People, Culture and Engagement Committee

TIME /DATE / VENUE	1330, Thursday 19 September 2024 in Room 0.32, Unit 1, St Andrew's Court
PRESENT	Claudia Iton (Chair)
	David Willan
	Chris Williams
	Stacey Parrinder-Johnson
	Mark Readman (via video-conference)
	Professor Graham Galbraith
IN ATTENDANCE	Fiona Hnatow, Chief People Officer
	Wayne Bowen, Head of HR Strategic Planning
	Becky Miles, Professional Services Staff Governor
	Sophie Jones, Head of Continuous Improvement
SECRETARIAT	Paul Mould, Executive Director of Corporate Governance
	Jacqui Bryden, Senior Governance Officer

To facilitate the attendance of staff for specific items, some items were taken out of the order designated in the agenda.

1   Welcome, Quoracy, Conflict of Interest and Apologies

1.1   The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

1.2   There were no apologies.

1.3   The Executive Director of Corporate Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business.

1.4   There were no conflicts of interest declared.

2   Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record.

3   Matters Actioned and Matters Arising

32.1   Action was reported within the agenda papers on four items; two for note, one item to be received on the agenda and one item to be received at a future meeting.

32.2   There were no other matters arising.

4   People, Culture and Engagement: Continuous Improvement

Sophie Jones, Head of Continuous Improvement provided a presentation on the progress and work of continuous improvement at the University.

4.1   The key points noted were:

i. Continuous improvement (CI) was an iterative process to improve services, products and processes and there were a number of key improvement projects in progress.

ii. The CI team undertook both improvement projects and delivered training to build capacity across the University.

4.2 In discussion, it was noted that:

i. Successful continuous improvement provided a means to facilitate different ways of thinking and doing and to create challenge. An example had been to implement a different approach to recruitment marketing because, after the University Reset, it was important to optimise resources.

ii. The training provided a model of internal consultancy to develop skills and understanding and a framework of tools to implement improvement projects with a wider strategic view. Growth would evolve with increased knowledge, improved data literacy and enhanced analytical skills.

iii. Continuous improvement focused on the client to improve an end-to-end service across multiple disciplines and a matrix style of working. It would encourage collaboration and cross training and build capacity.

iv. Outcomes would be measured by the ability to build capacity which would lead to improved outcomes in measures such as the National Student Survey. There would be increased collaboration across the whole University, a shift in language and solutions focused on the service or user and not on the process itself.

v. Project groups would be able to set their own measures and metrics of success to create transformation and a culture of making real improvements.

vi. There was a high demand on the CI team to support projects and it was important to provide the training and tools to develop managers and teams to create agility and grow confidence.

4.3 Following discussion, the Committee noted the presentation.

5 Annual Review of the Terms of Reference

Paul Mould, Executive Director of Corporate Governance presented a report on the assessment of the work undertaken by the Committee in 2023/24 when mapped against its terms of reference, the current terms of reference for the Committee, and an indicative work programme for the academic year 2024/25.

5.1 The key points noted were:

i. The assessment of Committee business for 2023/2024 indicated that the Committee had discharged its Terms of Reference.

5.2 In discussion, it was noted that:

i. The measurement of Committee business was more quantitative than qualitative.

ii. The exploration of lived experience in the presentations was helpful and informative.

iii. The biennial staff survey had been put back and feedback had been sought via other mechanisms such as the online Q&A sessions and the Café Conversations. The staff survey would take place in 2025 and would provide more detail and assurance of engagement following Reset.

iv.   The three University values of 'Ambitious', 'Responsible' and 'Open' were incorporated into every communication.

v.   It was important to receive feedback from the Board Effectiveness Review on the purpose of the Committee to inform future actions under the indicative business for 2024/2025. The indicative Committee business was reviewed annually but could be reviewed and amended during the year.

vi.   The Nominations Committee would be asked to allocate an External Governor to the Committee and the Provost would be asked to join the Committee following recent retirements in the senior leadership team.

Action: Executive Director of Corporate Governance

vii.   The appointment of a new Staff Representative would be subject to a normal internal recruitment process.

Action: Senior Governance Officer

viii.   Pairing External Governors to Elected Officers to improve interaction with the student body was in progress.

ix.   A schedule of student events for Governors to attend to meet students would support improved interaction and would be included in the monthly Governor's Bulletin. Examples were: Freshers Fair; Clearing; Graduation; Open Days; the Vice-Chancellor's Annual Address; and openings or launches.

Action: Senior Governance Officer

5.3   Following discussion, the Committee:

i.   Noted the assessment for the year 2023/2024 and agreed its assurance to the Board that it has discharged its terms of reference.

ii.   Agreed the following changes to the Committee terms of reference for 2024/2025 to recommend to the Board:

a.   The appointment of a new External Governor via the Nominations Committee.

b.   The appointment of the Provost to the Committee.

iii.   Approved the indicative work programme for 2024/2025.

6   Reset Update – confidential

7   Annual Report on the Trends and Patterns in Staff Appeals and Grievances – confidential

8   Employee Relations Update – confidential

9   Policy Approvals

Fiona Hnatow, Chief People Officer presented three HR policies for approval. The policies were:

- Organisational Change and Redundancy Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy

9.1   The key points noted were:

    i. The policies were compliant with the current ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) guidelines and written to be easily understood.

    ii. Confidential.

9.2 In discussion, it was noted that:

    i. The policies were an improvement on the previous policies because they were more accessible and easier to understand.

    ii. A minor typo in the Grievance Policy on page 16 would be amended from 'Observe the terms and conditions of your contracts' to 'Observe the terms and conditions of your contracts'.

    iii. The new government might make some changes in the near future to employment legislation which would be likely to affect the new policies. Should changes be required the Chair would be delegated to determine if they would be made by Chair's amendment.

9.3 Following discussion, the Committee:

    i. Approved the HR policies.

    ii. Agreed to delegate to the Chair to assess and agree any further minor changes to the approved policies or whether the changes should receive full Committee approval.

10 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Thursday 5 December 2024 from 13:30 to 16:30.

Confirmed Committee dates for 2025:

- Tuesday 4 March 2025
- Thursday 29 May 2025