

People and Resources Committee

Public minutes of the 16th meeting of the People and Resources Committee held on:-

Date: Thursday 7 September 2023

Time: 1 pm

Venue: MS Teams

Present: Valerie Webster (Chair)
Neville Hounsome
Rebekah Eglinton
Kathryn Foreman
John McEvoy

In attendance:

Ewan Shears, Secretary to the Committee
Claire Amor, Executive Director of Governance, Assurance and Planning
Alastair Bridges, Executive Director of Resources and Business Performance
Andrew Smith, Interim Deputy CEO and Registrar
Fatma Ali, Head of HR
Alan Keshtmand, Head of Finance
Paul Cooper, Head of Business Change
Uta Pollmann, Partner Project Lead (Items 12 & 17)
Natasha Chaugele, HR Business Partner
Chantelle Blunt, HR Business Partner
Vesna Maglov, Registration Team Leader
Oli Davies, Council Apprentice

Public

Item 1. Chair's welcome and introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the 16th meeting of the People and Resources Committee.

Item 2. Apologies for absence

- 2.1 There were no apologies received.

Item 3. Approval of agenda

- 3.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

Item 4. Declarations of members' interests

- 4.1 No interests were declared.

Item 5. Public minutes of the People and Resources Committee meeting 8 June 2023 (report ref: PRC 24/23)

- 5.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 8 June 2023.

Item 6. Matters arising (report ref: PRC 25/23)

- 6.1 The Committee noted the report.

Item 7. Resources and Business Performance Directorate performance report (report ref: PRC 26/23)

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive Director of Resources and Business Performance. The Committee noted that the report and appendix provided an update on performance in the areas covered by the HCPC's corporate enabler functions and showed performance and trends as at July 2023, with commentary on key issues.
- 7.2 The Executive reported that there had been continued good performance against most measures and highlighted the following points:-
- average days to hire had fallen significantly over the past year and turnover for the year to date was down;

- technology measures showed good performance, with high levels of availability at or above KPI levels and a strong security score;
- the figures on office attendance had increased by a small amount although remained below the benchmark level. The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) recently reviewed the hybrid working policy and agreed on a purpose-driven approach, with accountability sitting more clearly with Heads of Department to determine the best working patterns within the overall corporate policy and to meet its objectives;
- project priorities included, the implementation of the Business Central (BC) finance system, the continuation of the online concerns work, the completion of the FtP2 project, capturing data requirements for FtP reporting as part of the data strategy, and discovery phase work on a new HR recruitment module and on FtP front loading. Work on the new HR recruitment module was however delayed due to the prioritisation of the continuing work on Business Central; and
- delivery and benefits realisation for the majority of projects were on track.

- 7.3 In response to a question relating to office attendance levels, the Executive confirmed that the change in terminology and focus on being 'purpose driven' was not a change in policy but reflected recent SLG conversations about the needs that different teams, individuals and the wider organisation had. The Committee agreed that an improvement in attendance levels to meet the KPI should be progressed.
- 7.4 The Executive reassured the Committee that a delay caused by key IT resources being on leave was a one-off situation and a result of a project timeline shift.
- 7.5 The Executive noted that it was difficult at this stage to predict timelines for the online applications project and that the new resource joining the team in October would initially be focused on the BC reimplementation as a priority project. An update would be given to the Committee later in the year on the progress of other projects. The Committee noted that there were implications of moving timelines on the forecast for the end of year accounts.
- 7.6 The Committee highlighted that there was a difference in the forecasted and budgeted figure given for the online applications project. The Executive explained that there had been no change to the net overall value and the difference was due to a carryover from the previous year and agreed to confirm the calculations outside of the meeting.
- 7.7 The Executive assured the Committee that the planned downtime of the Registration and BC systems was for data migration and there would be minimal impact to the organisation. The Committee were further assured

that the fee increase was priority, and it had been validated in both the current and the new (BC) finance systems.

- 7.8 The Committee sought clarification in reference to page 13 of the paper where it stated that investigations were being carried out in both Registrations and FtP to help prevent missed hearings and asked whether this was a one-off incident being managed or an ongoing issue. The Executive explained that the reference was about system enhancements and not actual FtP hearings and cases, and agreed to provide further detail to the Committee outside of the meeting.
- 7.9 In response to a question the Executive noted that active backlog items shown on page 13 of the report, were fluid and part of a six-weekly prioritisation process for product optimisation.

