

John Wheatley College

Board of Management

Personnel and Staffing Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee held on Tuesday, 2 October 2007 at 12.30pm in Room S/O9 at the Easterhouse Campus.

1. Sederunt

The meeting commenced at 12.30pm and was attended by:

H Ostrycharz (Chair);
A Woolley;
D O'Brien;
R Venditozzi;
Elspeth MacArthur; and
I Graham (Principal).

Also in attendance:

A Kirk (Depute Principal);
A Sherry (Assistant Principal) (until 1.35pm);
D Sneddon (HR Manager); and
S Vaughan (for recording purposes only).

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Terms of Reference

Members noted the terms of reference for the Personnel and Staffing Committee. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate with 6 members in attendance.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee held on 24 April 2007

H Ostrycharz requested that under item 6 (matters arising) the sentence "The developers of the HERA system had conducted a wider group of stakeholders without the College's knowledge or comment" was changed to "The developers of the HERA system had contacted a wider group of stakeholders without the College's knowledge or comment".

Ms Ostrycharz further requested that under item 8 (Staff Attendance Report 1 November 2006 – 31 January 2007) the sentence “This reduction was mainly attributable to an improvement in long-term absence” was substituted with “This reduction was mainly attributable to an improvement in long-term absence.” With these changes, the minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 24 April 2007.

6. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

Item 10 - Scottish Funding Council Circular 12/07 – Health and Safety

The Principal reported that the Co-ordinating Health and Safety in Tertiary Education (CHASTE) initiative was ongoing.

7. SFC Staffing Return 2006/07

The Depute Principal spoke to the contents of the report. He reminded members that the College was required to return to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on an annual basis, staffing numbers and related information for the staff that it employed during each academic year. He indicated that the purpose of the paper was to apprise members of the contents of the session 2006/07 SFC staffing return.

A Kirk proceeded to highlight the contents of the staffing return. He reported that there had been an overall decrease in the number of staff employed by the College from 262 in academic session 2005/06 to 248 in session 2006/07. Similarly, the number of teaching staff posts decreased over that period from 170 to 160 as a result of a reduction in the number of temporary staff and permanent staff having higher levels of class contact though this remained within the agreed contractual maximum. He reminded members that this decrease had been the anticipated outcome of legislation related to fixed-term employees and the action which the College had taken to comply with this legislation.

The Depute Principal reported that the staffing full-time equivalent (FTE) rose from 153.98 to 156.46 in 2006/07 and the number of teaching staff FTE had decreased from 90.12 to 89.52 in session 2006/07. The latter was achieved with an increase in student activity. The number of non-teaching staff FTE rose from 63.86 to 66.94 over the same period, as a result of additional staff in funded posts. A Kirk noted that the WSUMs delivered had risen by 2% this year. The Principal informed members that there had been no real growth in student activity over the last two years.

The Depute Principal further reported that the SFC return required that where staff were absent from the College for any periods in excess of three weeks, the FTE for the absence period was deducted from the staffing return. The FTE deduction made for absence for all staff decreased from 5.43 in session 2005/06 to 4.7 in session 2006/07. Although this represented an improvement from the previous year, it meant that the College was funding 4.7 FTE posts which were non-productive as a consequence of this absence rate.

This constituted approximately 3% of the total FTE. He reminded members that absences of three weeks or under were in addition to this figure.

The Depute Principal reported that the number of staff holding a teaching qualification had increased from 63% to 66% in 2006/07 with the number of staff qualified but not teacher trained decreasing slightly over the same period from 35% to 33%. The number of unqualified staff decreased from 2% to 1% in session 2006/07. This represented one member of staff. He informed members that fourteen employees were currently undertaking the TQFE programme at Dundee University and that one employee was currently on the Professional Development Award programme.

In response to a request from the Principal, D Sneddon agreed to amend the report before it was considered by the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), by the addition of a sentence on staff working towards TQFE in relation to the 'Communities of Practice' initiative.

