



**Minutes of Human Resource Committee  
Meeting Number 39  
Friday 20 October 2023 at 9.00am via video conference.**

**Present:**

Kieran Donaghy, Charity Commissioner (Chair)  
Gerard McCurdy, Chief Commissioner  
Patricia Kelly, Legal Commissioner

**In Attendance:**

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive  
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services  
Anne-Marie Watts, Administrative Officer (minutes)  
Valarie McCloskey, DfC Voluntary and Community Division (observer)

**Apologies**

None

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.00am. No conflicts of interest were declared.

Kieran Donaghy welcomed the new committee member Patricia Kelly and noted as an interim arrangement Gerard McCurdy would continue to attend until a new Deputy Chief Commissioner was appointed and took up a role on the committee. Kieran acknowledged that Gerard McCurdy chaired the Committee previously.

**1. Minutes of meeting No. 38, 14 June 2023**

The minutes of the Committee meeting No.38 held on 14 June 2023 were previously agreed by correspondence. An update was given on outstanding action items.

**AP 1: Minutes of 14 June 2023 meeting and updated actions to be recommended to the Board for publication.**

**2. Review of HR Committee Terms of Reference**

The Chair introduced the review and noted a suggested change highlighted at the previous Board meeting. Following discussion an annual report to the Board was not considered necessary and the terms of reference were subject to minor amendment agreed for recommendation to the Board as proposed by Gerard McCurdy and seconded by Patricia Kelly.

**AP 2: Amended HR Committee terms of reference to be recommended to the Board for approval.**

### **3. People Strategy 2023-26**

Head of Corporate Services introduced the People Strategy paper and noted the context. Following discussion, the strategy was agreed subject to minor amendment, as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP 3: People strategy 2023-26 to be recommended to the Board for approval.**

### **4. Review of Hybrid working policy.**

Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper and the committee welcomed the very positive results and feedback. The Chair noted the progressive approach being taken by the Commission and welcomed the staff briefing taking place to discuss the results of the pulse survey and develop an action plan. The committee recognised the changes made by sponsor department around risk assessing remote working equipment issued to staff and highlighted the issue of maintaining a log of visitors and staff when in the office as part of the fire register at Marlborough House. The Committee agreed to recommend the extension of the pilot of the Commission's hybrid working arrangements with the finalised policy being brought to the committee in December 2023, as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP 4: Staff Briefing re results of the Pulse Survey of hybrid working.**

**AP 5: Extension of hybrid working pilot to be recommended to Board.**

**AP 6: Hybrid working policy to be finalised for agreement at committee meeting in December 2023.**

**AP 7: Management to raise maintenance of the visitor log and staff register with facilities.**

### **5. Safeguarding Policy**

Head of Corporate Services introduced the review of the Commission's safeguarding policy. The Committee noted the diversity in functions being carried out by staff and agreed further discussion was needed before the revised policy could be finalised for recommendation to the Board in December 2023. The Committee discussed the key issue of disclosing information about a safeguarding concern to the relevant authorities and agreed this does not require a Schedule 1 decision as proposed by Patricia Kelly and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP 8: Head of Corporate Services to meet with Patricia Kelly to discuss finalising the review of the safeguarding policy.**

**AP 9: Position on staff making safeguarding disclosures to be recommended to Board for agreement.**

### **6. Accommodation**

Head of Corporate Services introduced the paper and noted the assumptions that underpinned the new accommodation needs. The committee noted that security considerations would be assessed by security partners. It was confirmed that planned needs had been discussed with staff and trade union and, following discussion, the paper will be revised and submitted to the Board for approval. In the meantime, details are to be shared with sponsor department to enable search for new accommodation to begin, as proposed by Kieran Donnelly and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP 10: Accommodation needs paper is to be revised and submitted to the Board for agreement.**

**AP 11: Information to be shared with sponsor department to enable search for new accommodation to begin.**

### **7. Review of Committee annual agenda**

The Committee discussed and agreed the agenda subject to minor amendment.

### **8. HR Dashboard**

The committee noted the range of progress and welcomed the development of the dashboard. Frustration was expressed at current access to Occupational Health Services.

### **9. HR-Related Audit Recommendations**

The Committee noted the positive feedback from internal audit regarding the Concerns about the Commission policy and were content with the progress against other recommendations. A verbal update was provided regarding the NIAO recommendation on the pension accrual.

### **10. Trade Union Update**

Chief Executive advised relations were very positive and details of the recent Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee meeting were noted.

### **11. HR Developments**

The committee noted plans to progress the intranet site further and make it the default web page for staff and commissioners and that there had been some impact on service during the most recent pay dispute strike action. The committee discussed the approach of using an agency to assist with recruitment and agreed the involvement of a Commissioner in any agency sifting/shortlisting process was in line with Schedule 1 committee and recruitment process legal obligations, as proposed by Kieran Donaghy and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP 12: Use of agency to support external recruitment to be progressed.**

### **12. AOB**

None.

### **Issues for next meeting**

Items identified included finalised Hybrid Working Policy, Safeguarding policy, accommodation update and aspects of Section 3 of the Staff Handbook.

Meeting concluded at 10.50am

Date of next meeting Monday 11 December 2023 at 10.00am via video conference

**HR Committee  
Register of Outstanding Action Points**

<b>Committee Meeting and Action Point</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Status</b>
39(1)	20/10/23	1	Minutes of 14 June 23 meeting to be recommended to the Board for publication.	HCorpS	Complete
39(2)	20/10/23	2	Updated HR Committee terms of reference for recommendation to the Board for approval.	HCorpS	Complete
39(3)	20/10/23	3	People strategy 2023-26 to be recommended to the Board for approval.	HCorpS	Complete
39(4)	20/10/23	4	Staff Briefing re results of the Pulse Survey of hybrid working.	HCorpS	Complete
39(5)	20/10/23	4	Extension of hybrid working pilot to be recommended to Board.	HCorpS	Complete
39(6)	20/10/23	4	Hybrid working policy to be finalised for agreement at committee meeting in December 2023.	HCorpS	Complete
39(7)	20/10/23	4	Management to raise maintenance of the visitor log and staff register with facilities.	HCorpS	Complete
39(8)	20/10/23	5	HCorpS to meet with Patricia Kelly to finalise the draft safeguarding policy.	HCorpS	Complete
39(9)	20/10/23	5	HCorpS to include interim position on making disclosures for Board agreement.	HCorpS	Complete
39(10)	20/10/23	6	Accommodation needs paper to be revised and submitted to the Board for agreement	HCorpS	Complete

39(11)	20/10/23	6	Accommodation needs information to be shared with sponsor department	HCorpS	Complete
39(12)	20/10/23	11	Use of agency to support external recruitment to be progressed.	HCorpS	Complete
38(2)	14/06/23	2	Updated HR Committee terms of reference for recommendation to the Board for approval.	HCorpS	Complete
38(6)	14/06/23	7	Add question about views on performance management to the next staff survey.	HCorpS	Underway
38(7)	14/06/23	7	Add previous staff survey results regarding health and well-being.	HCorpS	Complete
34 (2)	15/06/22	2	Formal Launch and demo of updated staff handbook on intranet to be arranged.	HCorpS	Underway
34(8)	15/06/22	4	Training plan to be developed for Commissioners around new Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) governance guidance.	HCorpS	Underway