
Finance and Resources Committee

Public minutes of the 52nd meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held as follows:-

Date: Thursday 30 July 2009

Time: 10:30am

Venue: The Council Chamber, Health Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU

Present: Mrs Mary Clark-Glass
Dr Malcolm Cross
Mrs Sheila Drayton
Ms Julia Drown
Professor John Harper
Mr Richard Kennett (Chair)
Dr Arun Midha
Mr Neil Willis

In attendance:

Mr G Butler, Director of Finance
Ms D Dawkins, Partner Coordinator
Mr R Dunn, Business Improvement Manager
Mr G Gaskins, Director of Information Technology
Mr S Hall, Facilities Manager
Ms L Hart, Secretary to Council
Ms T Haskins, Director of Human Resources
Mr I Madeira, Projects Manager
Ms C Milner, Financial Controller
Ms K Neuschafer, Partner Manager
Ms C Reed, Project Portfolio Manager
Mr G Ross-Sampson, Director of Operations
Mr M J Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar

The Secretary to Council took the Chair for the first item.

Item 1.09/113 Nominations of Chair (report ref: FRC 79/09)

- 1.1 The Committee was asked to nominate a Chair and, in accordance with procedure, Mr Kennett having been the only candidate proposed and seconded was duly appointed. This appointment would be submitted to Council for ratification on 10 September 2009.

Mr Kennett was invited to take the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Item 2.09/114 Apologies for absence

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Keith Ross, Eileen Thornton and Anna van der Gaag.

Item 3.09/115 Approval of agenda

- 3.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

Item 4.09/116 Declarations of members' interests

- 4.1 Members had no interests to declare in connection with the items on the agenda.

Item 5.09/117 Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 23 June 2009 (report ref: FRC 80/09)

- 5.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the 51st meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Item 6.09/118 Matters arising (report ref: FRC 81/09)

- 6.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 6.2 The Committee agreed that, with reference to the report on contract signing limits, it would be useful to produce a table detailing the agreed signatories against the approved limits.
- 6.3 The Committee noted the actions list as agreed at the last meeting.

ACTION: GB

Item 7.09/119 Finance report (report ref: FRC 82/09)

- 7.1 The Committee received a report on the work of the Finance Department.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that the new Director of Finance would be reviewing the presentation and format of the financial reports submitted to Committee and Council.

ACTION: GB

Item 8.09/120 Human Resources report (report ref: FRC 83/09)

- 8.1 The Committee received a report on the work of the Human Resources Department.
- 8.2 The Committee noted the work carried out in relation to the Employee Consultation Arrangements and the recent appointment of the Director of Policy and Standards.
- 8.3 Discussion ensued on the arrangements in the event of a pandemic, in particular the current swine influenza pandemic, and the following points were made:-
- the business continuity plans had been updated to incorporate how HPC would operate in the event of a pandemic;
 - information on swine influenza had been posted on the website for Registrants;
 - with regards to staff, information had been posted on the intranet, hand wash would be made available, and sufficient licences had been acquired to allow more staff to work at home should the need arise;
 - in the worst case scenario, Council and Committee meetings would be cancelled since the organisation could continue to run on a day-to-day basis and, in addition, a delegated authority framework was in place if urgent decisions needed to be made.
- 8.4 Council noted that there were mechanisms in place to allow recently retired Health Professionals back onto the Register should there be a shortage in the event of a pandemic.

Item 9.09/121 Partner Manager report (report ref: FRC 84/09)

- 9.1 The Committee received a report on the work of the Partner Manager.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the ongoing recruitment taking place.

Item 10.09/122 Information Technology report (report ref: FRC 85/09)

- 10.1 The Committee received a report on the work of the Information Technology Department.
- 10.2 The Committee noted that as a result of the penetration testing, the website was down for 2 hours. The Committee further noted that the vulnerabilities were identified and remedial action taken. In addition, the hosting of the website was due to transfer to a new company which would further enhance the security of the site.
- 10.3 With regards to the online renewals project, the Committee noted that load testing still had to take place and this may identify problems in the system.

Item 11.09/123 Operations report (report ref: FRC 86/09)

- 11.1 The Committee received a report on Operations, covering the Registration Department, project management, facilities management and business improvement.
- 11.2 The Committee noted that it was essential that the online renewals system was scaleable, useable and secure and until such time as the Executive was satisfied these conditions had been met, the system would not be launched. Despite the minor slippage in the delivery of the project, it would still be delivered on budget.
- 11.3 Further discussion ensued on the report and the following points were made:-
 - There had been a downward turn in the number of international applicants although looking at the statistics in previous years, this figure tended to even itself out;
 - That whilst it was good to see an increase in the volumes of calls answered, there had still been calls which were abandoned. It was noted that the large proportion of calls abandoned was within 30 seconds and so was before operators could even get to the phone;
 - All service standards in Registration were being looked at;
 - The Communications Department assist in all projects and the level of their involvement depends upon the stage at which the project is at;
 - It would be useful to be kept informed of the proportion of CPD audits returned;

- the Executive had commissioned Reading University to carry out an exercise on the CPD audit samples. The paper was due to be submitted to Council in due course and a decision could be taken at that time as to whether any changes to the current process were required.