A Woolley queried whether the statistics reflected the recruitment of individuals from industry rather than lecturers from other colleges. A Kirk reported that the College recruited both from industry and other colleges.

The Principal reported that the College had received a request from the SFC to submit individualised staff returns however the Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) was concerned about this request. He explained that the College, and ASC, objected to individualised returns as they contented that this would represent an additional administrative burden on the sector. Following discussion members acknowledged the College's concerns. Elspeth MacArthur acknowledged that similar concerns had arisen in the Higher Education sector when such a scheme was introduced there.

With no further discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendices;
- ii) note the contents of the College's staffing return for 2006/07;
- iii) note that the report and its appendices would be presented at the next scheduled meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee; and
- iv) note that the College had forwarded the report to the SFC by the due date, 5 October 2007.

8. SFC – Review of Human Resource Management

The Principal spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to advise members of the SFC proposal to conduct a review of Human Resource Management (HRM) in both the Higher Education and College Sectors in Scotland and of the steps taken by the College to prepare for this process.

I Graham reported that the College:

- had concerns about the actual and opportunistic costs of this exercise;

- doubted the value of the circular;
- was concerned that the Review appeared to ignore wider developments made by UK Audit Services in the benchmarking of HRM; and
- was concerned about the scope of the Review.

Consequently the College did not welcome the Review, a position which was shared by other Colleges in Scotland. However, if this exercise was to proceed, the College believed that it should be a 'self-evaluative' process.

The Principal proceeded to outline the key elements of the College's response to the consultation, which included that:

- the College welcomed the opportunity to comment on the SFC proposal to Benchmark HRM in Colleges and Higher Education Institutions. It did not, however, welcome the proposals made by SFC;
- the College was concerned that the proposals had no indication of the direct and opportunity costs to both the Council and those to be benchmarked. It was therefore difficult to determine whether such a proposal would represent value for money;
- the College was concerned that, in the absence of central advice or agreement on sector-wide definitions, the collection on 'quantitative evidence' would be a considerable 'time bandit' for those involved in the exercise, if existing data sets had to be 'translated' solely for this purpose;
- the College was puzzled that the Council's paper made no reference to the recently published Joint Report by UK Public Sector Audit Services entitled 'Value for Money in Public Sector Services', which set out a framework for benchmarking HRM;
- the College believed that if such a benchmarking exercise was to have any real and lasting value to the sector it should concentrate on establishing a qualitative framework which enabled an improvement agenda to drive the future development of HR development in individual institutions. Such an approach might usefully also utilise existing HR 'quality standards', such as Investors in People.
- the College was unclear what the Council meant by the term 'Learning Journey';
- the College required clarification of the aims of the Benchmarking Exercise;

- the College was not confident that an in-house SFC process would be possible and reluctantly believed that, of all of the options proposed, a self-evaluation model was the most acceptable model;
- the College was concerned about the timetable for the exercise and the implications of this exercise on the work of College's HR sections; and
- the College would have no objection to providing any further information which might be required in respect of this response.

The College contended that this document would be of value to the Board given the scale of expenditure which the College made on its staff and given its responsibilities as an employer.

I Graham subsequently proposed that from the beginning of the academic/financial year, an up-dated version of the position statement would be presented at the first meeting of each session of the Board's Personnel and Staffing Committee. Members endorsed this proposal.

The Principal informed members that the draft HR Context Statement would also be discussed with staff representatives on the College's Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).

In response to a request from the Chair, subsequently endorsed by members, D Sneddon agreed to incorporate the HR Team action plan into this Context Statement. It was also agreed that the data on staff development activities would also be added to the document. The Principal endorsed a proposal by Ms MacArthur that some further data concerning the evaluation of the Further Education Role Analysis (FEDRA) should be incorporated into the report.

In response to questions the Principal confirmed that the College had previously used in the Pacific Institute to conduct an Organisation Attitudinal Survey but since the data collated did not constitute a representative sample, the College would prefer to utilise the data obtained through the Investors in People (IIP) initiative for the analysis of its HR function. I Graham further commented that the Pacific Institute had concluded that efforts should be made to improve communication within the College and this was currently being addressed.