Item 8. HR Performance Report Q1 2022-23 (report ref: PRC 27/23)

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper from the Head of HR. The report covered the first quarter of the 2023-24 financial year and outlined the performance of the organisation in line with the key performance indicators from the HR function. The Committee noted the following points:-
- the data showed an improved period compared to Q4 2022-23;
 - there was a reduction in average days to hire;
 - there was a reduction of recruitment campaigns;
 - the HR team had dedicated time to act as recruitment agents and sourced candidates directly, which had proven to be successful with previously hard to fill roles being recruited for;
 - there was a decrease in sickness absence overall, but an increase in employee relation cases which were largely due to employees triggering the sickness absence policy; and
 - turnover remained at 16%.
- 8.2 The Committee welcomed the informative report and noted the continued improvements highlighted.
- 8.3 In response to a question the Executive noted that a new approach to recruiting to Registrations was introduced as it was proving difficult to find the right applicants through traditional recruitment. Individuals would apply through an agency in the knowledge that the position would be permanent, but it would allow both the organisation and candidate time to assess suitability to the role. The approach would also allow for speedier recruitment when required. The Executive further noted that introduction of the new recruitment module to be launched into the HCPC system

would provide the capability for the organisation to begin to grow and draw upon its own talent pool.

- 8.4 The Executive confirmed that covid absences continued to be recorded, and since April 2023 were no longer treated separately from other sickness records. There was one individual absent with long-covid and this was being monitored closely with support being provided.
- 8.5 The Executive noted that work was undertaken last year to identify high turnover roles at the HCPC and the reasons for it. Pay and benefits were the primary factor for high turnover and following benchmarking with other similar organisations, an uplift in salary was made to those roles which had resulted in improved turnover levels.

Item 9. HCPC Employee pulse survey results – Q1 2023-24 (report ref: PRC 28/23)

- 9.1 The Committee received the HR Pulse survey results Q1 2023-24 from the HR Business Partner who highlighted the following findings:-
- the response rates had improved following the promotion of the survey at the staff away day, although the two largest departments still accounted for a lower rate of response. This was being activity addressed with Heads of Departments and the employee forum;
 - there was a high level of understanding on how individuals work contributed to the delivery of the HCPC's strategy;
 - high levels of staff continued to feel connected to the HCPC's values and behavioural framework;
 - overall, management support remained a positive area for the HCPC;
 - there was still more work to be done in relation to communication and senior leadership visibility. A working group had been formed to address that, along with other initiatives being developed;
 - there had been a decrease in feeling that employees were given opportunities to learn and develop their skills when needed, although the trend had been on an upward trajectory throughout the previous year, so there was no immediate concern;
 - the net promoter score had increased and was a continuing trend, and the employee engagement score had remained at a similar level to the previous period;
 - employees continued to report that the feedback they received helped them improve their performance; and

- there was a continued increase in the numbers of employees who viewed the HCPC as a diverse and inclusive employer.
- 9.2 The Committee welcomed the well-presented report and were encouraged by the activities highlighted. However, there was concern relating to the decreasing trend in the engagement score relating to communications and noted that both the Executive and the Committee should monitor that as a matter of risk and concern. The Executive assured the Committee that they were alive to this, and it was being addressed with the help of the newly formed working group and through the Heads of Departments.
- 9.3 In response to a question the Executive considered that the relatively high score given for individuals feeling connected to the culture of the HCPC and a sense of belonging was a welcomed result and might have been influenced by the recent culture workshops where the HCPC's values and behavioural frameworks were explored.
- 9.4 In response to a question the Executive noted that any link with the decrease in score for learning and development and the slight underspend shown in the finance report (Item 10) was not a trend, but was mainly a timing issue due to the majority of HR initiatives such as the mentoring schemes, management development programme and the senior leadership programme being in the planning stages during Q1 2023-24; and these would initiate during Q2 2023-24. Mid-year reviews for individuals were also now underway and that was an opportunity for managers and staff to reflect and consider their opportunities for the remainder of the year.
- 9.5 The Committee noted that the breakdown of respondents was by departments and not by roles, and this metric was fed back to the Heads of Department directly. HR would also be inviting employees to an online session to review the results of the survey and the key actions identified.
- 9.6 The Committee requested the presentation of percentages in the results to be accompanied by actual numbers to allow better understanding and analysis across the different sized teams.
- 9.7 The Committee noted that this pulse survey was at an early stage and it was too soon to consider trend data but would continue to monitor.

