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## **CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF 01 MARCH 2022**

#### **15:00, Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:** Rose Dodgson; Lesley Drummond (Chair); Ann Landels; Gwen Raez.

**In attendance:** Ian Brooke (EVOC) Nick Croft; Audrey Cumberland; Michael Jeffrey; Shona Pettigrew; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED that apologies had been received from Bruce Cassidy.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed new Non-Executive Board Members, Stewart Darling and Kerry McCormack, to the Corporate Development Committee as observers - following their appointment to the Board of Management on 15 December 2021.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Shona Pettigrew, the new Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange, to her first meeting of the Committee.
- 1.4 The Committee NOTED that Ian Brooke, Deputy Chief Executive of Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC), would join the meeting for Item 5.2 to present an update on the City of Edinburgh Community Planning Partnership.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 None.

#### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 23 November 2021 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. RELATIONSHIP REPORT

### 5.1 RELATIONSHIPS UPDATE

5.1.1 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.

5.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the College continued to develop its partnership working alongside the Edinburgh College Development Trust (ECDT), with its current focus on a business simulation gaming project, a care experienced student support project, and the launch and growth of the *Friends of Edinburgh College* network. The Director of Communication, Policy & Research highlighted to the Committee that the *Friends of Edinburgh College* was an alumni network of former students and staff.

5.1.3 The Committee NOTED an update on the involvement of the College with its local community planning partners. The Director of Communication, Policy & Research advised the Committee that the College had assisted Midlothian CPP in the production of a new Single Midlothian Plan, which focussed on economic recovery, employability and training, skills development and tackling poverty. In addition to this, the College had also contributed to a new Tackling Poverty Plan in East Lothian, as part of the regional CPPs work to tackle long-term unemployment through re-skilling and upskilling.

5.1.4 The Committee NOTED that work on the Granton Waterfront Development Project continued to progress with the development of the Granton Train Station building, which would accommodate new business start-ups and growing SMEs. The Director of Communication, Policy & Research advised the Committee that work continued with the City of Edinburgh Council's Muirhouse Library, on another major project, which had temporarily located many of its core services to the Granton Campus Hub.

5.1.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the range of engagement outlined in the report and NOTED that overall levels of engagement were returning to pre-pandemic levels.

### 5.2 CITY OF EDINBURGH COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

#### ***Ian Brooke and Gwen Raez joined the meeting***

5.2.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update on matters relating to the City of Edinburgh CPP. The Deputy Chief Executive of EVOC, as a representative of the CPP, advised the Committee of the three priorities of the Edinburgh Partnership Board for the people it serves:

- (i) Enough money to live on.
- (ii) Access to work, learning or training opportunities.
- (iii) A good place to live.

5.2.2 The Committee NOTED that, whilst the Covid-19 pandemic had shown how leaders from a diverse range of organisations could come together to

make a difference in the challenging areas of poverty, inequality and deprivations, it was likely that the ongoing cost of living crisis would continue to provide significant challenges for all community partners.

5.2.3 The Committee NOTED that work continued towards the delivery of the Edinburgh CPP Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Improvement Plans. The Deputy Chief Executive of EVOC highlighted to the Committee that the College had taken a leading role in the design and delivery of a £120,000 programme of small grants for community-based adult learning in the City.

5.2.4 The Committee welcomed the update provided on the City of Edinburgh CPP and DISCUSSED the following:

- (i) The funding crisis facing the college sector and the need to engage with partners at a local authority level on significant strategic issues.
- (ii) The widening of the CPP's 'work, learning and training opportunities' priority and the difficulties around fully realising its goals without any further financial support.
- (iii) The need for the College to test whether it can access areas of funding, through its Commercial Team, that local authorities cannot.
- (iv) The potential for the ECDT and the ECSA, as charities, to bring in alternative funding.

5.2.5 The Committee AGREED that the Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange should meet with the Deputy Chief Executive of EVOC to consider alternative funding options further. The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Executive of EVOC for attending the Committee and engaging with members.

