TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE CORPORATION

Employment and Business Policy Committee

Minutes of the Employment and Business Policy Committee
on Tuesday 24 September 2024 at Truro College.

Present: D Skinnard (in the Chair), R Townsend, M Tucker and J-A Sunderland

Also Present: A Bull (Director of Curriculum Development), J Cashmore (Director of Operations), H McKinstry (Director of Partnerships & Apprenticeships), V Pearson (Director of Teaching & Learning), and W Randle (Head of Governance)

Item	Discussion/ Decision	Action
1.	**Apologies and declarations of interest** Kay Penney was welcomed to her first meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Kim Conchie, Mark England, Katie Ashworth and Lucy Langdon (Chief Finance Officer). There were no further declarations of interest to those contained on the register.	
2.	**Minutes of meeting held on 17/06/2024** The Committee reviewed the minutes and approved them as an accurate record of the meeting.	
3.	**Matters arising** The Committee received the matters arising report and the following points were noted: ▪ The Seaton building open event is planned for early 2025 ▪ The Partnership Pledge information has been shared with Governors ▪ The Director of Business Partnerships and Apprenticeships plans to join future Homes in Cornwall meetings ▪ Contact was made re AI and the College will be informed of events and developments ▪ The CEO of the Chamber of Commerce has agreed to join the Committee following Ofsted, when the previous CEO will step down ▪ Regarding the Pay Award; at the AoC HR network it was noted that other colleges were sharing higher pay awards, yet, whilst the award was higher, the original salary starting point was much lower than the College's	
	Skills Development	
4.	**Strategic updates with key stakeholders** The Committee received the paper. The Director of Business Partnerships and Apprenticeships noted the following highlights:	

	The College awaits the decision on an extension of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), which affects several projects and funding streams, i.e the bootcamps and LSIF and LSIP funding. Devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the Adult Skills Fund is set for April and is being guided by a skills strategy developed with the Workforce and Skills Board of the Economic Forum; which the Principal sits on. The devolved budget, starting in April 2025, allocates only £0.5m to the College, prompting considerations for increasing the share. The Adult Skills strategy aligns with the College's vision and there is good collaboration with other key partners. In response to a Governor question, the College have worked hard to tailor the community learning programme so that there is clear intent for every strand of learning.	
5.	**Employment and skills developments** The Director of Business Partnerships and Apprenticeships updated that the College are delivering seven bootcamps in wave five with an end date of March 25; details contained in the paper. The programme has been successful in supporting over 100 students, and whilst funding could be withdrawn, it has enabled sustainable courses which are now part of the College's core business. The impact on the economically inactive was noted. It was noted that whilst there is a skills gap in Cornwall within retrofit, no one has signed up to this offer. A Committee member reflected on the impact of the poor enrolment on the retrofit programme, noting the additional costs incurred by housing associations as they cover the costs of out of county contractors. The College remain committed to the programme and will consider alternative ways to attract students.	
6.	**Apprenticeship outcomes** The Director of Business Partnerships and Apprenticeships updated on the Employer Connect initiative and the development of six transferable skills, being embedded in the College's offer, to support learners in the work place; confidence, resilience, create and innovation, physical literacy, academic skills and teamwork. An explanation of the research undertaken to identify the six key skills was shared. It was reported that recent SAR meetings have demonstrated the development of relationships with businesses to support rich curriculum content and links to industry to meet skills needs and support placements. In response to a Governor question, all staff are encouraged to participate in the industry emersion day to see current practice in action. To secure quality relationships with business to support the mandatory work placement requirement for all learners, a number of actions have been taken: The Partnership Pledge has been relaunched with the Chamber of Commerce, with 150 pledges made, the Programme Team Leader (PTL) business breakfast to enable PTLs to engage with business generated 70 opportunities and the College have recently introduced a Parent Pledge and plan to develop an Alumni Pledge. In response to Governor questions, a system called Navigate is used to set and communicate work placement objectives with employers, and to evaluate the	

success of the placement. It was noted that whilst the College support with placements, the accountability lies with the students to liaise with employers; the potential to undertake Governors on the Ground activity in this area was noted.

