

**CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING OF 8 JUNE 2023**

**15:30, Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Stewart Darling; Fiona Doring; Skye Marriner; Gwen Raez (Chair)

**In attendance:** Nick Croft; Audrey Cumberford; Michael Jeffrey; Shona Pettigrew; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

**Observer:** Kirsty MacKenzie

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Bruce Cassidy.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Stewart Darling, a Non-Executive Board Member, to his first meeting of the Corporate Development Committee, following a review of committee membership by the Board of Management on 28 March 2023.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Kirsty MacKenzie to the Committee as an observer. The Committee NOTED that the Board of Management had agreed, on 28 March 2023, that Ms MacKenzie would be co-opted to the Corporate Development Committee in the academic year 2023/24.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 None.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 28 February 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

**4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT**

- 4.1 The Committee NOTED that actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

## 5. COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING REPORT

### 5.1 COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING UPDATE

- 5.1.1 The Committee NOTED an update on key aspects of commercial activity across the College. The Director of Innovation & Knowledge Exchange informed the Committee that the Commercial and International Teams had performed strongly, and it was expected that they would exceed their 2022/23 income targets.
- 5.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the SFC had intended that a new look Interface funding model would be in place by the start of the next academic year. The Director of Innovation & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that, due to continued delays in relation to the Scottish Government's Innovation Strategy, college sector discussions with the SFC had not yet progressed to a state that would allow the new funding model to be implemented by August 2023.
- 5.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the current position of the Interface funding model, to support innovation and knowledge exchange in Scotland, and the college sectors position within the Scottish Government's Innovation Strategy. The Committee AGREED that, once the Innovation Strategy had been published, the College should publicise case studies of its impact to highlight the work of colleges in the innovation and knowledge exchange space.
- 5.1.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the impact of the decision taken by SDS to reduce apprenticeship funding across the sector by 13%, and a subsequent decision to count year two starts as new starters (- which would again directly impact on funding). The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Committee that a letter from the sector had been submitted to the Chief Executive Officer at SDS calling for a meeting to discuss recent funding changes further.

### 5.2 GRANTON WATERFRONT NURSERY UPDATE

- 5.2.1 The Committee NOTED the progress made in recent years by the College's Waterfront Nursery with regards to its financial stability, service development, service quality, and partnership activity with the City of Edinburgh Council. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that the Nursery had become a valued service for local communities, which aligned with the ambition of the College to become a civic anchor institution.
- 5.2.2 The Committee NOTED that during 2022/23 bank staff had been employed by the Nursery to reduce agency costs, which had risen significantly during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that despite the work undertaken to reduce staffing costs, the College remained unsure what extent the outcomes of the national job

evaluation exercise would affect staff expenditure in 2023/24 and beyond.

5.2.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the impact of the national job evaluation exercise and the ongoing national bargaining process for support staff. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that significant pay increases over a sustained number of years could place the Nursery back into deficit, potentially resulting in increased costs to parents and carers of Nursery children through increased fees.

5.2.4 The Committee NOTED several options put forward by the Director of Communications, Policy & Research to ensure the Nursery continued to operate in a sustainable manner. The Committee DISCUSSED the following in relation to the Waterfront Nursery:

- (i) The operation of a Nursery provision and how this fitted within the strategic objectives of the College.
- (ii) The current operation of the Nursery at 98% capacity, with a waiting list of almost 50 children.
- (iii) The 190 registered children at the Nursery, with 90% coming from the local area and who aren't College staff or students.
- (iv) The potential impact of increased fees on service users.
- (v) The ongoing shortage of early years places in the local area and the growing number of children entitled to the Scottish Government's early year expansion scheme.
- (vi) The interactions held with City of Edinburgh Council around Nursery and its role in the local area.
- (vii) The position of the Waterfront Nursery as the only remaining college-operated nursery in Scotland, following the decision of New College Lanarkshire to close its nursery this year.

5.2.5 The Committee welcomed the excellent progress made by the Waterfront Nursery over recent years to ensure its financial sustainability, and NOTED the need to continue to review its financial performance once the outcome of national job evaluation and annual pay awards were known.

5.2.6 The Committee AGREED that the Director of Communications, Policy & Research should report back to the Corporate Development Committee at a future date with scenarios and options for future planning.

### 5.3 COMMERCIAL STRATEGY 2023-26

5.3.1 The Committee NOTED a Draft Commercial Strategy 2023-26. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Committee that the Strategy outlined the direction of travel for the College towards increasing its alternative income streams over the next 3-years, whilst providing a sustainable growth model for the College.

- 5.3.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the Commercial Strategy and NOTED that it had received opportunity to review prior drafts at its meetings in December 2022 and February 2023. The Committee APPROVED the Draft Commercial Strategy 2023-26 and AGREED that it should be presented to the Board of Management on 26 September 2023, along with the full suite of sub-strategies associated with Edinburgh College Strategic Plan 2023-26.
- 5.3.3 The Committee AGREED that, in reviewing progress against the new Commercial Strategy, it would welcome further detail on the profitability of current contracts, in order to better understand how the College can reduce its financial shortfall through commercial income.

