

## Board of Management Meeting of the People and Culture Committee

MINUTE OF 1<sup>st</sup> MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2024 AT 1500 HRS ON CITY CAMPUS, ROOM C.06.106 (PCC1).

Present	
Manira Ahmad	Ciara McCarthy
Roddy Gillespie	Stuart Mcdowall
Paul Little	Audrey Sullivan
In attendance	
Debbie Gordon	Drew McGowan
John Gribben	May Miller
Megan Frickleton (Interpreter)	Abbie Todd (Interpreter)
Scott Harrison	Ann Butcher (Minute)
Apologies for absence	
Stacey Hawes	Paul Hillard

*In the absence of an approved Convener, A Sullivan served as acting Convener for items 1-4.*

Item PCC1-1	Apologies for Absence	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Apologies were received from P Hillard and S Hawes.	

Item PCC1-2	Declarations of Interest	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	There were no declarations of interest.	

Item PCC1-3	Identification of Items to be Discussed Privately	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	None notified.	

Item PCC1-4.1	Minute of the People & Culture Committee meeting held on 15 May 2024	
Paper No: PCC1-A	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Approval
Decision/Noted	The minute was approved.	

Item PCC1-4.2	Appointment of Convener	
Paper No:	Lead: D McGowan	Action requested: Approve

<b>Decision/Noted</b>	R Gillespie was nominated for the role of Convener. M Ahmad was nominated for the role of Vice Convener. Both nominations were approved by the Committee.
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<b>Item PCC1-4.3</b>	<b>People &amp; Culture Committee Annual Report 2023-24</b>	
<b>Paper No: PCC1-B</b>	Lead: D McGowan	Action requested: Approve
<b>Discussion</b>	D McGowan provided an overview of the Committee's high-level review and record of deliberations and decision-making throughout the academic year 2023-24. Members discussed the importance of data-driven insight and decision-making. D McGowan highlighted current work being undertaken and confirmed that the Digital Strategy Progress Report, to be presented by S Renton at the next meeting of the Committee, will provide further information and an opportunity to discuss developments.	
<b>Decision/Noted</b>	To approve the People & Culture Committee Annual Report for 2023-24 subject to minor amendment. To note that S Renton will provide a Digital Strategy progress report at the next meeting.	

<b>Item PCC1-4.4</b>	<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Interim Reports</b>	
<b>Paper No: PCC1-C</b>	Lead: J Gribben/S Harrison	Action requested: Approve
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>J Gribben reported that the full report, due in April 2025, will provide detailed baseline data and meet legal reporting requirements. This interim report serves primarily as preparation, offering workforce data and recruitment analysis by protected characteristics, highlighting the College's progress. He specifically mentioned the valuable work undertaken in reviewing and redesigning the Equality Impact Assessment process, as well as the College's approach to addressing gender-based violence, which led to achieving the Emily Test Charter Mark.</p> <p>M Ahmad commented that it was positive to see analysis related to protected characteristics but noted that efforts should go beyond the nine standard characteristics and emphasised the importance of more detailed information on intersectionality within the College which would help identify and understand more specific challenges. S Harrison advised that the EDI working group has recently been re-established with both internal and external stakeholders. This group will play a vital role in shaping processes and outcomes, particularly how data is utilised, for example through targeted campaigns.</p> <p>S Mcdowall commended the report as an excellent resource that reflects the College's commitment to inclusivity. He highlighted the staff age demographics particularly in relation to organisational development and succession planning and enquired how this data would help support recruitment. J Gribben informed that recruitment processes will be diversified, and where necessary, additional training would be provided to staff. He also mentioned that a skills matrix will be developed to identify appropriate training needs. This approach will help enhance succession planning and create an</p>	

internal talent pool.

R Gillespie highlighted the spikes in reports of gender-based violence and other forms of harassment compared to previous years, enquiring if this was due to improved reporting processes. S Harrison advised that awareness of the online reporting tool has been increased, with additional information provided on the website and during student and staff inductions. R Gillespie suggested that more detailed information be provided however J Gribben informed that while this could be analysed in greater detail, the College must be mindful of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and pointed out that if the numbers were small, individuals could potentially be identified.

A Sullivan highlighted the number of online modules available to staff, noting high participation rates. J Gribben reported that while some areas show strong uptake, others face challenges, particularly due to academic staff balancing teaching and preparation demands, which can limit time for training. The reasons for low participation in certain areas are being investigated and managers are encouraged to allocate dedicated time for staff to complete Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Key findings from the Pay Gap Progress Report were reviewed. M Miller commended both reports and asked about next steps for improvement. J Gribben noted that the College's gender pay gap reflects wider societal trends, with many female staff in lower-paid, part-time roles due to care responsibilities. While the College aims to provide skills and career paths to close this gap, societal change will take time.

