

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Wednesday 2 October 2024 at 9:00 am
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:	Dr David Cutting Ms Alana Jones Campbell, Committee Chair Ms Celine McCartan, Principal & Chief Executive Ms Anne McCleary (<i>from item 4.2</i>)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs Camilla James, Head of People & Culture Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body Mrs Sharon McGrath, Director of Corporate Services
APOLOGIES:	Mrs Libby Armstrong Mr Brian Ingram Mrs Gillian McDowell

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Ms Jones Campbell, Committee Chair, welcomed all present to the meeting, extending a particular welcome to Dr Cutting following his recent appointment to the Committee. She spoke of the agreed focus for 2024/25 on the enhancement of the student experience and of the Committee's role in achieving this objective.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs Armstrong, Mr Ingram and Mrs McDowell.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Dr Cutting declared his membership of the University & College Union.

Further conflict of interest declarations were made in relation to the confidential and reserved sections of the meeting.

At a later stage in the meeting Ms Jones Campbell and Ms McCleary declared their membership of Benenden Healthcare.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 8 May 2024.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 Update on Re-organisation
- Paper 04.02 Update on the Next Chapter Report
- Paper 04.03 Draft Next Chapter Action Plan
- Paper 04.04 Draft 2024/25 Employee Engagement Plan.

4.1 Update on Re-organisation

Ms McCartan updated the meeting on the progress of the re-organisation processes within the Finance & Governance, IT Services and Quality & Student Engagement Teams, and reported the expectation that these will be substantially progressed by the end of October 2024.

In response to a comment from the Committee Chair, the meeting was provided with assurances that collective consultation has been undertaken where required.

Ms McCleary joined the meeting at this juncture.

4.2 The Next Chapter

Ms McCartan provided an overview of the measures taken to address the recommendations made in the Next Chapter Report including the establishment of a Culture & Engagement team, ongoing management engagement with staff and students, the rollout of Leadership Development training, plans to introduce a coaching culture within the College, continued collection of feedback through staff surveys, the redevelopment of the online Staff Hub and continuing publication of monthly Leadership E-briefs to staff.

She referenced the draft Action Plan and draft 2024/25 Employee Engagement Plan in papers 04.03 and 04.04 and undertook to circulate an updated version of the draft Action Plan for comment. She also advised of the Department for the Economy's (DfE) normalisation of arrangements for its oversight of the College in light of the progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Improvement Plan and undertook to circulate confirmation of same.

In response to members' comments on the ambition to embed a coaching culture within the College, Mrs James reported on the initial plans to re-introduce the Performance Appraisal Scheme following the cessation of Action Short of Strike as well as on the ongoing development of a coaching toolkit.

ACTIONS:

- **Management to circulate updated draft Next Chapter Action Plan; and**
- **Management to circulate confirmation of DfE's normalisation of arrangements for its oversight of the College.**

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 Workforce Development Policy
- Paper 05.02 Workforce Development Guide
- Paper 05.03 Draft CPD Schedule
- Paper 05.04 2023/24 Sickness Absence Report
- Paper 05.05 2023/24 Equality Progress Report
- Paper 05.06 Social & Wellbeing Committee Terms of Reference.

5.1 **Workforce Development Update**

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Papers 05.01, 05.02 & 05.03

Mrs James undertook to amend the Workforce Development Guide to reflect feedback received in relation to the distinction between mandatory and non-mandatory training. She also explained that the draft Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Schedule has been informed by a college wide training needs analysis, that managers are encouraging staff to complete all corporate training modules by late October, that positive feedback has been received on the Leadership Development training and that support has been provided to several staff undertaking teaching and Higher Education qualifications.

In response to questions and comments, management undertook to circulate details of the corporate training modules which staff must undertake annually and spoke of the objective of commencing the performance appraisal process for all staff in 2024/25 with appropriate training to be arranged thereafter if required.