Apprenticeships achievement
The Committee reflected on the paper requesting that future reporting includes gender by course area data to support monitoring. It was noted that the College produce an EDI monitoring report which collates this information and use a case study approach to encourage gender balance within applications.

Through benchmarking against Exeter College and national data, the College are exceling within nursing and turning around in construction. It was noted that the apprenticeship achievement rates are impacted by whether students take the end point assessments.

The Committee were reminded of recent achievements, that the College are an Expert Provider and that the College's restaurants recently achieved 1st and 2nd in the national AA restaurant.

In response to a Governor question, the College do not plan to significantly increase apprenticeship numbers thus mitigating the risk of future staffing challenges and enabling the focus to remain on retaining quality. The plan is to recruit to 1000 with the STEM provision.

	HR	
7.	**Staff Development Report 2023/24** The Staff Development Coordinator was welcomed to the meeting. The following highlights from their report were noted: ■ The changes to Development Days, the SEND focus fortnight, and the Education Exchange were noted. ■ There is a slightly smaller budget than previous years, noting an overspend of £2.5k due to external speakers for the Education Exchange and SEND focus fortnight. ■ The College have paid for 10 staff to undertake masters in education with SEND. ■ A hybrid approach to team days has been implemented to reduce costs. ■ Where feasible, training is recorded and available online where needed. ■ An overview of the targeted training was provided; it was noted that a Governor attended mental health training. In response to a Governor question on staff's engagement with the appraisal system, it was noted that engagement varies by department.	
8.	**HR Update: Recruitment Analysis 2023/24** The Committee received the report and invited the Associate Director – HRES to present the key findings. The HR report for 2023/24 highlighted an 11.5% increase in recruitment compared to the previous year, with challenges in hiring for specialised roles like mental health nursing and engineering lecturers, and LSMs within Progression Pathways. There was a significant decline in applications but an increase in internal appointments and use of recruitment agencies to support with specific posts.	

	In response to a Governor reflection on the NHS recruitment advertisements on the A30, new recruitment avenues, including armed forces and the use of social media are being explored. The College are also developing their own apprenticeship pathways to support succession planning. The application process is under review and redundancies, due to the end of European funding, have been mitigated through redeployment. The market remains challenging despite recent pay awards.	
9.	**Review of HR Policies and Procedures** The Associate Director of HRES provided an update on the Wellbeing policy which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that this was a new policy providing a single one point of reference, and combining other polices and a stress management toolkit. Following challenge from the Committee, it was agreed to defer approval of the policy to the next meeting, following review with a Governor and SMT. The Associate Director – HRES was thanked and they left the meeting.	AB
10.	**Update on discussions with Staff and Union Representatives** The Principal reported that workload is the key area of focus rather than pay, with details shared on upcoming conversations. A discussion took place on protected lunch time for lecturers without interruption by students and it was understood that there is a staff room in every building. It was noted that communication of the College accounts will be shared with staff to ensure a clear understanding of the College's reserves position.	
11.	**Progress against Strategic Objectives** The Committee received the paper reporting progress against objectives, noting further information will be considered under agenda item 14. It was noted that the risk linked with staff recruitment has increased.	
12.	**Risk related to the Committee** Considered in the above agenda item.	
13.	**Future thoughts for the Committee** It was reported that the Committee recently met to review their effectiveness. At the next Search and Governance Committee meeting, consideration will be given to which of the Committee responsibilities can move to other Committees.	
14.	**HR Strategy – Confidential update** Detail contained in the confidential minutes.	
15.	**Staff Pay for 2024/25 - Confidential update** Detail contained in the confidential minutes.	
16.	**Dates of next meetings:** Tues 4 February 2025 Tues 17 June 2025 All meetings in Valency, Truro campus, starting at 5pm	