



For the future you want

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 27 NOVEMBER 2018

16:30 Boardroom, Milton Road Campus

Present: Ian Diamond; Ann Landels; Niki McKenzie; Nigel Paul; Fiona Riddoch; Ian Young (Chair)

In attendance: Nick Croft; Audrey Cumberford; Jonny Pearson; Chris McDougall; Lindsay Towns; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

1.2 The Committee Chair welcomed the Chair of the External Engagement Committee, Ann Landels, as a new member.

1.3 The Committee Chair welcomed the new Principal, Audrey Cumberford, to the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 No declarations of interests were received.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 21 August 2018 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 MATTERS ARISING REPORT

4.1.1 Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda, with the exception of the following:

4.1.2 *FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN THE WEST OF EDINBURGH CORRIDOR (Minute 4.2.2/ 22.05.18 refers)*

The Committee NOTED a verbal update on developments from the Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that the Minister for Further Education and Science, Richard Lochhead MSP, had indicated that he would encourage universities and colleges to work closely to smooth student transitions and articulation routes, and he would encourage further joint planning around education provision in regional areas.

4.1.3 *CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORTING (Minute 8.4/22.05.18 refers)*

The Committee NOTED that the Board had reviewed a proposal to develop key performance indicators to assess progress on the delivery of the Edinburgh College Strategic Plan at its Development Day on 30 October. The Head of Corporate Development advised the Committee that draft KPIs would be considered by the Board at its meeting on 19 March 2019, prior to their inclusion in the Edinburgh College Annual Report and Strategic Plan Update in September 2019.

4.1.4 *NURSERY REVIEW (Minute 10.1.3/22.05.18 refers)*

The Committee NOTED a verbal update on the financial performance of the Nursery and the initiatives undertaken by the Head of Estates and IT Services to reduce the ongoing financial shortfall. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that a review of the most suitable business model for the Nursery will be undertaken early next year with recommendations to be reported back to the Policy & Resources Committee when completed.

The Committee NOTED that the planned Granton Waterfront Development Project included plans for nursery provision. The Head of Estates and IT Services advised the Committee that the college was currently in discussion with City of Edinburgh Council regarding its plans and to encourage the Council to incorporate existing nursery provision at the Granton Campus.

4.1.5 *BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION PLAN (Minute 6.5/21.08.18 refers)*

The Committee NOTED that, following the closure of the Business Transformation Plan, the Chair of the Board had agreed with the SFC that a light-touch review of the Plan would take place in May 2019.

4.2 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE: TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 4.2.1 The Committee NOTED its updated terms of reference as agreed by the Board on 18 September 2018.

5 STRATEGIC PLAN AND BLUEPRINT 2017-22 REPORT

5.1 BLUEPRINT 2017-22 UPDATE

- 5.1.1 The Committee NOTED an update on progress achieved to date in the delivery of the Edinburgh College Blueprint 2017/22. The Principal outlined the significant progress that had already been made and acknowledged the evolutionary nature of the Blueprint Journey. Further to this, the Committee NOTED that the next phase of the Blueprint had evolved following its consideration by the new Principal, the Executive Team, the Senior Management Team and discussions held at the Board Development Day on 30 October 2018.
- 5.1.2 The Committee NOTED a proposal by the Principal to reshape the Blueprint around the following three ambitions for Edinburgh College: (i) A college with a curriculum for the future; (ii) a high performing digital college; and, (iii) a resilient, agile college with reach and potential to grow. The Principal reiterated to the Committee that the much of the activity associated with the original Blueprint projects had been embedded into college operations and the proposed reshaping of the Blueprint represented a need to converge and intensify the focus on the remaining activity, coalesced around three high level themes.
- 5.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the following in relation to the proposed reshaping of the Blueprint:
- (i) The proposed Blueprint Gateway Review and its purpose;
 - (ii) the need to ensure that Blueprint projects are outcome focused and linked to external factors;
 - (iii) the proposed streamlining of governance arrangements, and the need to ensure that appropriate information continues to be presented to the Committee and the Board;
 - (iv) the structures in place to ensure that the curriculum is forward thinking and innovative;
 - (v) the importance of sharing best practice and doing more to highlight the excellent work of the college;
 - (vi) the role of staff and Board members in promoting the work of the college, to enhance its reputation in the region and nationally;
 - (vii) the continued development of commercial activity at the college, and the potential for a step change in this area going forward.
- 5.1.4 The Committee NOTED and endorsed the Gateway Review of the Blueprint proposed by the Principal.