M Ahmed also praised the report but reminded the Committee of shifting demographics and the rise in demand of wider care responsibilities. She further suggested the need for more proactive support and adjustments to work patterns. J Gribben informed that staff are already receiving significant support, with flexible work arrangements in place. While this is not yet fully documented, this will be a focus in ongoing work on staff benefits, with attention to changing demographic needs.

**Decision/Noted**

That the Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Annual Report (October 2024) be approved.  
That the Pay Gap Progress Report (October 2024) be approved.

**Item PCC1-5.1**

**Staff Wellbeing & Engagement Survey Progress Report**

**Paper No:  
PCC1-D**

**Lead:** J Gribben

**Action requested:** Discuss

**Discussion**

J Gribben updated the Committee on the progress of action plans and support following the Robertson Cooper survey undertaken during March 2024. Managers are being trained to better support staff teams, though are mindful that not all issues can be fully resolved. He acknowledged that there were pockets of dissatisfaction which he considered to be expected, especially since the survey was conducted during a significantly challenging period for the College.

The Committee discussed how to understand the reasons and help support staff on long term sick leave and, how to engage those who did not participate in the survey. J Gribben acknowledged that it was difficult to consider issues

that were not being recorded by staff including those who did not take part. While response rates were good, he highlighted that it was important to understand why some staff did not take part and what drives satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This will be further considered.

P Little reminded the Committee that the College chose to undertake this independent, external survey to address key issues raised and set benchmarks. He further emphasised that the survey feedback will lead to a robust implementation plan and reminded the Committee of the College's proactive approach towards staff wellbeing, including being the first college in Scotland to appoint Wellbeing Officers.

C McCarthy asked about opting out of certain personal responses where they were not applicable, so they don't affect overall results. J Gribben clarified that such feedback should only impact individual reports but agreed to investigate this further.

<b>Decision/Noted</b>	To note the update report.
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*S Harrison left the meeting.*

Item PCC1-5.2 Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-24		
Paper No: PCC1-E	Lead: J Gribben/D Gordon	Action requested: Discuss
Discussion	<p>D Gordon provided an overview of the College's Health and Safety (H&amp;S) Annual Report for 2023-24, describing key measures and systems in place to support compliance and reduce risks. She highlighted achievements including improved fire and emergency training, a H&amp;S newsletter, customised online H&amp;S training modules, a successful internal H&amp;S audit system pilot, the launch of an internal H&amp;S benchmarking audit, and the stability of the H&amp;S team.</p> <p>S Mcdowall highlighted the rise in near-miss incidents, noting that the buildings age and the condition of the estate could contribute to an even greater impact on these statistics. D Gordon explained that near-miss reporting is a proactive way to catch potential safety issues early before they lead to serious incidents. While some deterioration of the building is expected, near-miss reports will help identify areas needing attention and repairs can be undertaken before they become severe. She also stressed the importance of encouraging respectful use of the building by staff and students.</p> <p>M Ahmad pointed out that the impact on H&amp;S should be considered as pressure increases to reduce the building's carbon footprint. D Gordon agreed, recognising the link between this shift and H&amp;S considerations. The Committee also acknowledged the value of highlighting ongoing efforts in biodiversity and greenspace initiatives and the positive contributions the College brings.</p>	
<b>Decision/Noted</b>	To discuss the Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-24.	

Item PCC1-5.3 Health and Safety Monthly Reports		
Paper No:	Lead: J Gribben/D Gordon	Action requested: Discuss

<b>PCC1-F</b>	
<b>Discussion</b>	J Gribben provided the Committee with a summary of the H&S monthly reports produced for August and September 2024, highlighting the number of accidents and incidents recorded. The Committee acknowledged the benefits of making this information accessible to staff as it can help identify best practices, recognise trends and highlight areas for improvement. While much of this information is reactive, sharing it allows for important learning opportunities.
<b>Decision/Noted</b>	To discuss the Health and Safety Monthly Reports.