D Sneddon proceeded to highlight a number of planned future developments in HRM, which included:

- the development of a single Equalities Policy and Equalities Scheme and associated Action Plan;
- the introduction of a competency-based Job Evaluation System (FEDRA) to cover all posts in the College;
- the continued evaluation of the contribution of the HRM function to the College; and

- the benchmarking of the College HRM in comparison to the sector by participation in the Value for Money in Public Sector Corporate Services, a joint project by the UK Public Sector Audit Agencies.

The Principal reminded members that Ms Sneddon would lead the Benchmarking Group.

A Woolley commended Ms Sneddon on her report and proposed that it was added to the College's website. Members endorsed this proposal.

The Chair thanked Ms Sneddon for her report and with no further comments, members agreed to note the contents of the Principal's report and its annexes.

9. Absence Management Survey 2007

The HR Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to provide members with information relating to the College response to the Absence Management Survey undertaken by GM Associates on behalf of the Association of Scotland's Colleges (ASC) in May 2007. She reported that the College had been asked to provide information relating to its absence statistics for session 2005/06 and for the period 1 August 2006 to March 2007. She reported that due to the format of the information required in the survey, the data had to be manually manipulated, a process which had taken some time. Furthermore GM Associates had subsequently requested further information, which the College had provided.

D Sneddon proceeded to highlight the main elements of the two responses which had been submitted by the College reporting that staff absenteeism had decreased from 5.91% in the period from August 2005 to July 2006 to 4.44% in the period August 2006 to March 2007. The average number of working days lost in any single instance of sickness absence was 2 days for both support and academic staff for periods of absence no longer than 5 days for session 2006-07. She further reported that during session 2006-07, 51.79% of staff had zero sickness absence in the year. The three main reasons given for sickness absence were cold/flu, respiratory infections and an upset stomach.

The HR Manager reported that during session 2005-06, the average number of working days lost in a single instance of sickness absence totalling no longer than 5 days was 2.03% for support staff and 2.15% for academic staff. A total of 22.08% of staff had zero sickness absence in that year. The HR Manager reported that Self Certification Days had been taken into account when the number of days lost through absence had been calculated. She further reported that if the survey had considered only Long Term Absence (LTA), the three main causes for such absences for 2006/07 would have been surgery/industrial injury, major illnesses (including kidney failure/heart attack) and stress-related illness. In the latter case, staff were encouraged through the Well-being Policy to raise any issues with their line manager and HR in order to enable the College to conduct an Individual Stress Risk Assessment with the employee concerned.

The Principal reminded members that it was difficult to compare absence statistics between Colleges, because of differences in the way in which absence was defined and calculated. Consequently, he welcomed the utilisation of a single, clear definition of absence in GM Associates' report. D Sneddon reported that the results of the Absence Management Survey for the sector would be presented at a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee when they became available.

With no further discussion, members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the HR Manager's report and its appendix;
- ii) note the College's return to the ASC's survey; and
- iii) request the HR Manager to bring the results of the Absence Management Survey to a future Personnel and Staffing Committee meeting.

10. Employee Counselling Service – 1 August 2006 – 31 July 2007

The HR Manager apprised members of the referrals made to the Employee Counselling Service (ECS) during the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. She reported that the College had recently renewed its contract with the ECS and would continue to use its services in academic year 2007/08. She reminded members that the service provided by the ECS was confidential between the employee and the counsellor with the College receiving reports on the type of referral, the reason for the referral and the number of staff that had accessed counselling services. She emphasised that the College did not receive information on the content or outcome of counselling sessions.

D Sneddon reported that a total of seven staff used the ECS service during the period 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 and this had included one-to-one counselling and the twenty-four hour help line. During the period 1 August 2006 to 31 May 2007 the Client/Helpline was contacted 3 times. Two of these contacts were due to personal problems and one was due to work-related problems.

