

**College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Employment Policy Committee
17 May 2023
8.30am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Sally Mitton Kay Driver David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor Governor (Principal)
Attending	Julie Howlett Jules Bridges	Head of Human Resources Head of Governance

No.		Action
1	Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Chris Ashman.	
2	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting – 22 February 2023 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023 were reviewed and subject to removing under point 9 that the EDI governor has met with Clare Pelling the minutes were agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.	HoG
4	Matters Arising The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report. There were no items to carry forward. The completed items are to be removed from the table.	
5	Policy Update i Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking The committee received the policy. Due to connectivity issues K Driver left the meeting at 8.35am, leaving membership inquorate. Noting that discussion could be held but decisions could not be made the remaining members proceeded with the meeting reserving any decision until such time as K Driver could resume connectivity. Regarding the policy the Chair asked if clarification could be added to the policy to explain what the manager would do if a member of their staff reported a case to them as this appeared to be missing from the draft document. The HoHR agreed to add this detail in and confirmed that responsibilities would be set out and explained at staff training sessions. It was noted that the college is under the threshold so legally the college is not required to have a modern slavery and human trafficking statement but ethically we should have one. The committee continued with agenda items 6 and 7 until at 9.00am K Driver was able to rejoin, and the meeting resumed quoracy. The Chair invited her to comment	HoHR

on the policy and further to confirming all were content the committee **approved** the policy.

6 **Whistleblowing Policy – Staff Awareness**

The Chair explained that the corporation had asked the committee to consider the awareness of the policy among staff to ensure that staff are aware of how to raise concerns to ensure that the small level of cases raised was a true reflection of the actual number of concerns.

The committee felt reassured that there is an awareness among staff that the policy exists as the HoHR confirmed that this policy is highlighted on day one of employment at induction and there are posters around college advertising when and how to whistle blow. In addition, the Principal added that there are other policies where staff can raise issues/concerns such as Freedom of Information, grievances and complaints so there may be an issue with visibility about whistleblowing or it could be that other procedures are followed, with whistleblowing perhaps being the last resort. There was agreement that we should find a way to publicise the policy in an inobtrusive way and the HoHR will give this further thought.

HoHR

As an aside the HoHR commented that the team are looking to introduce re-induction sessions for longer serving employees to refresh knowledge and understanding. The committee agreed with this approach adding that the content must be beneficial to participants so should include topics/information that existing staff may not necessarily know or needed to be updated about.

Confidential/Restricted item under Instrument 17.2(d)

7 **Legal Updates**

The report set out several legislative changes since the last meeting of the committee and a few forthcoming changes for the college to prepare to meet. These being:

- The Worker Protection Bill (relating specifically to Sexual Harassment)
- Minimum Service Levels (in relation to Union Strike Action)
- Consultation on holiday pay (for workers with irregular or zero-hour contracts)
- Proposed Menopause Reforms
- Carers Leave Bill (permitting one week's unpaid leave a year to care for a dependent with a long-term care need)
- Draft Code on 'Fire and Rehire' (consultation closed on 18 April 2023)

This item was deemed "Confidential."

The Worker Protection Bill relating to sexual harassment is expected to come into effect early next year. The revised Bill will put the onus back onto the employer to ensure that staff are protected against cases of sexual harassment from third parties. Work will start now to ensure that any third party connected to the college are on board with the change; they have their policy in place and staff are trained, to ensure that our staff are protected. Essentially, under the new Bill, the college could be liable if a member of staff is sexually harassed by a third party. Our employee would claim against the college for not protecting them against a third party so the work in the coming months will be to put practice in place that demonstrates that the college has done everything practicable to safeguard its employees against sexual harassment by a third party. The Principal commented that the safeguarding theme last year was sexual harassment, and it is proposed that the likely focus for next year will be harassment more generally with an element of sexual harassment included. It was noted that the college policy would cover staff separately from the policy for students.

8	<p><i>Confidential/Restricted item under Instrument 17.2(d)</i> Curriculum Impact Report <i>This item was deemed “Confidential.”</i></p>	
9	<p><i>Confidential/Restricted item under Instrument 17.2(d)</i> DBS Compliance/Safeguarding and Prevent Training update <i>This item was deemed “Confidential.”</i></p>	
10	<p>HR KPI Report The committee received the statistical report noting the decrease in external recruitment campaigns and a decrease in the number of leavers. Recruitment is notably in a much better place. There are some unfilled vacancies but the Recruitment and Retention Officer continues to work through these.</p> <p>The Principal mentioned that CWA is seeing higher staff turnover rates than in previous years and this is an FE sector wide issue as higher turnover rates are aligned with those in lower paid roles. There is an £8K difference in pay between FE and schools and turnover rates are higher with those new in post and those in years 1 and 2 of employment, many not staying more than 5 years. The committee would like to keep this in focus for reports and include turnover benchmarks wherever possible.</p>	
11	<p><i>Confidential/Restricted item under Instrument 17.2(d)</i> Annual Pay Settlement <i>This item was deemed “Confidential.”</i></p>	
12	<p>Strategic Targets Progress 2022-23 Strategic target owners have updated the termly progress made. A couple of targets have been achieved, and in the main good and reasonable progress has been made against others with only a few behind target.</p> <p>Those behind target in the main are because reviews of current practice need to be completed first before progress can be made. The HoHR wants to make sure that the changes made are proactive and not reactive, but this will take a longer period to progress and get right. The Principal commented that these targets were inherited by the HoHR when she came into post and new practice, fresh ideas, reshaping and realignment with the new HR Strategy will be necessary. The wording around our strategic ambitions in terms of HR and a refinement of targets for next year will be presented to the corporation at the meeting to be held in July 2023. The HoHR commented that there will be more focus in the strategic plan around culture and wellbeing.</p>	
13	<p>Review of Committee’s Performance, Terms of Reference and Annual Business Cycle The committee considered the prepared review and concluded that it provides a fair and accurate summary of the committee’s performance during the year. Commentary will be added to acknowledge that a review of the strategic targets in the year is planned and achieved.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference were considered, and it was concluded that these remain fit for purpose. Reference to the ‘Clerk to the corporation’ will be amended to the ‘Head of Governance’ and it was agreed that the committee will meet up to three times in the academic year and asked that an additional responsibility of the committee is added to ‘support the role of the HoHR’.</p> <p>Similarly, the annual business cycle was considered, and it was agreed that the business items covered in the year would enable the committee to fulfil its</p>	<p>HoG</p> <p>HoG</p>

responsibilities noting that a representative for Health and Safety would be invited to attend the meeting of the committee in October.

Subject to these amendments/insertions the corporation will be asked to approve committee terms of reference and annual business cycle at the meeting to be held in July 2023.

HoG

14 Any other business

None

15 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- To recommend the approval of the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy to the corporation at the meeting to be held in July 2023.
- To report back to the corporation at the meeting to be held in July 2023 to confirm the plans to raise staff awareness of the whistleblowing policy.
- To support the annual pay settlement proposal further to budget and affordability review of the Finance and General Purposes committee
- To recommend the approval of the committee Terms of Reference and annual business cycle to the corporation at the meeting to be held in July 2023.

16 Date and time of next meeting

Date to be confirmed for a Wednesday in October 2023 at 8.30am

Meeting ended at 10.15am