*D Gordon left the meeting.*

<b>Item PCC1-5.4</b>	<b>HR Metrics Report</b>	
<b>Paper No: PCC1-G</b>	Lead: J Gribben	Action requested: Discuss
<b>Discussion</b>	<p>J Gribben introduced the HR metrics report for the period January to April 2024 and provided a brief overview of the executive summary including the increase in overtime spend, decrease in additional hours spend and changes in headcount. He emphasised that this data is crucial for informing decisions and steering future direction. A summary of the organisational change was also highlighted, and the Principal's decision for no further Compulsory Redundancies during AY 2024-25 was noted.</p> <p>M Ahmad noted the significant decrease in headcount compared to the previous year and asked whether due diligence had been performed to ensure that the remaining staff were not overburdened. J Gribben informed members that detailed business cases had been developed by SMT and staff who were approved for Voluntary Severance during 2023-24 had held diminished roles. He assured that the impact of additional responsibilities taken on by remaining staff has been addressed. P Little added that ELT have ensured that the removal of any position would not negatively impact the remaining team. He emphasised that the entire process was robust and had been thoroughly scrutinised.</p> <p>M Miller highlighted potential issues regarding work-related stress and the importance of recognising when staff may be overworking due to their dedication. P Little informed that appropriate line management is in place to monitor workloads and provide support at all levels. Additionally, there are forums available for sharing information and raising concerns. Mental health first aiders also meet informally to discuss and share insights, helping to support staff wellbeing.</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding the high number of long-term sickness absences, particularly those attributed to perceived work-related anxiety and stress. J Gribben explained that, on closer examination, these absences are often due to various factors rather than workload alone. He acknowledged the importance of managing and supporting work-related stress through careful case management. R Gillespie suggested that additional data and specific examples would be helpful for further understanding.</p>	
<b>Decision/Noted</b>	To discuss the HR metrics report.	

<b>Item PCC1-5.5</b>	<b>Strategic Risk Review</b>	
Paper No: PCC1-H	Lead: D McGowan	Action requested: Discuss
Decision/Noted	That the 3 strategic risks, scores and MAPs reported to the Committee were reviewed with no changes proposed.	

<b>Item PCC1-6.1</b>	<b>EDI Update</b>	
Paper No: PCC1-I	Lead: S Harrison	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	To note the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update report.	

<b>Item PCC1-6.2</b>	<b>Estates &amp; Facilities Management Report</b>	
Paper No: PCC1-J	Lead: J Gribben	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	To note the report covering the operational period April – July 2024.  M Ahmad further emphasised the importance of highlight matters related to the transition to net zero. J Gribben added that a sustainability action plan is currently being developed and will be submitted at the next meeting.	

<b>Item PCC1-6.3</b>	<b>IT Progress Update</b>	
Paper No: PCC1-K	Lead: S Renton	Action requested: Note
Discussion	The requirement for a comprehensive investment and replacement programme of the College IT infrastructure was emphasised and concerns about ongoing flat cash and delays in funding, which have impacted the procurement of new PCs planned for 2024-25 were noted.  Members suggested exploring opportunities to build symbiotic relationships with industry and private sectors, focusing on software solutions and targeted investments.	
Decision/Noted	To note the update report.	

<b>Item PCC1-7</b>	<b>Any Other Notified Business</b>	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Discuss
Decision/Noted	None.	

<b>Item PCC1-8</b>	<b>Review of Meeting</b>	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Discuss
Decision/Noted	R Gillespie thanked members and staff for their attendance and contribution. In particular, he welcomed the presentation on the Staff Wellbeing and Engagement Survey and highlighted the comprehensive EDI reports that were approved for publication. Members agreed to highlight these matters to the	

attention of the Board in the Governance Report prepared by D McGowan.

Item PCC1-9	Disclosability of Papers	
Paper No: Verbal	Lead: D McGowan	Action requested: Agree
Decision/Noted	No changes were proposed.	

Item PCC1-10	Date of Next Meeting	
Paper No:	Lead: Convener	Action requested: Note
Decision/Noted	Wednesday 12 February 2025	

*The meeting closed at 1735 hours.*

## ANNEX TO THE MINUTE

### ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
PCC1-4.3 30 10 24	<b>Committee Annual Report:</b> S Renton will provide a Digital Strategy progress report at the next meeting.	SR	12 02 25
PCC1-5.4 30 10 24	<b>HR Metrics Report:</b> Consider including additional information on staff absences where possible.	JFG	12 02 25
PCC1-6.2 30 10 24	<b>Estates &amp; Facilities Mgt Report:</b> Sustainability action plan will be submitted.	JFG	12 02 25

### ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item	Description	Owner	Target Date
PCC3-5.2 15 05 24	<b>Update on Organisational Change:</b> Inform students on EIS-FELA ASOS and further programme of strike action.	JFG	ASAP <b>Complete</b>
PCC3-8 15 05 24	<b>AONB – Staff Wellbeing &amp; Engagement Survey:</b> Provide a presentation and full report at the next meeting of the Committee, prior to reporting to the full Board	JFG	30 10 24 <b>Complete</b>
SSEC1-5.3 27 10 21	<b>Staff HR Metrics Report:</b> Arrange information meeting with PMO staff.	SL	Ongoing