D Sneddon further reported that following the issue of a questionnaire to 257 staff in session 2005/06 to establish the effectiveness of the ECS, the College had received 83 responses. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were aware that the ECS was available, however only 40% of those who responded were aware that the ECS offered a twenty-four hour helpline. Nineteen percent of respondents had used the services provided by ECS. Of the 67 respondents who had indicated that they had not used the service, 76% said they would use the service and 17% had stated that they would not consider using it. The College had consequently taken a number of steps to promote the ECS and encourage staff to use the service.

The HR Manager informed members that although 56% of those assessing ECS had found the service useful 44% found the service fair/poor. The College had also taken steps to source an alternative provider. However, due to the limited availability of other providers

and the cost involved with those available, the College had decided to retain its affiliation to the ECS.

D Sneddon informed members that the College intended to undertake another survey of staff' views on ECS at a later date.

D Sneddon reported that the ECS had highlighted that there had been fewer referrals than they would normally have expected during session 2006/07 and in recognition of this ECS had retained the College on a special reduced rate of £2,400 per annum. The normal affiliation charge for an organisation covering 200 employees was £3,000 per annum. In addition ECS had extended the twelve-hour helpline to a 24 hour free-of-charge helpline to widen access to this service for staff.

The HR Manager reported that as part of the review of the Well-being Policy the College would reconsider alternative providers of counselling services and would establish whether a partnership arrangement with other Colleges and a particular provider was an option, in order to minimise cost. However, the Principal acknowledged that the College may be obliged to use the ECS as a result of the APUC procurement process. He noted that the Co-ordinating Health and Safety in Tertiary Education (CHASTE) group had commended the Well-being Policy. D Sneddon informed members that the outcome of the review would be reported to a future meeting of the Personnel and Staffing Committee.

The Principal opined that the College needed to use a service like ECS and that the decline in the number of staff using the ECS may have been due to the College's implementation of policies such as the Well-being Policy. D Sneddon reported that the College was currently considering one case of bereavement where the staff member had received counselling. However such support was not available to close relatives. She informed members that the College may consider extending access to this service to close relatives in such situations as part of the review process.

With no further discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resources Manager's report;
- ii) note the College's continued use of the Employee Counselling Service;
- iii) request the Human Resources Manager to source an alternative employee counselling provider with a view to potentially replacing the existing provider; and
- iv) request the Human Resources Manager to bring a report on other alternative providers to a future Personnel and Staffing Committee meeting.

11. Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan – Update Report

D Sneddon reminded members that the College had produced a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and associated Action Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2005. The DES had been implemented on 4 December 2006.

She further reminded members that the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) had contacted the College to advise that its DES did not comply with the 2005 Regulations, sections 2(2) and 2(3)(a): the involvement of disabled people in the development of a DES. In response to these comments the College had produced a programme of involvement activities in order to address the issues raised by the DRC.

The HR Manager reminded members that the Depute Principal had responded on behalf of the College by comprehensively detailing the consultation process which the College had embarked on when preparing the Scheme, which had taken into consideration the needs of a wide range of disabled individuals. In addition he had also provided an accompanying Action Plan. D Sneddon reported that in order to demonstrate further the involvement of staff, learners and other stakeholders in the development of the College DES, a programme of involvement activities had been put in place. The information gathered through these involvement activities would inform the ongoing development of the DES and its associated Action Plan which would be considered at an appropriate future Board meeting.

D Sneddon opined that these involvement activities had been a valuable exercise, since the feedback from staff and students would be used by the College in the future. The feedback from learners had mainly been positive and only raised minor issues which could be addressed through Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), since these learners had recently commenced their studies at the College. D Sneddon commented that feedback which had been received from an ex-student who attended a focus group organised in partnership with Glasgow Disability Alliance had been extremely positive about their experience at the College.

The Principal informed members that, with Alan Sherry, he was scheduled to meet with representatives from Glasgow City Council Psychological Services team in the near future to explore how best to develop collaborative working practices.