AGREED: that the Workforce Development Policy is recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

ACTIONS:

- **Workforce Development Guide to be amended to distinguish between mandatory and non-mandatory training; and**
- **Management to circulate details of the corporate training modules which staff must undertake annually.**

5.2 **Absence Management**

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 05.04

Mrs James highlighted the College's 2023/24 average sickness absence rate of 4.58%, noted the reduction from the 2022/23 figure of 5.01% and confirmed the 2023/24 sector average sickness absence rate of 4.77%. She commented on the marked reduction in short term absences as well as on the increase in long-term absences. Drawing attention to the reasons given for absences, she noted the comfort gained that work related stress does not feature in the top five reasons given.

Members welcomed the progress made in absence management and spoke of the benefits accrued in the longer term.

5.3 **Equality**

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.05

Mrs James confirmed the submission of the 2023/24 Equality Progress Report to the Equality Commission and spoke of the ongoing development of an Equality Action Plan.

5.4 **Other**

5.4.1 **Workforce Planning**

Ref: Management Report Section 4.1

Mrs James informed the meeting of the potential need to offer additional hours or second contracts to Associate and Full Time Lecturers to resource curriculum delivery in light of recruitment challenges and explained that the process for allocation of such hours has been streamlined.

5.4.2 Temporary Approval for Increment and Deane Payments

Ref: Management Report Section 4.2

Mrs James advised of the temporary approval granted by the Permanent Secretary for 2024/25 pay progression increments. She explained that this arrangement has been the norm in recent years and that full approval will be granted in due course. She also referenced the eligibility of 11 lecturers for Deane payments.

5.4.3 Benenden Healthcare

Ref: Management Report Section 4.3

Ms Jones Campbell and Ms McCleary declared their membership of Benenden Healthcare.

Mrs James advised of the proposal to provide staff the option of subscribing to Benenden's private healthcare scheme, which had previously operated in the College.

5.4.4 Social and Wellbeing Committee Terms of Reference

Ref: Management Report Section 4.4 and Paper 05.06

Mrs James referenced the Social and Wellbeing Committee's Terms of Reference and outlined the social and wellbeing initiatives underway and planned.

5.4.5 Occupational Health Contract

Ref: Management Report Section 4.5

Mrs James informed the meeting of the extension of the contract for Occupational Health Services with the current provider with reduced provision due to capacity constraints.

5.4.6 Staff Turnover

Ref: Management Report Section 4.6

Mrs James reported an increase in the staff turnover rate to 16.13% in 2023/24 as a result of the Voluntary Severance Scheme and the cleansing of the Part Time Lecturer Register. The value of the information gleaned through Exit Interviews was highlighted.

6.0 REVIEW OF STAFFING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06.01 Staffing Committee Terms of Reference
- Paper 06.02 Amendments to Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

With reference to Paper 06, Mrs McCauley highlighted the amendments proposed to the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference to document agreed approval and reporting arrangements.

AGREED: that the revised Staffing Committee Terms of Reference is recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

7.0 PROPOSED 2024/25 PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Proposed 2024/25 Programme of Business.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed 2024/25 Programme of Business.

8.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 List of Outstanding Actions

It was noted that the proposal to undertake an environmental screening exercise on support for staff and students with neurodisability would be considered at a sectoral level. It was noted that all other outstanding items had been actioned.

A revised list of actions is contained within Appendix A.

9.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

10.0 REFLECTION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING

Members commented on the effective and efficient chairing of the meeting.

The meeting went into reserved session.

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
20 NOVEMBER 2024**

CHAIRPERSON 

DATE 20/11/2024

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	04/10/2023	5.3	Mrs James to consider undertaking an environmental screening exercise on support for staff and students with neurodisability.
2	02/10/2024	4.2	Management to circulate updated draft Next Chapter Action Plan.
3	02/10/2024	4.2	Management to circulate confirmation of DfE's normalisation of arrangements for its oversight of the College.
4	02/10/2024	5.1	Workforce Development Guide to be amended to distinguish between mandatory and non-mandatory training.
5	02/10/2024	5.1	Management to circulate details of the corporate training modules which staff must undertake annually.