

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Wednesday 29 November 2023 at 9:00 am
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:	Mr Brian Ingram Mrs Sandra Isherwood Ms Alana Jones Campbell, Committee Chair Ms Celine McCartan Ms Anne McCleary Mrs Gillian McDowell
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs Regina Gormley, Human Resources Services Team Lead Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body Mrs Sharon McGrath, Director of Corporate Services
APOLOGIES:	Mrs Camilla James, Head of People & Culture

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

The Committee Chair tendered an apology on behalf of Mrs James and extended her condolences and that of the Committee to Mrs James on her recent bereavement.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Ms McCartan declared an interest in the review of the Carers Policy in the context of her caring responsibilities. At a later point in the meeting she also declared an interest in paper 05.07, the Circular on Pay Award for Principals and Deputy Directors.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 4 October 2023.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING

4.1 Change Program

Ms McCartan explained that the Report on the Progress of the Implementation of the Strategic Improvement Plan has been updated and made available to all governors. She advised on the progress made in all actions with the exception of the development and embedding of sustainability curriculum. She referenced the recent 'We're Listening' staff survey and undertook to circulate the associated report when available. She then invited Mrs McGrath to update the Committee on the recent Change Team meeting.

Mrs McGrath reported on the responses received to the staff survey highlighting the areas cited as going well, the areas for improvement and the recommendations made and advised that the associated report will be circulated to staff along with the third Leadership E-Brief in mid-December. She also commented on the action to ascertain

from staff what measures could be taken to improve communication and enhance the visibility of the Governing Body. She referenced the Change Team's assertion that the opinions given reflect sectoral circumstances as well as its recommendation to delay the commencement of an external review of the change process to allow adequate time to embed the new college structure.

Reflecting on the commencement of the change process in January 2022, members discussed the optimal timing of an external review noting the time required to undertake a procurement exercise for a review as well as that required to implement any recommendations arising and suggested that preparatory work is undertaken to progress an external review of the change process.

ACTION: preparatory work to be undertaken to progress an external review of the change process.

4.2 Reform to Save Scheme and External Recruitment

Ms McCartan reflected on the discussion held at the 15 November 2023 Governing Body meeting on the paradox of the forthcoming voluntary redundancies under the Reform to Save Scheme and the College's position of externally advertising posts where possible, adopted following a recommendation from the Report of the Review of Human Resources, Corporate Services and Governance. She reminded the meeting of the approvals made in relation to recruitment of the Curriculum Manager and temporary Head of People & Culture positions in alignment with the legal advice received on this matter and proposed that an internal trawl approach is adopted to recruitment in the first instance in order to support existing staff and safeguard jobs, with the scope for external advertisement of posts where circumstances justify it.

AGREED: that an internal trawl approach is adopted to recruitment in the first instance with the scope for external advertisement of posts where circumstances justify it.

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Report
- Paper 05.02 Carers Policy
- Paper 05.03 SWC Access NI Policy Statement
- Paper 05.04 Number of Full Time and Associate Lecturer Staff on Strike in October 2023
- Paper 05.05 Discussion Paper on Awarding Incremental Credit to Academic Staff
- Paper 05.06 Circular CEF LNC 2008-03 Scheme for Placing Lecturers on Salary Scales
- Paper 05.07 CEF 2008/03 2023.01 Circular on Pay Award for Principals and Deputy Directors
- Paper 05.08 Absence Management Toolkit.

5.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 05.01

The update provided in the Management Report on Health, Safety & Wellbeing was noted by the Committee.

5.2 Policy Reviews

Ref: Management Report Section 2.1 and Papers 05.02 & 05.03

5.2.1 Carers Policy

It was noted that the most recent version of the Carers Policy had not been issued to members due to a version control error. Ms McCartan then outlined the proposal to amend the policy to extend the duration of leave to deal with emergency or unexpected domestic situations to three days. Members highlighted the importance of ensuring that the policy meets the statutory minimum time off for dependents and suggested that a right of appeal is considered. It was also suggested that the Special Leave of Absence Guide should be referenced within the policy.

AGREED: that a further review of the Carers Policy is undertaken by Management to consider the suggestions made and that the revised policy is circulated to members with a view to recommending it to the Governing Body for approval at its January 2024 meeting.

5.2.2 SWC Access NI Policy Statement

It was suggested that the SWC Access NI Policy Statement is amended to require an original Access NI Disclosure Certificate from applicants.

AGREED: that the SWC Access NI Policy Statement is recommended to the Governing Body for approval subject to the amendment above.

5.3 Incremental Credit for Lecturing Staff

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Papers 05.05 & 05.06

Ms McCartan drew attention to the proposal to routinely place newly appointed lecturers on point 3 of the of the salary scale to align with the approach adopted in other colleges and to mitigate recruitment challenges. With reference to the associated circular, members sought assurance that criteria for such posts will require applicants to have the minimum qualifications and experience to warrant placement at point 3 on the salary scale. Management undertook to amend the proposal to specify that the criteria for lecturing posts list the required level of qualifications and experience to warrant placement at point 3 on the salary scale. In the interests of equality, members also discussed the need to apply the revised policy to lecturers appointed to the first point of the salary scale in the previous two year period.

AGREED: that the Discussion Paper on Awarding Incremental Credit for Academic Staff is revised as outlined above and that the revised paper is circulated to members with a view to recommending it to the Governing Body for approval at its January 2024 meeting.

5.4 Industrial Action

Ref: Management Report Section 2.3 and Paper 05.04

Ms McCartan informed the meeting of declining numbers of University & College Union (UCU) members participating in strike action, commented on the ongoing disruption caused and noted differing views on UCU's mandate for strike action. She also reported on the half day strike by NASUWT members and on the impact of the forthcoming Translink strike.

In response to a question from a member, Ms McCartan reported on the continued discontent amongst lecturing staff on pay matters.

5.5 Further Education Principals' and Deputy Directors' Pay Award

Ref: Management Report section 2.4 and Paper 05.07

Ms McCartan declared an interest in this item.

The update provided in the Management Report on the Further Education Principals' and Deputy Directors' Pay Award was noted by the Committee.

5.6 Update on Outstanding Actions

Ref: Management Report section 3.0 and Paper 05.08

The updates provided in the Management Report on the progress of the implementation of the actions arising from the previous meeting were noted by the Committee.

6.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 List of Outstanding Actions

A revised list of actions is contained within Appendix A.

7.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

8.0 REFLECTION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING

Members commented on the positive discussions held during the meeting. Referencing the Report on the Analysis of the Governing Body Self-Assessment Exercise, the Committee Chair welcomed feedback from members on Staffing Committee operations at any time.

The meeting went into confidential session.

**CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
31 JANUARY 2024**

CHAIRMAN



DATE 31/01/2024

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	04/10/2023	5.3	Mrs James to include information on recruitment panel training in the 2023/24 Equality Progress Report and to consider undertaking an environmental screening exercise on support for staff and students with a neurodisability.
2	04/10/2023	5.3	Mrs James to consider undertaking an environmental screening exercise on support for staff and students with a neurodisability.
3	29/11/2023	4.1	Report of the most recent 'We're Listening' staff survey to be circulated to members when available.
4	29/11/2023	4.1	Preparatory work to be undertaken to progress an external review of the change process.
5	29/11/2023	5.2.1	Carers Policy to be reviewed and circulated to members with a view to recommending it to the Governing Body for approval at its January 2024 meeting.
6	29/11/2023	5.3	The Discussion Paper on Awarding Incremental Credit for Academic Staff to be revised and circulated to members with a view to recommending it to the Governing Body for approval at its January 2024 meeting.