I Graham also reminded members that the College had responded to the Scottish Parliament's Equality Committee's enquiry (chaired by Cathy Peattie MSP) regarding learners and staff detailing the steps which the College had taken to promote inclusion.

D Sneddon reported that the revised DES would be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Board and, subject to approval, the revised copy would be sent to the DRC for information. H Ostrycharz commended the College's response to the DRC.

Having heard the HR Manager's report members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the Human Resource Manager's report and its appendices;
- ii) note the contents of the programme of involvement activities;
- iii) note that a copy of the revised Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan would be sent to the Disability Rights Commission for information;

- iv) note that the revised Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan would be presented to the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Management for approval; and
- v) request the Human Resources Manager bring the revised Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan to a future Personnel and Staffing Committee meeting.

12. Staff Turnover Indices – 1 August 2006 – 31 July 2007

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, reminding members that as part of the College's monitoring systems it regularly recorded staff turnover and stability ratios and reported these to the Personnel and Staffing Committee. The purpose of the paper was to apprise members of the staff turnover and stability ratio for the academic year 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007.

She informed members that the College had reported the staffing information for the year 2006/07 by wastage rate and stability factor, as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). The wastage rate for permanent support staff was 22.64% for 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 and the stability rate was 84.38%. In comparison the wastage rate from 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006 which was 32.47%, with a 77.27% stability rate for the same period. She informed members that this reflected the greater career opportunities which were available to support staff outwith the College. She reminded members that as a small organisation the College provided staff with Career Development opportunities in order that they could take steps to acquire skills which would enable them to meet their career aspirations and often that would be outwith the College.

The wastage rate for permanent academic staff from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 was 2.86% and the stability rate was 90.29%. The wastage rate from 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006 was 7.38%, compared to a stability rate of 86.84%. She informed members that the College had advertised a total of 7 permanent academic posts during session 2006/07 making a total of six appointments, with three appointments taking effect in session 2006/07 and three taking effect from September 2007. These appointments would be shown in the 2007/08 statistics. The College did not fill one post. She informed members that these appointments had been made within the context of the Workforce Plan which established the areas where teaching activity had been stable over the past three sessions. As a result, the College created 5 (4.5FTE) new academic posts.

The HR Manager reported that the wastage rate for temporary academic staff for session 2006/07 was fairly stable, rising from 53.93% from 1 August 2005 to 31 July 2006 to 57.14% from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007. The increase and decrease in the month of April was solely attributable to the Easter revision provision which was operated in partnership with a local community school.

D Sneddon informed members that six temporary academic staff had left the service of the College.

D Sneddon informed members that turnover indices would be reported to the Committee on an annual basis, to provide a rolling comparison of wastage and stability. H Ostrycharz opined that although the support staff figures were high this was in line with the rest of the public sector.

With no further discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendices; and
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a further report at a future meeting of the Committee.

13. Staff Attendance Report – 1 February 2007 – 31 July 2007

The Human Resources Manager spoke to the contents of the report, which apprised members of attendance statistics for the period 1 February to 31 July 2007.

She proceeded to highlight the key elements of the report statutory that the percentage for sickness absence from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 was 4.42% for permanent staff. She informed members that the days lost due to sickness absence for the month of July were not included in the calculation for permanent academic staff. The absence rate for support staff for the same period was 4.65%. The absence rate for permanent academic staff from 1 August 2006 to 31 July 2007 was 4.22%. The absence rate for temporary academic staff during the same period was 1.15%. There were no temporary academic members of staff absent on long-term sick leave during session 2006/07.

D Sneddon proceeded to highlight the absence information for academic year 1999/2000 to 2006/07, which recorded an improvement in the College sickness absence rate over the previous three academic years with the absence rate for session 2006/07 being 4.42%. She reported that there had been a total of 166 instances of short-term absence during academic year 2006/07 involving 100 staff, eighty-six instances involving 45 support staff and 80 instances involving 55 academic staff. In total 400.5 days were lost with 197 days for support and 203.5 for academic staff.

