

Further Education Corporation

BOARD DEVELOPMENT DAY

Monday 24th January 2022

NOTES

Date and timings: **14.45**

Location By videoconference

Present (Governors): Sue Saxton
Roland Anderson
Denise Brown (PCE)
Sarah Stone
Nikki Hill
Gwynn Williams
Gerry Bender
Rick Olver
Elizabeth Sipiery (Chair of Governors)
Rod Gray
Rani Koya
Andy Ray
Lee Freeman

Clerk Melissa Drayson

In attendance Phil Briscoe (Interim VP- Curriculum and Quality)
Anthony McGarel (Deputy PCE)
Jayne Sheehan (Interim VP – Curriculum Growth)
Nicki Kelly (Assistant Principal)
Brad (Assistant Principal)
Roney Brooks (Head of Human Resources)
Steve Smith (VP Corporate Services)

Item		Action lead
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1.	Pay reform feasibility	
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Governors discussed the outcomes and options set out in the report (presentation slides provided) for pay and pensions reform. The context for this was increasing difficulty attracting and retaining staff in some posts and areas. The difficulties in curriculum areas such as Engineering and Construction were well known, and the status quo was agreed as not an option.

The biggest obstacle to recruitment currently was pay – particularly in specialist support areas such as HR and some teaching areas. Replacement costs for departing staff were considerably higher. There

as considerable competition from neighbouring colleges, particularly those able to offer London Weighting. Some colleges were also negotiating higher salaries than those advertised with applicants.

Comments and reflections included:

- Need for careful consideration and preparedness to be creative in order to attract the next generation of college leaders
- Few private sector organisations now offer final salary pensions, – not sure that is the expectation nowadays, and not a sustainable option
- There is unlikely to be a one-size-fits-all solution – different things will attract different people. Do we have a full understanding of what these are? Younger people are likely to be less attracted by pensions schemes.
- There was a high risk of legal challenge or crystallisation of the pensions deficit if existing staff were moved out of LGPS, Therefore, any change would probably apply only to new staff
- Pension changes on their own would be unlikely to restore parity on support role pay
- There was support for the proposed shift to simpler salary bands
- Warwick was difficult to compare with South Essex due to geography and job markets, especially proximity to London.
- Governors did not wish to be in a situation where the staff base was being reduced in order to pay people more.
- Concern about the impact on staff morale if seen to be taking something away (eg LGPS)
- Requirement to ensure that any member of staff that opts out of LGPS fully understands the risks and implications of the decision – specialist independent pensions advice to be provided.

All agreed that we need to look at ‘total reward’ package rather than just pension and salary – some other benefits are very valuable as well. For teachers, this included contact hours. Other considerations might be annual leave for pay swaps, salary sacrifice, agile working arrangements. Messaging to staff should be focused on improved terms and conditions, rather than any cost-savings. The work would also include an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of employing staff through a subsidiary, including an equalities impact assessment.

ACTIONS:

- Paper to Board/P&RC on staff recruitment strategy**
- ‘Cafeteria of staff benefits’ proposals to be developed by the Executive Team and brought back for further consideration**

PCE

2. Whistleblowing

The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures had been updated to reflect comments made by governors during the previous term. It was agreed that it was now much improved. Steps to increase visibility were also set out.

Governors stressed the need to ensure support to all parties involved, including the Whistleblower, the person against the claim was being brought and the investigator.