

**Minutes of Meeting of GTCNI Human Resources Committee
Held via Zoom**

Thursday, 27th May 2021 at 10.30am

Present: John Unsworth (JU), Vice-Chair
Brendan Morgan (BM)
Clíodhna Scott-Wills (CSW)

Apologies: John Kelly (Chair), Martin Cromie (MC), Ciara Duffy (CD), Geraldine Duffy (GD), Siobhan McElhinney (SMcE), Catriona Mullan (CM).

In Attendance: Alan Boyd (AB), DE representative
[REDACTED] (DL)
Sam Gallaher (CEO)
[REDACTED] (EL), Notetaker

Action

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Vice Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and confirmed that the three Members present were sufficient to meet quoracy. The Vice Chair advised that JK was stepping back as Chair for a period of time, and the Vice Chair would step up to Acting Chair for that period. Apologies were noted as detailed above and it was also noted that Shirley McKenna had formally stood down from the Committee. The Chair welcomed [REDACTED] (DL) to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair suggested that any Declarations of Interest could be raised throughout the agenda.

The CEO recorded a conflict on Item 12 of the agenda, advising that he would step out of the meeting at that point.

No other Declarations of Interest were raised.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (11th February 2021 – HR-20-19-Min)

The Chair advised that the date of previous minutes should refer to the meeting of 11th February 2021, and not as detailed on the agenda which referred to minutes dated 16th September 2020. This was noted by Committee.

The Chair asked Committee if they wished to raise any issues regarding the previous minutes. There were no issues raised and the minutes were proposed and seconded as an accurate account of the meeting of 11th February 2021 as below:

Proposed: BM
Seconded: JU

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

Actions from the previous meeting were discussed as below and as detailed in the Actions Register.

HR-21-19-A2 – Chair Correspondence - Progress on outstanding grievances

The CEO updated on current status, i.e. that there remained one outstanding grievance. There was one outstanding complaint regarding the ending of a FTC. JU advised he would clarify full details of current and recently resolved cases offline with BM and report any discrepancies back to Committee.

**HR-21-19-
A2**

HR/20/15 A7 – NIPSA Staff Survey – Emotional Resilience Training

The CEO advised training was currently difficult to arrange due to staff working remotely though online options were being explored. However, training was in plan with a view to scheduling in the Autumn along with GDPR Training. CSW stressed the importance of this training and encouraged progressing as soon as possible. The Chair advised that EA had a wider scope to undertake resilience support without the need to tender. The CEO advised he would discuss suggested options with the HR provider to aim to arrange in the short term.

**HR-20-15
A7**

5. Chair Correspondence

The Chair advised no correspondence had been received.

6. NIPSA Survey follow up – update from Vice-Chair of Council

The Chair asked if an update was available. It was understood that SMcE had prepared a ToR which was due to be tabled for approval. This proposed an external facilitator be engaged to build relationship and help to address a number of issues raised in the NIPSA Staff Survey.

The CEO advised this ToR should be reviewed and, if agreed by Committee, could proceed to procurement by obtaining 2 to 3 quotes, subject to approval by the Permanent Secretary. The CEO undertook to arrange for circulation of the ToR to Committee for review and, if acceptable, progress to procurement. The Chair commented that this was an important issue which should not be delayed and was content for the HR Sub-Committee to progress with the CEO.

**HR-20-20
A1**

The Chair noted that there were some training overlaps, the one discussed above and other training needs relating to information management.

The CEO explained that timing was an issue due to the fact that there had been a reported data breach (currently inconclusive), which had heightened staff anxieties regarding current issues with Council. A number of staff had recently left the organisation at this busy time of year in respect of registration, along with unforeseen issues regarding DBS. The CEO explained that the DBS issue had arisen due to the fact GTCNI had an arrangement in place with Capita for making checks off the DBS 'Barring List'. This arrangement had terminated suddenly with no alternative for GTCNI. This situation needed to be addressed and a solution found. Meetings were ongoing to identify possible available

options and the Registration Team were being briefed. This issue had resulted in a backlog of applications being built up which had caused stress for the team and, added to a number of other factors, had heightened tension and uncertainty for staff.

The Chair thanked the CEO for updating Committee on the situation and acknowledged this was a very challenging time for the staff team. Training for employees had been the starting point; Committee had concerns about staff wellbeing and while training was important care and consideration were needed to manage the matter. A Training Programme was an important initiative, and it was appropriate for the CEO to set up a programme of support for staff as he saw fit.

BM, as Chair of Council, noted and acknowledged the issues reported.

7. Proposed addendum to Dignity at Work and Grievance Policies (HR-20-20-01 – awaited)

The Chair noted this addendum was awaited.