The HR Manager further reported that there had been a total of 73 instances of long-term absence involving 25 members of staff who were absent 11 days or more on one or more occasion. In addition there were 16 instances of absence involving 11 staff, which represented a total of 147.5 days lost due to short-term intermittent sickness absence. She informed members that in the third and fourth quarter of session 2006/07, there had been a total of four employees absent due to stress-related illness. Of the four employees, three experienced personal difficulties and had now returned to work. One employee had felt that their condition was work-related and the College had taken steps to resolve the employee's concerns.

D Sneddon informed members that there had been eighteen incidents of musculoskeletal-related absences, five of which were work-related and had been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and investigated by the College's Health and Safety Officer. She further

informed members that training in manual lifting and handling had been scheduled for session 2007/08 and would form part of a rolling programme in health and safety training in the College.

The Depute Principal informed members that the total cost of sickness absence in session 2006/07 had been £174,323 compared to £189,121 in session 2005/06. In response to questions the Principal informed members that this figure represented a notional opportunity cost and not a direct cost.

The HR manager reported that in the second quarter, there had been a total of seven employees absent on long-term sick leave which had decreased to six in the third quarter though this rose to eleven in the fourth quarter. A total of three permanent academic staff were absent on a long-term basis in the third quarter and this increased to five in the fourth quarter. At the time of writing this report there were no permanent academic staff absent on long-term sick leave however three support staff were absent on a long-term basis in the third quarter increasing to six in the fourth quarter.

In response to questions D Sneddon reported that there had been no temporary academic staff on long-term sick leave during academic year 2006/07.

D Sneddon reported that the annual absence percentage rate for short-term intermittent absence for permanent staff was 1.25% and for long-term absence it was 3.17%. She highlighted that long-term absence had the greatest impact on the College in session 2006/07. She informed members that the College employed on average 171 permanent employees and a total of 1,415 days had been lost due to sick absence during academic year 2006/07 with the number of days lost per employee for permanent staff being 8 days.

H Ostrycharz reminded members that this figure was 9.8 days in the civil service.

D Sneddon highlighted the main points of the analysis of sickness absence in the College as:

- an average of 8 working days lost per employee;
- 79% of all spells of sickness absence lasted less than 5 working days;
- long-term absences had the greatest impact within the College, with 22% of all absences lasting 11 days or more;
- 65% of all staff had at least one spell of sickness absence;
- women tended to have more spells of absence than men within the College. Although more females than males took short-term periods of absence, both males and females lost an average of 2.3 working days; and
- staff at lower grades had a tendency to take more spells and longer periods of absence than those at higher grades, with

86% of all absence being attributable to staff below middle management level.

D Sneddon reported that the College was investigating means of taking more proactive steps to reduce the staff absence rate further. The Principal informed members that the College was looking at ways of health promotion for staff including making available antiseptic handwashes to reduce the spread of infection.

The Principal informed members that the College was in the initial stages of formulating a specific policy which would address the needs of staff members with Cancer.

In response to questions D Sneddon informed members that the College would continue to focus on developing approaches to improve its attendance management highlighting that managers were issued with attendance reports for their area of responsibility on a monthly basis and regular meetings were held with this staff cohort to review staff attendance.

The HR Manager reported that the College would undertake another well-being survey before the end of the calendar year and preparations for the survey were underway. This would be undertaken with the assistance of the external provider which had previously worked with the College to conduct the original survey. In addition the College would issue a similar questionnaire to that issued in 2004 to gauge the impact of the changes introduced and the effect of the Well-being Policy.

The Depute Principal reported that prior to the end of session 2007/08, the HSE Stress Indicator Toolkit would be issued to staff. The analysis of the data produced by this survey would assist the College to benchmark itself against other organisations. Furthermore, as part of the College's equality impact assessment process, the Attendance at Work Policy and associated Attendance Management Handbook for Managers would be reviewed.