5.1.5 The Committee APPROVED the proposal to reshape and evolve the Blueprint, as outlined by the Principal, to ensure the college delivers its ambition to 'future-proof' itself. The Committee NOTED that reportage on progress would continue to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 19 February 2019, and thereafter.

5.2 EDINBURGH COLLEGE STRATEGIES 2018-23

5.2.1 The Committee NOTED three Edinburgh College strategies which had been reviewed to provide a clear sense of direction over the medium term, regarding the approach of the college to finance, estates and IT infrastructure. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that refreshed strategies were also required to demonstrate good practice per SFC guidance, and internal and external audit recommendations.

5.2.2 The Committee NOTED that all three strategies were linked to the development and delivery of the Blueprint 2017-22, specifically, the key theme emerging from the Blueprint review (e.g. digitalisation, curriculum for the future, organisational resilience and reach, and workforce planning and development). The Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that these strategies were holding positions based on shorter term visions, but longer term ambition and vision relating to the strategies would be defined as a result of the Blueprint review during this academic year.

5.2.3 The Committee NOTED the Finance, Estates and IT Infrastructure Strategies, as presented by the Head of Finance and the Head of Estates and IT Services.

5.2.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the following matters in relation to the strategies presented:

- (i) The purpose of the strategies to outline the key strategic pillars of the college going forward based on current plans;
- (ii) the importance of the IT Infrastructure Strategy to underpin future-proofing and innovation at the college;
- (iii) the restriction placed on the Finance Strategy by Scottish Government regulations through the reclassification of Colleges;
- (iv) the forecast around staffing costs against total income due to national pay agreements as presented in the Finance Strategy;
- (v) the focus placed on sustainability within the Estates Strategy and its environment and reputational benefits;
- (vi) the social facilities available to students on each campus, and the level of engagement with ECSA to ensure that students felt safe on campus;
- (vii) space utilisation across the college and the discussions taking place with the Head of Curriculum and Performance on classroom timetabling;
- (viii) the impact of national budget cuts in capital funding, and the impact this has on both estates and IT infrastructure.

- 5.2.5 The Committee welcomed each of the strategies as strategic pillars and holding positions for the college going forward, and APPROVED the Finance Strategy, the Estates Strategy and the IT Infrastructure Strategy.

6 RECRUITMENT & RETENTION DASHBOARD

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED an update from the Assistant Principal, Recruitment and Retention, on the performance of the college against its 2018/19 recruitment and retention targets. The Assistant Principal informed the Committee that the SFC had set the college an activity target of 187,969 for current academic year.
- 6.2 The Committee NOTED that in spite of an increase in enrolments there had been a decrease in credits in comparison with the previous academic year. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that the reason behind this was a drop in the number of full-time FE student, which was not offset (in terms of credits) by an increase in the number of part-time FE students.
- 6.3 The Committee NOTED that the average credit claim for a full-time student was 16.25 credits whereas the average credit claim for a part-time student was 5 credits. The Committee DISCUSSED the potential impact of the shift from full-time to part-time study on the overall credit score of the college going forward. The Chair of the Board advised the Committee that the weighting of part-time enrolments was an important matter for further consideration at a national level.
- 6.4 The Committee NOTED that early withdrawal in the current academic year had reduced by 50% from 2015/16, however, full-time FE withdrawals remained an area of concern. The Assistant Principal advised the Committee that early withdrawals were being addressed by the Executive Team through the ongoing Performance Review process.

7 CAPITAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

7.1 CAPITAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

- 7.1.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update from the Head of Estates and IT Services on the proposed use of unspent backlog maintenance funding.

7.2 CATERING PROCUREMENT REPORT

- 7.2.1 The Committee NOTED that it had taken a decision on 06 November to unanimously approve a proposal, put forward by the Executive, that the tender of Gather & Gather (trading name of Mitie Catering Services Ltd) as an external catering provider be accepted.
- 7.2.2 The Committee NOTED that this decision had been taken outwith its scheduled meeting cycle, due to the need for a period of 30 days staff consultation between the agreement of the Committee and the implementation of the contract. Further to this, the Committee NOTED that the closure of the college over the festive period from 21 December until

07 January would provide an opportunity for the new service provider to commence refurbishment work.

- 7.2.3 The Committee NOTED a verbal update on progress from the Head of Estates and IT Services advising the Committee that social areas at both the Granton and the Milton Road Campuses would be refurbished prior to the launch of the refreshed catering service in the January 2019.