The CEO advised the addendum had now arrived with him and would be circulated to Committee for comment, agreement and approval. If agreed, this could be added as an addendum to the Policies.

**HR-20-20
A2**

8. Update on ongoing HR matters (HR-20-20-02)

The CEO referred to paper circulated and highlighted the main issues as follows:

- **NIPSA Recognition Agreement** – Correspondence was received from NIPSA on 5 May. Information was sent back to NIPSA week commencing 17 May which they had not responded to, and the CEO would follow up with them.
- **Industrial Tribunals**
 - Case 1** – a revised statement was received from the complainant and GTCNI's statement was being worked on ahead of the Case Review to be held in September. Hearing scheduled end of October.
 - Case 2** – GTCNI continuing to liaise and take direction from Legal. Complainant had been contacted about possible mediation and a cautious response had been received. Disclosure documents had been served and it was not expected to hear more until June, although the Hearing was imminent.
 - Case 3** – this involved the same claimant as Case No. 2, an issue here being that the claimant had not appeared to have availed of the internal process. A response to the complaint had been lodged with no further update at present.
- **FTC issue** – Individual was in contract to end of July but requested to leave on 14 May. Agreement was reached for the individual to leave on 28 May with payment in lieu of remaining leave due. Agencies had been contacted roached to fill this gap on a temporary basis which DE were aware of.
- **resignation** - It was noted that the CEO had received a notice of resignation from the [REDACTED] on 24/05/21. This matter was being addressed.

The Chair noted concern regarding the absence of a senior staff member to oversee Finance. Although financial issues were the remit of F&GP Committee, this Committee needed to ensure there was an appropriate staffing structure in place, and the Chair asked what the plans were to meet this need.

The CEO advised that immediate issues (payroll, bank, etc) had been dealt with so there were no immediate decisions to make in the next few weeks. It was planned to recruit a resource as soon as possible and agencies would be contacted.

The Chair noted concern regarding the level of work and responsibility that fell to the CEO and other staff, and welcomed the fact of having this gap filled quickly. The Chair asked the CEO to inform Committee if any other major gaps arose.

The CEO advised that a Project Manager had been employed who started two weeks previously, was getting up to speed and had the remit to progress the new registration system project. It was anticipated that support would be needed from the Registration Team now that the Project Manager was in place. This was being worked through, with budget in place to cover this resource.

The Chair noted that Committee were reassured by this update in respect of HR issues.

The CEO continued with his update:

- **Information Governance** – A document was due to be sent to the F&GP Committee advising that a resource was needed quickly to work through the Business Case for CVS. The Chair commented this was obviously an essential addition to the staffing team and encouraged the CEO to proceed on that basis.
- **Data breach** – Action was needed on back of a report received from Internal Audit and the issue would be investigated with the involvement of the HR provider. Without discussing the details, the Chair noted that an HR procedure may need to be initiated in this case which should be deferred to the HR provider. If a Panel was needed in due course, the CEO should advise Committee.

This point concluded the CEO's update.

The Chair thanked the CEO for providing a very helpful overview of the current issues and noted a challenging context for a wide variety of reasons. The Chair asked if there were any questions from Committee.

CSW noted the Committee had a responsibility to the CEO, as Registrar, and advised that he should consider his own personal need for support or mentoring.

The CEO responded that the biggest frustration had been the increase in operational work and finding time to write a Business Case was very challenging at present. To address these issues, consideration was being given to recruiting temporary staff to work on the operational side. There were a number of key areas where resources were needed: Head of Professional Services; Communications; the Website; liaison with UK colleagues and sharing tools/learnings; Head of Corporate Services; Registration Manager. Other fundamental issues were Registration and Legislation; Operational business;

Council issues which were affected and inter-related to Operations. The CEO advised that DL's review would highlight all these matters.

CSW reiterated that this workload was very heavy, and the CEO had a network of support that he should use if required. The Chair and Committee concurred with this point.

9. HR Action Plan (to include restructure) (HR-20-20-03)

The CEO advised most actions had already been covered earlier unless there were any further questions.

The Chair noted there were a number of very challenging issues. The staff restructure was a priority, although the situation had changed and could change again. Considering this situation, the Chair asked if Committee could make a temporary appointment, without having to go through a Business Case.

The CEO advised that another priority was the Industrial Tribunal due to be heard in July. The matters and allegations were very serious and needed time to prepare for, which the CEO was anxious about.

The Chair advised the Committee was concerned about the CEO's health and wellbeing but pointed out that other processes were in train regarding DL's review which could contribute to other issues. It was appreciated and noted that there were a range of challenges. The Chair asked if there were any further questions on this item but there were none.

10. Absence Report (HR-20-20-04)

The CEO advised that absence rates were low compared to last year and were acceptable and in line with expectations and there was nothing further to report.