With no further discussion, members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of the report and its appendices;
- ii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward the revised Attendance at Work Policy and Procedure to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- iii) request the Human Resources Manager to bring forward a further report to a future meeting of the Committee.

14. HM Treasury – Inflation Evidence for Pay Review Body - Recommendations

The Principal spoke to the contents of the correspondence from Gordon Brown MP (when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer), which considered inflation evidence for pay review body recommendations. He highlighted that the document required organisations to remain vigilant as to the risk of higher pay settlements feeding through into higher inflation and that these circumstances pay settlements in the public sector should be no more than 2%.

Members noted the contents of the correspondence.

15. Professional Development Programme 2007/08

A Sherry spoke to the contents of the report, which sought to apprise members of the bids received from staff for session 2007/08 with proposals for allocating this element of the Quality Budget. He proceeded to highlight the bids from staff on continuing programmes of study, which had commenced in previous sessions. He informed members that due the level of demand for support in session 2007/08 it was proposed to provide staff with 50% of the cost of these fees resulting in a commitment of £1,950.

He reported that the bids from staff wishing to embark on new programmes of study in session 2007/08 totalled £9,547 and it was also proposed to offer these staff 50% of the costs of the programme which represented a commitment of £4,409. He informed members that these bids included fees for an MSc in Equality and Discrimination at Strathclyde University. It was noted, however, that in academic session 2006/07 not all of the staff had taken up the offer of 50% funding for programmes.

A Sherry further reported that through the Professional Development Programme, the College offered to provide financial support for up to four members of staff wishing to undertake the distance learning Teaching Qualification: Further Education (TQFE) programme at the University of Dundee. This was in addition to the four members of staff supported from the mainline Quality and Academic budgets. He reminded members that the offer of places through the Professional Development Programme was open to all staff, whether on temporary or permanent contracts. As with all bids in the programme, only the fees were paid, with the staff member studying in his/her own time. For the current distance learning programme at the University of Dundee had been received. It was proposed to support all four at a cost of £4,000 as this was a key qualification for staff.

The Assistant Principal informed members that a lecturer had recently joined the College and was currently undertaking the Teaching Qualification at Stirling University. In these circumstances it was proposed to pay the fees of £450 to enable the staff member to complete this qualification.

A Sherry reminded members that in order to enhance the inclusiveness of the learning experience afforded to learners whose first language was not English, the College had invited staff to undertake training in the area of Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL). This has resulted in only one bid, at a total cost of £90. Since this was a College priority area, it was proposed to support this bid in full.

He reminded members that in line with established practice, staff would be required to sign a letter of undertaking if they accepted the support offered by the College. In response to questions he reported that the included a commitment to reimburse to the College any fees

paid should they leave the employment of the College during session 2007/08.

The Assistant Principal informed members that since the report had been compiled a subsequent request had been received to enable a member of staff to undertake a procurement qualification. The College had welcomed this bid and therefore would seek to support the request under the same terms as those outlined above.

He informed members, including this addition, if they endorsed the proposals contained in the report it would result in a commitment of £10,899 for session 2007/08, which would equate to approximately 30% of the total Quality budget a similar allocation to previous sessions.

The Principal opined that the College staff development programme was ahead of that which was likely to be recommended by RoSCo Report.

In response to questions A Sherry confirmed that the bids received were from both academic and support staff.

With no further discussion members agreed to:

- i) note the contents of this report;
- ii) agree to offer staff 50% of course fees as outlined above;
- iii) note that those staff engaging on programmes, which met College key priorities, had their fees paid in full; and
- iv) the implementation of the Professional Development Programme for session 2007/08.

A Sherry left the meeting at 1.35pm.

16. Risk Management – Issues to be considered as a consequence of the consideration of the above agenda

Members agreed that there were no risk management issues that would have to be considered at the meeting.

17. Closure

The meeting closed at 1.40pm, with the Chair thanking all members for their attendance.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 30 January 2008.