

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 9:00 am
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

- Mr Brian Ingram
- Mrs Sandra Isherwood
- Ms Alana Jones Campbell, Committee Chair
- Ms Celine McCartan, Principal & Chief Executive
- Ms Anne McCleary
- Mrs Gillian McDowell

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Camilla James, Head of People & Culture
- Mrs Fiona McCauley, Secretary to the Governing Body
- Mrs Sharon McGrath, Director of Corporate Services

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Ms Jones Campbell, Committee Chair, welcomed all present to the meeting. She reflected on the three key objectives set by the Department for the Economy (DfE) for the Further Education (FE) sector of increasing enrolments, reducing costs and enhancing quality; on the Minister for the Economy's objectives of good jobs, promoting regional balance, raising productivity and reducing carbon emissions; on the College's vision of Inspiring Learning, Empowering People; and on the College's values of Respectful, Accountable, Engaging and Committed.

It was noted that all members were present.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict of interest declarations were made.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 21 February 2024.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04 People Plan Update Report.

4.1 Change Management

4.1.1 Change Programme

Ms McCartan commented on the achievements of the Change Programme and on the evolution to focus on culture in recognition of the work still to be done in this area. She explained that short-term backfill for the Change Manager position is currently being

trawled with a view to completing the implementation of the Strategic Improvement Plan, noting that the requirement for a Change Manager position will cease thereafter.

4.1.2 Employee Engagement Survey

Reporting on the most recent Employee Engagement Survey, Mrs McGrath explained that, in contrast to previous surveys, a non-anonymous approach had been taken to gather contextual data on the feedback received which had yielded rich qualitative information despite a lower response rate. She provided an overview of the responses received and undertook to circulate the report on the analysis of the responses when available.

ACTION: Management to circulate the report on the analysis of the responses to the Employee Engagement Survey when available.

In response to questions from members, management commented on the value of both anonymous and non-anonymous surveys, noting that a combination of both is likely to be used in the future, and explained that the communication deficits reported by staff relate mainly to middle management tiers and that interventions will be put in place to address the issues identified.

Mrs James highlighted the feedback received regarding the desire for a stronger community spirit within the College as well as the value in recognising the efforts and achievements of staff and students, and made the meeting aware of plans to pilot a Living our Values Scheme amongst staff with a view to implementing this on a wider basis in 2024/25.

4.1.3 External Evaluation of the Change Programme

Mrs James outlined the fieldwork undertaken by Phillipson Performance Partners Limited in the evaluation of the Change Programme, including focus groups and one-to-one interviews, and explained that a report on findings is under development.

Ms McCartan provided an overview of the verbal feedback received from the lead consultant and on the recommendations expected regarding a collective focus on students, staff recognition initiatives and improved communications at middle management level. She provided options in relation to presentation of the report to the Governing Body, the Change Team and the Senior Leadership Team following which a virtual meeting on 31 May 2024 to receive the report was agreed.

4.1.4 Leadership Development Programme

Mrs James reported good progress in the implementation of the Leadership Development Programme to five cohorts of staff.

4.2 Implementation of the People Plan

With reference to paper 04, Mrs James updated the meeting on the progress made in the implementation of the objectives within the People Plan, reporting in particular on those objectives reaching their target implementation date and confirming that 25 objectives have been completed, six have been partially completed and nine are yet to be achieved.

Members welcomed the progress made and commented on the value of the effort involved in the implementation of the objectives of the People Plan.

In response to a suggestion from a member on the expansion of the trauma informed practice model, Mrs James advised of plans to re-introduce the trauma informed

practice concept in 2024/25 through training and development with a view to building on this thereafter.

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Report
- Paper 05.02 Absence Management Report
- Paper 05.03 Fair Employment Monitoring Return Analysis Report
- Paper 05.04 Workforce Development Policy
- Paper 05.05 Fixed Term Contract Policy
- Paper 05.06 Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy
- Paper 05.07 NILGOSC Circular 07/2024 ON Pay Administration Strategy
- Paper 05.08 NILGOSC Pension Administration Strategy.

5.1 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 05.01

Members welcomed the proposed introduction of NEBOSH training for staff, commented on the need to ensure that mandatory training is completed and, in response to a question on the lockdown alarm, were advised of the development of a procedure to be followed in such an event as well as of the need for training on the implementation of this procedure.

5.2 Absence Management

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 05.02

Mrs James corrected an error in relation to the percentage of staff with absences in March 2024 to 13.77%. She then commented on the relatively stable nature of staff absences, noting the within target performance and highlighting the relatively low proportion of absences due to work related stress. She added that sectoral benchmarking will be undertaken in the Summer and, in response to queries, acknowledged the impact of the College's aging workforce on sickness absence rates as well as the impact of long-term absences on departmental sickness absence statistics.