The Head of Estates and IT Services left the meeting

8 FINANCE REPORT

8.1 FINANCE REPORT

- 8.1.1 The Committee NOTED that the college would publish its first Annual Procurement Report (APR) covering the period from 01 January 2017 to 31 July 2018. The Head of Finance advised the Committee that it was a legal requirement that the APR was signed off by the Executive and published on its website.
- 8.1.2 The Committee NOTED that following a ballot of their membership, the three support staff trade unions had accepted a pay offer for the period 01 April 2018 to 31 August 2020. The Head of Finance outlined the pay agreement and advised the Committee that it aligned with accrued amounts in the 31 July 2018 annual accounts and the 2018/19 budget.
- 8.1.3 The Committee NOTED that national negotiations with EIS in relation to pay had failed to reach an agreement, and as a result the college had received formal notification from the General Secretary of the EIS that a ballot for strike action had opened in November. The Principal advised the Committee that the college had contingency plans in place should industrial action take place, and would ensure all campuses remain open and students were appropriately supported.

8.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO SEPTEMBER 2018

- 8.2.1 The Committee NOTED the financial performance of the college as outlined in the Management Accounts to September 2018.

8.3 TUITION FEES 2019/20

- 8.3.1 The Committee NOTED a proposal for the 2019/20 tuition fees, as endorsed by the Executive. The Head of Finance advised the Committee that the paper proposed a 2% increase to part-time course fees based on a market review against other colleges and local universities (with the exception of some commercial, managing agent and international course fees, minutes 9.3.2 and 9.3.3 refer).
- 8.3.2 The Committee NOTED that commercial tuition fees increased by 2%, unless otherwise advised by Faculty Heads. The Head of Finance outlined

eight courses where fees would not be increased from 2018/19, and a further five courses where fees were proposed to increase above 2% in 2019/20.

- 8.3.3 The Committee NOTED that the International Team had recommended that full-time international fees remained the same in 2019/20, following an increase of approximately 10% in the previous year.
- 8.3.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the following aspects of the proposed 2019/20 tuition fees:
- (i) The thorough Equality Impact Assessment undertaken by the Finance Team, including consultation with ECSA;
 - (ii) the pricing of fees in relation to the holistic costs of teaching and use of provisions;
 - (iii) the pricing of courses against other providers in cases where the college has built a strong reputation, and wide market research.
- 8.3.5 The Committee APPROVED the 2019/20 tuition fees as outlined by the Executive. Further to this, the Committee AGREED that in next year's tuition fees proposal the Finance Team should include an overview of profit margins for specific course types.

The Head of Finance left the meeting

9 HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

- 9.1 The Committee NOTED a Human Resources Report which included updates on employee relations and organisational development. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that a new Head of HR & OD, Sue Clyne, would join the college on 03 December 2018.
- 9.2 The Committee NOTED that following a NJNC agreement that academic staff studying for a teaching qualification were now entitled to 150 hours remission over the academic year, effective as of this academic session. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that this represented a significant change for the college as currently no formal agreed remission was provided. The Committee NOTED that the college was considering the implications and arrangement to put in place, utilising the funding provided, following this decision.

10 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The Head of Curriculum and Performance joined the meeting

- 10.1 The Committee NOTED an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which applies to all member of the college community, including current and potential staff and students, visitor, Board members and people contracted to work at or for the college. The Head of Curriculum and Performance provided a supplementary update on the achievements of the college so far against its main equality priorities.

- 10.2 The Committee welcomed the report and DISCUSSED the progress of the college towards meeting its equality duties and its Gender Action Plan targets.
- 10.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and AGREED that it should include a statement of endorsement by the Board, and further guidance on unconscious bias (including a policy statement on training in this area).
- 10.4 The Committee NOTED a Draft Mainstreaming Report would be presented for its review on 19 February 2019.

11 HORIZON SCANNING REPORT

- 11.1 The Committee NOTED a Horizon Scanning Report which outlined major political, economic, social, technological, legal and/or environmental developments that could impact on the five strategic plan aims of the college. The Head of Corporate Development advised the Committee that further to this, the report also indicated what the college was doing to address these impacts.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 The next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee shall take place on 19 February 2019, in the Boardroom, Milton Road Campus.

Meeting closed at 18:30