Item 10. Finance report – July 2023 (PRC 29/23)

- 10.1 The Committee received a paper from the Head of Finance. The report presented the financial position as at the end of July 2023, with a commentary on the major variances, risks and opportunities.
- 10.2 The Head of Finance highlighted that the full year forecast surplus was previously set at £3.2m and the latest (July 2023) forecast provided a significantly improved position with a projected surplus of £4.1m (£0.9m

favourable variance). This improvement reflected the recent surge in international application income exceeding previous forecast assumptions. The key risks and liabilities were summarised as set out in the report and included that of regulatory reform and the need to build up depleted reserves.

- 10.3 The Committee noted that the £500k provision for additional legal costs relating to FtP and PSA standards was budgeted for as an acknowledgement of a risk and as a buffer to provide the opportunity to invest in further improvements should a surplus position be realised. The Committee requested that the Executive Director of Regulation who was absent from the meeting, presented a private paper on the latest position relating to the FtP provision, forward planning and also legal provider transfer costs to a future committee meeting.
- 10.4 In response to a question regarding other current assets and the difference between the actuals and budgeted figures, the Executive explained that was related to the methodology applied to debtors or accounts receivables, as recommended by the external auditors. The Executive agreed to add an explanatory footnote to the report.
- 10.5 In response to a question the Executive noted that the two FtP legal firm contracts for the provision of case management services were fixed over a number of years, with the option to extend by a further two years upon expiry in March 2024. The HCPC had also recently advertised for three lawyer roles in FtP to bring some legal expertise in-house for a blend of internal and external support. The Committee welcomed the approach.
- 10.6 The Committee noted that the Government had recently published its workforce plan and requested that workforce planning and how that might impact the HCPC should be added to the Committee forward planner as a future topic of discussion. Committee requested the Executive consider workforce demands and approaches in all four nations. The Executive noted that the HCPC registrant numbers had increased significantly prior to the plan for England and that it would continue to engage at the forefront with stakeholders to ensure that the HCPC would be ready for any future increases as a result of the plan and that it continued to fulfil its role in maintaining up-to-date standards and protecting the public.

Item 11. Reserves policy review (PRC 30/23)

- 11.1 The Committee received a paper from the Head of Finance. The report set out that the HCPC's reserves policy was last updated in March 2020, and that it had the requirement for positive reserves by setting the target in line with positive net realisable assets; and that following a review, the updated policy sought to build on that further with the aim to maintain reserves at three months of operating expenditure, as adjusted for financial risk, with a maximum of six months of operating expenditure. Reserves were forecasted to reach their target in the medium term of two

to three years dependant on influencing factors that remained as risks and opportunities.

- 11.2 The Committee noted the revised reserves policy and sought clarification of aspects of the policy, the Executive's ambition and noted there would be need to monitor closely. The Committee further noted that the policy would be reviewed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 20 October 2023, prior to any Council consideration.

Item 12. Partner Report – Q1 2023-24 (PRC 31/23)

- 12.1 The Committee received a paper from the Partner Project Lead. The Committee noted the Partners operational report which provided a number of performance metrics, with commentary for Q1 2023-24.
- 12.2 In response to a question, the Partner Project Lead clarified that the eight-year rule of a maximum two four-year terms was written into the Health and Care Professions Order for specific Partner roles only (FtP Panel Chair, FtP Panel members and Registration Appeal Panel members), and was therefore not applied across all Partners. Other Partner terms were also four years long and they could be renewed indefinitely as required by the organisation. The Committee asked the Executive to be mindful for a higher-end age group spike and its impact on diversity, whilst noting there were recruitment limitations and requirements for some Partner roles.
- 12.3 In response to a question the Partner Project Lead assured the Committee that they were working with the Head of Registration to ensure sufficient resources were in place for international registration application volume increases.

Item 13. Committee Forward Planner (PRC 32/23)

- 13.1 The Committee welcomed and noted the new Committee forward planner.

Item 14. Resolution

- 14.1 The Committee was invited to adopt one or more of the following:

'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;

- (a) information relating to a registrant, former registrant or applicant for registration;
- (b) information relating to an employee or officer holder, former employee or applicant for any post or office;

- (c) 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;
- (d) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Council and its employees;
- (e) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Committee or the Council;
- (f) action being taken to prevent or detect crime or to prosecute offenders;
- (g) the source of information given to the Committee in confidence; or
- (h) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Committee's or Council's functions.'

Item	Reason for Exclusion
15	H
16	H
17	H
18	H

Chair.....

Date.....