Noted

11. Corporate Risk Register (HR-20-20-05)

The Chair asked if there were any HR specific risks to highlight.

The CEO advised that the Register was being reviewed before being submitted to ARAC Committee. Ten risks remained, with two relating to HR Committee regarding staffing and structure. These had been covered earlier unless Committee had any other questions.

The Chair noted that the Corporate Risk Register would be tabled at Council in due course.

There were no further questions.

12. CEO/Registrar remuneration

The Chair asked Committee if there were any other items to discuss before the CEO left the meeting.

BM asked for an update on the number of people who had stood down from Council. The Chair asked BM and the CEO to take this discussion offline.

The Chair and Committee thanked the CEO for his contributions to the meeting.

The CEO left the call at 11.55am.

Please see 'In Committee' minutes for report of discussion.

13. AOB

No other business was discussed.

The Chair thanked the Committee and closed the meeting.

14. Date of next meeting

The date of next meeting was not discussed.

With no further business discussed, the Chair closed the meeting at 12.12pm

Actions Register

Actions raised on 27 May 2021

Action No.	Item	Details	Owner	By when	Status
HR-20-20 A1	NIPSA Survey follow up	CEO to arrange for ToR to be circulated to Committee and, if agreed, to proceed to procurement of a consultant, seeking approval of Permanent Secretary. The HR Sub-Committee to progress with the CEO.	CEO C'tee and Sub-Comm	Aug??	Open
HR-20-20 A2	Addendum to Dignity at Work and Grievance Policies	The CEO to circulate Addendum to Committee for comment, agreement and approval.	CEO	Aug??	Open
HR-20-20 A3	CEO/Registrar Remuneration	BM to send forward paper for Committee to review.	BM	ASAP	Open
HR-20-20 A4	CEO/Registrar Remuneration	BM to seek legal advice and report back to the HR Committee as soon as possible.	BM	ASAP	Open
HR-20-20 A5	CEO/Registrar Remuneration	The HR Committee to convene a meeting to consider and approve details as required.	All	ASAP	Open

Actions carried forward

Action No.	Item	Details	Owner	by when	Status
HR/20/15 A07	NIPSA Staff Survey / Resilience Training	ABT and CEO to discuss providing the Emotional Resilience training noted above to staff. Update 16 Sep – CEO advised discussion had taken place but costs and Covid 19 implications and value of eLearning with H2G needed to be determined before progressing. Work in progress. Update 11/11 – work ongoing. Update 11/02 - The CEO suggested that training should be put on hold until the results of the Staff Survey had been dealt with. Action to remain open. Update 27/05 – The CEO to consider options for online training to be arranged in the short term.	CEO	Aug??	Open
HR-20-17- A02	HR Matters – FOI / SAR	CEO/BM to share advice from DE on possible options for help with FOI/SAR.	CEO/ BM	Aug??	Open
HR-21-19- A1	Chair Corr - Grievance Hearing advice from DE	Chair to follow up with DE in getting advice of using another provider to assist with grievance hearings. Update 27 May – No update available - JU to discuss status with JK.	JU	Aug??	Open
HR-21-19- A2	Chair Corr – meeting of Sub-Committee	Vice-Chair to arrange a discussion with the Sub-Committee to try to progress outstanding grievances asap. Update 27/05 - JU to clarify full details of current/ recently resolved cases, discuss offline with BM and clarify back to Committee.	JU	Aug??	Open
HR-21-19- A3	NIPSA Staff Survey – appointment of independent HR consultant	GD, CM and SMcE to meet the two suggested providers, provide feedback to Members to decide which provider to use. Update 27/05 – action held open awaiting update from SMcE.	GD, CM, SMcE	Aug??	Open

Closed Actions

Action No.	Item	Details	Owner	By when	Status
HR-21-19-A4	NIPSA Staff Survey – Business Case	CEO to prepare a Business Case for approval by DE. Update 27 May – B Case tabled and discussed at this meeting.	CEO	May	Closed
HR-21-19-A5	HR Policy Review – gaps in policy.	CEO to circulate details of the issues highlighted and ask the HR provider to progress policy for these gaps.	CEO	May	Closed
HR-21-19-A6	HR Matters – org chart	CEO to circulate staff organisational chart to include the current structure, acting up arrangements and what the anticipated new structure would look like.	CEO	May	Closed
HR-21-19-A7	Effectiveness Review	CEO to circulate email from last ERC meeting.	CEO	May	Closed
HR-20-17-A03	Working arrangements re Covid 19	JU to share information from EA on plans to return staff to office working. Update 11/02 – JU to provide the CEO with contact details of DA person to share relevant documentation. Update 27/05 – The situation remained with no change envisaged for the foreseeable future.	JU	May	Closed