5.3 Fair Employment Return

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.03

Mrs James confirmed the submission of the Fair Employment Monitoring Return to the Equality Commission and explained that a more comprehensive return, incorporating all staff, had been possible due to the automation of the system from which relevant data is extracted.

She reported a continuation of higher representation from females and Roman Catholics in relation to both applicants and appointees to college positions in line with recent trends and commented on the need to take affirmative action to redress the imbalance.

In acknowledging the imbalance reported, members commented on the assurances provided by the thorough and transparent recruitment processes in place and were advised of the forthcoming transition to online anonymized shortlisting to further promote transparency.

5.4 **Policy Reviews**

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Papers 05.04, 05.05 & 05.06

Mrs James apprised the meeting of the draft nature of the Workforce Development Policy pending further review and consultation, highlighted the development of a Fixed Term Contracts Policy at the Committee's request and referenced the updated Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy incorporating the feedback received from the Governing Body.

A discussion followed on the Fixed Term Contracts Policy during which members commented on the importance of agreeing and adhering to a framework for the management of fixed term contracts, the need for a rationalisation of policies, the need for separation of the operational aspects from the policy and the need for consultation with trade unions. It was agreed to recommend the Fixed Term Contracts Policy for approval by the Governing Body in order to provide a framework for the management of fixed term contracts with a further review to be undertaken upon consultation with relevant parties.

AGREED: that the Fixed Term Contracts Policy and the Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy are recommended to the Governing Body for approval

5.5 **Other**

5.5.1 **Trade Union Update**

Ref: Management Report Section 5.1

Mrs James explained that the business case for the lecturers' pay agreement is awaiting Ministerial approval with the expectation of administration of backpay in June 2024 payroll.

5.5.2 **Pension Administration Strategy**

Ref: Management Report Section 5.2 and Papers 05.07 & 05.08

The Committee noted the NILGOSC Pensions Administration Strategy.

6.0 **REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S PERFORMANCE IN 2023/24**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Partially Completed Review of Committee's Performance in 2023/24.

With reference to Paper 06, Mrs McCauley advised that the self-assessment checklist had been completed where a factual response was available and sought members' views on remaining questions. The resulting review is attached at Appendix A.

7.0 **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2024/25**

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 07 Schedule of Meetings 2024/25.

The Committee accepted the proposed schedule of meetings for 2024/25 with the October 2024, December 2024 and May 2025 meetings to be held virtually and the February 2025 meeting to be held in the Dungannon campus.

AGREED: acceptance of the proposed schedule of Staffing Committee meetings for 2024/25.

8.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 List of Outstanding Actions

It was noted that the policies listed have been further reviewed as requested, that information on recruitment panel training will be included in the 2023/24 Equality Progress Report in September 2024 and that the possibility of undertaking an environmental screening exercise on support for students and staff with a neuro-disability remains outstanding and has been discussed sectorally.

A revised list of actions is contained within Appendix B.

9.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

No further business was raised.

10.0 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR 2024/25 – 2025/26

Mrs McCauley advised of the forthcoming expiration of Ms Jones Campbell's two year appointment as Committee Chair and invited nominations for the position in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

AGREED: on the proposal of Mrs Isherwood, seconded by Mr Ingram, that Ms Jones Campbell be elected to the position of Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

11.0 REFLECTION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING

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

The meeting went into confidential session.

CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2024

CHAIRPERSON



DATE 12/06/2024

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE OF STAFFING COMMITTEE 2023/24

		Yes	No	Comments
Terms of Reference				
1	Does the Staffing Committee have written terms of reference?	✓		
2	Were the terms of reference reviewed by the Committee and approved by the Governing Body in this academic year?	✓		Reviewed on 4 October 2023 by the Committee and approved by the GB on 15 November 2023.
3	Has the Committee complied with the provisions of its terms of reference in its proceedings throughout the year?	✓		
Programme of Business				
4	Did the Committee agree a programme of business for the academic year?	✓		Agreed by the Committee at its 4 October 2023 meeting.
5	Did the Committee cover all business listed in the programme of business?		✓	Review of Workforce Development Policy deferred until October meeting.
6	Have all actions identified by the committee been satisfactorily delivered?		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on recruitment panel training to be included in the 2023/24 Equality Progress Report in September 2024 - Possibility of undertaking an environmental screening exercise on support for students and staff with a neuro-disability under consideration.
7	Was there any business that members feel do not need to be covered next year?		✓	
8	Was there any additional business that members feel should be included next year?		✓	
Staffing Committee Key Performance Indicators				
9	Does the appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and competences exist within the Committee to perform most effectively?	✓		
Governing Body Key Performance Indicators				
10	Did attendance levels at Committee meetings average at least 65%?	✓		100% attendance.

11	Did Committee meetings generally last no more than two hours?	✓		
Additional Comments				
12				

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.
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	08/05/2024	4.1.2	Management to circulate the report on the analysis of the responses to the Employee Engagement Survey when available.