ACTION: GRS

Item 12.09/124 Witness Expenses policy (report ref: FRC 87/09)

- 12.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 12.2 During the course of discussion, the following points were made:-
- clarity was required throughout the document regarding who was responsible for carrying out the bookings;
 - consideration needed to be given to include a reference to those expenses payable to a carer who was accompanying someone with disabilities;
 - the policy around taxi transportation needed to be tightened up but also required reference to people with physical disabilities;
 - that the paragraph relating to care allowance needed to be broadened so that qualified carers, such as those with an NNEB qualification, who were not necessarily registered could be employed.
- 12.3 The Committee requested that the Witness Expenses Policy be redrafted and submitted to the next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee in September.

ACTION: KJ

Item 13.09/125 Bank mandate and invoice signatories (report ref: FRC 88/09)

- 13.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 13.2 The Committee agreed to add Mr Richard Kennett as a signatory to List B for Bank Mandates and Invoice purposes.

Item 14.09/126 Committee representative at Audit Committee meetings (report ref: FRC 89/09)

- 14.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 14.2 In accordance with procedure, the Committee agreed to appoint Mr Richard Kennett to observe the Audit Committee on behalf of the Finance Committee.
- 14.3 The Committee noted that the appointment would be subject to ratification by Council.

Item 15.09/127 Equality and Diversity Scheme – Human Resources Employee and Partner Actions (report ref: FRC 90/09)

- 15.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 15.2 The Committee noted that the Education and Training Committee was investigating ways in which lay input at visits could be increased, without compromising the level of knowledge required for such an approval visit.
- 15.3 The Committee further noted the importance of the Welsh Language Scheme.
- 15.4 The Committee were informed that whilst there were no part-time employees at HPC, HR were seeing an increasing number of requests.
- 15.5 The Committee noted that there was an increased concentration of white people higher up in the organisation.
- 15.6 The Committee noted the progress with HR sections of the Equality and Diversity Scheme.

Item 16.09/128 Information Technology Strategy 2009-2010 (report ref: FRC 91/09)

- 16.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.

Item 17.09/129 May 2009 Management Accounts (report ref: FRC 92/09)

- 17.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.

- 17.2 The Committee noted that it was more meaningful to look at figures and trends over a longer period as variances often evened themselves out over a period and HPC worked on a two year cycle as a result of the income received through renewals.
- 17.3 A member queried the reasons behind the Communications department overspend and the Director of Finance undertook to convey the reasons for the deficit in the budget.
- 17.4 The Committee noted that the new Director of Finance would be reviewing the presentation and format of the financial reports submitted to Committee and Council.

ACTION: GB

Item 18.09/130 Terms of Reference and Standing Orders (report ref: FRC 93/09)

- 18.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.

Item 19.09/131 Case Management System research project (report ref: FRC 94/09)

- 19.1 The Committee received a paper for information from the Executive.

Item 20.09/132 Any other business

- 20.1 There were no additional items for consideration.

Item 21.09/133 Date and time of next meeting

- 21.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be held at 10.30am on Tuesday 15 September 2009
- 21.2 Subsequent meetings would be held at 10.30 am on:-

Tuesday 17 November 2009
Wednesday 10 February 2010
Thursday 4 March 2010 (Remuneration Committee)
Wednesday 17 March 2010
Thursday 29 April 2010
Thursday 17 June 2010
Thursday 29 July 2010

Resolution

The Committee agreed to adopt the following resolution:

'The Committee hereby resolves that the remainder of the meeting shall be held in private, because the matters being discussed relate to one or more of the following;

- (1) information relating to a registrant, former registrant or applicant for registration;
- (2) information relating to an employee or officer holder, former employee or applicant for any post or office;
- (3) the terms of, or expenditure under, a tender or contract for the purchase or supply of goods or services or the acquisition or disposal of property;
- (4) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Council and its employees;
- (5) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Committee or the Council;
- (6) action being taken to prevent or detect crime or to prosecute offenders;
- (7) the source of information given to the Committee in confidence; or
- (8) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Committee's or Council's functions.'

Summary of those matters considered whilst the public were excluded

Item 22.09/134 Minutes of the private part of the Finance and Resources Committee of 23 June 2009 (report ref: FRC 95/09)

- 22.1 The Committee considered and approved the minutes of the private part of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 23 June 2009.

Item 23.09/135 Matters arising

- 23.1 There were no matters arising.

Item 24.09/136 Provision of transcription Services for Fitness to Practise Hearings (report ref: FRC 96/09)

- 24.1 The Committee noted a report from the Executive on the Provision of transcription Services for Fitness to Practise Hearings.

Item 25.09/137 Any other Business

25.1 There were no other items for consideration.

Chairman

Date