## **6 RELATIONSHIP REPORT**

### **6.1 RELATIONSHIP UPDATE**

- 6.1.1 The Committee NOTED a Relationships Report which outlined key developments in relation to stakeholder engagement, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), community and third sector outreach, major partnership projects and Board engagement.
- 6.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the College continued to work closely with the Scottish Government, the Dnipro Kids Charity, City of Edinburgh Council, and NHS Lothian to provide appropriate support, and long-term accommodation planning was being progressed for families residing at the Milton Road Halls. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that Scottish Government specific grant funding to support the Dnipro Kids would cease as of early July 2023.

### **6.2 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2023-26**

- 6.2.1 The Committee NOTED a draft External Engagement Plan 2023-28 which aligned to the ambitions and goals of the Edinburgh College Strategic Plan 2023-28 and its growth and impact. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that the Plan provided a foundation for the successful delivery of Edinburgh College's strategic KPIs, including increased student recruitment and retention, effective public relations and stakeholder engagement, community learning and development, and increased commercial income.
- 6.2.2 The Committee NOTED the increased importance of effective external relationships and partnerships to the College, in light of the significant and sustained economic, social and environmental challenges facing the Edinburgh and Lothians region. The Principal advised the Committee that, in line with the External Engagement Plan, the College hoped to undertake a perception study with key stakeholders to assess their opinions on Edinburgh College and its wider ranging work.

- 6.2.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the role of Board members within the External Engagement Plan and AGREED that work should be undertaken with the Board of Management to consider how its members could assist with key external engagement activities and help deliver the objectives of the new Strategic Plan.
- 6.2.4 The Committee APPROVED the External Engagement Plan 2023-28 and AGREED that it should be presented to the Board of Management on 26 September 2023, along with the suite of Edinburgh College Strategic Plan 2023-28 sub-strategies, prior to its full implementation.

## **7. BRAND AND REPUTATION REPORT**

### **7.1 BRAND AND RETPUTATION UPDATE**

- 7.1.1 The Committee NOTED a Brand and Reputation Update which outlined progress on activities relating to communications, marketing, business intelligence, corporate development, policy research and public relations.
- 7.1.2 The Committee NOTED that Scottish Census Data 2022 would become publicly available in the coming months. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that, once data had been released, the College would commence work on a regional social, economic, and environmental strategic analysis to inform the College's strategic planning.
- 7.1.3 The Committee NOTED that an Events Management Group had recently undertaken development work to support better events coordination, management, and reportage across the College. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research highlighted that the Group would focus on the creation of a new event monitoring system, new costing model, new health & safety risk assessment procedures, and a standardised College hire agreement.

### **7.2 DRAFT RESEARCH PLAN 2023-28**

- 7.2.1 The Committee NOTED a draft of the Edinburgh College Research Plan 2023-2028, which had been developed following an extensive consultation with key stakeholders, staff, and students. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that the Edinburgh College Strategic Plan identified research and innovation activity as a critical success factor to the delivery of ambitions identified in the framework.
- 7.2.2 The Committee NOTED that, in order to deliver on the aims and objectives outlined in the Research Plan, the College had established an Edinburgh College Research Unit. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that the Unit brought together staff, students and partners, including the Edinburgh College Development Trust, through a range of groups and activities

7.2.3 The Committee welcomed the Research Plan and DISCUSSED the following:

- (i) The importance placed on the breadth, quality and impact of research activity through national and regional policy objectives.
- (ii) The challenges facing College to establish itself in the research space, when competing against universities and other providers.
- (iii) Staff engagement with the Research Plan and the contractual restrictions placed on staff members' time for research activities.
- (iv) The high-level of engagement with the Plan through a College-wide research forum, which included approximately 70 staff members.
- (v) The internal governance structures in-place to manage and monitor research activity and ethical considerations.

7.2.3 The Committee welcomed the direction of travel outlined in the Edinburgh College Research Plan 2023-2028 and APPROVED its implementation.

*Kirsty MacKenzie left the meeting*

## **8. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2022/23**

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED that at the end of each academic year the Committee is required to review its annual activity. The Committee Chair advised the Committee that the same evaluation form, which asked members to consider the committee's operation and its performance monitoring and strategic roles, would be completed by all committees of the Board.
- 8.2 The Committee AGREED that its operation was compliant with its terms of reference, as outlined in 'Part 1' of the evaluation form.
- 8.3 The Committee DISCUSSED its performance over the academic year and AGREED that members' feedback should be relayed directly to the Chair and the Clerk to the Board by 16 June 2023, prior to a finalised version of the report being recirculated to the Committee (outwith the meeting cycle) for approval.

## **9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

- 9.1 None.

## **10. FOR INFORMATION**

### **10.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2023/24**

- 10.1.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the upcoming academic year.
- 10.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED future engagement with Community Planning Partners (CCPs) and NOTED that the College had well developed structures in-place to interact with CPPs. The Committee AGREED that the Chair and the Executive Lead should develop a list of appropriate strategic partners to invite to scheduled meeting in 2023/24.

## **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 11.1 The next meeting of the Corporate Development Committee will take place on 7 September 2023.

***Meeting closed at 17:30***