice retention and achievement.
- Members strongly supported the College's position that it should recruit with integrity and not employ any apprentices on a framework or standard which was not already assessed by the College as 'good' quality or better.
- Members asked if there were lessons to be learned from other colleges. The EDHROD said that he would use the AoC EDHR Forum to learn lessons from other colleges on using the levy and/or their experience of adopting the new teaching apprenticeship standards. The College would also continue to keep up to date with the levy rules and processes for employers to help advise partner employers.

8.3 The Committee noted the report and agreed that the College currently had a number of higher priorities relevant to improving the use of levy funds, the foremost being improving the outcomes of the apprenticeship provision provided by the College. Once this was performing at a good standard, members would be interested in receiving a more detailed plan for using Levy funds, recognising that this was a lower order priority. It was therefore agreed that any further work on a plan for the apprenticeship levy should be de-prioritised at the current time.

20/1/9 Employee Engagement Survey 2018/19: update on actions

- 9.1 The EDHROD presented an update on how the College was addressing the concerns raised in the 2018/19 employee engagement survey and what impact the actions were having on staff morale and engagement.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the report and in particular the actions on workload, well-being and reward. Members supported that the College would be undertaking a pulse survey to obtain a better understanding of staff workload issues – the impact of action already taken and staff ideas about what further could be done.

20/1/10 Health and Safety Term 1 2019/20 update

- 10.1 The EDFR presented an update on the College's Health and Safety performance in the first term of 2019/20 and what the College was doing to achieve its stated aim of reducing accidents and promoting a culture with a high regard for maintaining staff and student safety. It was noted that the report included the report on an Internal Audit Review (IAR) on Health and Safety, which the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) had commissioned and requested FEGP to consider its findings. Some of the discussion is recorded in a separate confidential minute.

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| 10.2 | The EDFR said that the IAR had been effective in benchmarking the current performance, highlighting where improvements should be made and informing the H&S team improvement plan. It was a formal document that required a response and the actions arising would be monitored formally by the ARAC. | | |
| 10.4 | ACTIONS | | |
| i) | Future termly reports to FEGP to include progress on the IAR recommendations via a grid showing the action agreed and progress made to assure members that the recommendations are being addressed in a timely manner. | EDFR | 22.4.20 |
| ii) | Investigate whether the College already has or should have defibrillators on site and if so their location. | EDFR | 22.4.20 |
| 20/1/11 | Governors' Expenses Policy | | |
| 11.1 | The Governance Advisor and Clerk presented a report prepared in response to a query raised at the October meeting about the College offering reimbursement of a wider range of out of pocket expenses. The main points of the discussion were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility – the staff expenses policy had a suitably restrictive approach to expenses. Charity Commission permitted charities to pay out of pocket expenses to trustees for a wider range of expenses. There should be a covering statement acknowledging that, for governors, the College would be flexible in reimbursing out of pocket expenses such as where a governor could pre-book first class travel for less than standard fare. - Equality and diversity – it was commented that being explicit about the availability of expenses for child care costs for attending meetings might make the governor role more accessible to governors from different social groups and age groups currently under-represented on the board (e.g. people with young families or other care duties). | | |
| 11.2 | The Committee received the paper and <u>agreed</u> the following ACTION prepare a new Board policy statement confirming that the staff expenses policy applied to governors, with flexibility (within Charity Commission guidance and ESFA rules) permitting reimbursement of other out-of-pocket expenses that directly and solely arise from their governing. | Clerk | 22.4.20 |
| 20/1/12 | Review of Creative and Design restructure | | |
| 12.1 | The EDHROD presented an update on the de-brief conducted by senior managers on the restructure exercise, the main points were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The context of the restructure was a decline in student numbers for subjects in the area, this had been discussed with the teams prior to the restructure. - The College had also introduced a new Curriculum Team Leader (CTL) role in the same restructure and the staff side would have preferred a longer period for consulting on the new role. During the restructure, the College had appointed six new CTLs, five of whom were internal appointments. | | |

- the College has acknowledged that the timing of the restructure was not ideal and the Executive Leadership Team had made a commitment to recognised TU colleagues to try to avoid restructuring in periods when affected staff were most likely to want to take annual leave;
- The time taken and approach had been adjusted for each team, depending on the context. There had been delays, some of which had been to accommodate individuals engaging in the process.
- There would be a review of the College's redundancy and redeployment policies and procedures during 2019/2020, which would reflect the feedback and the learning from the de-brief.

12.2 The Committee noted the report and welcomed the assurance provided that the College had undertaken a thorough de-brief.

20/1/13 Finance Report Period 3 2019-20

- 13.1 The EDFR presented the Period 3 management accounts, which had been prepared following completion of the Period 3 Business Review meetings.
- 13.2 Governors considered the report and asked how the College intended to address the difference between the EBITDA P3 forecast against the original budget. The EDFR said that the P6 business review meetings were due to commence shortly and the aim of these meetings would be to deliver savings for the rest of the year to bring the forecast outturn of the EBITDA within budget.
- 13.3 The Committee noted the report.

20/1/14 Tuition Fees Policies

- 14.1 The EDFR presented updates to the Tuition Fees and Charges Policy, which were the result of an annual review process. In response to FEGP feedback last year, the review had been conducted earlier in the session which meant that the revised policy would be available earlier to applicants and enquirers.
- 14.2 Members considered the main points of the updates as follows.
- **Student debt and bad debt** – members noted that the policy included clearer wording that students taking adult training courses (self-funded or on Adult Learner Loans) are liable for full fees even if they withdraw early from the course. Governors asked if the College should be doing more to avoid students getting into debt for fees. The CEP said that as well as revising the policy wording, the College had improved communication to potential students in initial advice and guidance meetings so that those taking out an Adult Learner Loan were in no doubt about their financial liability. It was noted that there would be a report on bad debt at the next meeting of FEGP.
 - **Impact of Brexit** – the updates included changes to international fees and members asked if the UK leaving the EU would have an impact on fee levels and recruitment. The EDFR said that the College had a small

amount of international provision from within the EU and other parts of the world. The risks of Brexit were being managed and reported to governors via the strategic risk register.

- 14.3 The Committee approved the updated policy on behalf of the Governing Body and agreed the following

ACTION: publish the updated policy as soon as possible.

EDFR 31/1/20

20/1/15 Terms and Conditions of enrolment for Higher Education students for implementation from 1 August 2020

- 15.1 The Clerk presented the report on an external review of the College's HE Terms and Conditions and proposals for changes to ensure that the HE student contract fully complied with Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance and Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration.

- 15.2 The Committee considered the review and the main points of discussion were:

- Governors were satisfied that the changes proposed addressed the main findings of the review. The report and updated policy showing 'tracked changes' had presented this clearly.
- The changes made the Terms and Conditions clearer for students and were in students' favour, which should ease the process of communicating the changes to existing students.
- Members did not propose any substantial changes but did request a final proofread of the document, once approved, to correct some typographical errors prior to publication.
- It was agreed that, as the proposals were amendments to an existing policy and it was important to publish these as soon as possible to potential students, it was appropriate for the Committee to consider and approve the updated policy.

- 15.3 The Committee approved the amended Terms and Conditions of enrolment for Higher Education students on behalf of the Governing Body and agreed the following

ACTION: make the corrections recommended by members and publish the updated policy as soon as possible.

Clerk 31/1/20

20/1/16 Estates Strategy 2018-2021

- 16.1 The EDFR presented the report, which the Committee considered as follows.

- **Current work in progress:** it was noted that the College was already half-way through the 2019/20 programme of works and had identified that a new project manager role would be useful to ensure that the projects (small and large) were completed on time and within budget. Action was in progress to scope and recruit to the post.
- **Local Enterprise Partnership funded capital programme –** members sought reassurance that the College had put in place strengthened project management arrangements to ensure that this major capital development was delivered within budget and on time. The EDFR said that the College

had established a project board to oversee the project supported by a specialist external project manager. The plan for the College to employ its own project manager would also support successful delivery of this project.

16.2 The Committee noted the update.

20/1/17 Waivers of the Financial Regulations

17.1 The Committee noted that there had been no waivers since the last meeting. The EDFR confirmed that the action arising from the November report was in progress and would be reported to the next meeting.

20/1/18 Disposal of land at former Norton site

18.1 EDFR presented a report on a land transfer from the College to Sheffield City Council (SCC), who had contacted the College to say that the College remained the registered owner of two small parcels of land that should have been transferred to SCC at the time of the sale of the main site to a developer in 2017. On investigation it was found that this had been the intention of the parties at the time and the Governing Body had endorsed the application of the corporation seal to the land transfer document (GB minute 17/2/13.1 refers) but it appeared that this had not been registered with the Land Registry.

18.2 The EDFR confirmed that the land was of no value to the College, and the intention of both parties (demonstrated by the documents in the report) was for ownership to return to SCC, who had originally owned the whole site. It was noted that the consideration for the transfer was nominal and there would be no additional legal fees to be paid by the College.

18.3 The Committee noted the report and recommended that the Chair of Governing Body sign appropriate documents on behalf of the College to complete the transfer.

20/1/19 Review of Meeting and closing remarks

Members commented that the meeting had run according to the time planned and the themed presentation had been much appreciated.

20/1/20 Date of next meeting

Wednesday 22 April 2020 at 8:30 in the Boardroom (TG04), City Campus

Wednesday 24 June 2020 at 8:30 in the Boardroom (TG04), City Campus