***Ian Brooke left the meeting***

## **6. COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING REPORT**

6.1 The Committee NOTED that the Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange had been in post since January 2022 and was working closely with the Vice Principal Corporate Development to review the College's commercial, international, and alternative funding activity. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that she had been impressed with the scope of activity undertaken by both the Commercial and International Teams, whilst recognising more could be done with faculties to generate non-SFC income.

6.2 The Committee NOTED that, in terms of performance against budget, the key income streams of the College had been impacted by the increased uncertainty caused by the Omicron variant and the Covid-19 restrictions that were in place through the first six months of the academic year. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange highlighted to the Committee that, in addition to this, most of the College client base were also still focused on completing Year 3 of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) - as per the extended deadline provided by the SFC.

6.3 The Committee NOTED that although it had been a slow start to the academic year, in terms of FWDF activity, employers had begun to re-engage with the

College now that Covid-19 restrictions had been eased. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange informed the Committee that this had led to the College experiencing quicker growth income over recent months.

- 6.4 The Committee NOTED that the SFC allocation of Foundation Apprenticeship places for the next academic year had still not been confirmed, however, the College was working on the basis that it would receive the same allocation as in 2021/22. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange highlighted that the College continued to work with schools and local authorities to ensure that its Foundation Apprenticeship offer was clearly available to senior school pupils.
- 6.5 The Committee NOTED an updated on the performance of the Club & Accommodation, at the Milton Road Campus, and the Granton Waterfront Nursery. The Committee DISCUSSED recent changes to the application of associated costs within the management accounts to the Nursery and the Club & Accommodation.
- 6.6 The Committee AGREED to receive a further report on the Waterfront Nursery, and the impacts of the inclusion of 'associated costs' in the management accounts, on the future financial sustainability of the Nursery.
- 6.7 The Committee NOTED that the International Team were currently promoting its new commercial EFL and Summer School course offer which would be taught face-to-face from May 2022. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that there were potential risks to this project, should low market confidence in international travel continue into 2022.
- 6.8 The Committee DISCUSSED the conflict in the Ukraine following Russia's invasion on 24 February 2022 and NOTED that the College would continue to monitor developments and follow the UK Governments guidance relating to international travel and business activities.
- 6.9 The Committee NOTED that work was underway to renew the Commercial Income Strategy, and associated plans, which aligned to the new Edinburgh College Strategic Framework. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Committee that initial meetings had taken place with the Senior Management Team to discuss the development of the Strategy and further engagement sessions would be held with relevant teams and departments in March 2022.
- 6.10 The Committee DISCUSSED the development of a new Commercial Income Strategy and NOTED that a draft version would be presented to the Committee on 24 May 2022, for members' consideration.

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

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The Committee NOTED that Covid-19 communications and marketing activity at the College had tapered slightly - following recent changes in Scottish Government guidance. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research

informed the Committee that the College continued to articulate health & safety guidance and, under the EC Cares initiative, publish FAQs for staff and students.

- 7.3 The Committee NOTED that three student newsletters had been distributed to all students to update them on matters including under 22s free bus travel, Sustainable EC progress reports and Covid-19 Pandemic updates. The Committee DISCUSSED the level of engagement with the newsletters and social media analytics across various platforms. The Principal advised the Committee that student demographics, such as age, were a strong indicator of how individuals consumed various media, therefore it was important that the College continued to use a wide variety of platforms and formats.
- 7.4 The Committee NOTED that the College and ECSA were joint winners of the 'Net Zero Champion of the Year' category at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce Business Awards on 24 February 2022. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended all staff involved, and highlighted the need to promote the College's achievements around environmental sustainability as widely as possible.
- 7.5 The Committee NOTED that the Edinburgh College Research Unit (ECRU) had significantly progressed a funded research project with *Boutique Innovation*, which would analyse current and future innovation practices with industry partners. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that two new research projects funded by the ECDT into: (i) The impact of colleges on reducing socio-economic inequalities, and (ii) the extent and impacts of student homelessness, led by ECSA and the Edinburgh Cyrenians.

## **8. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

- 8.1 None.

## **9. FOR INFORMATION**

### **9.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2021/22**

- 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the current academic year.
- 9.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED potential items for consideration at future meetings of the Corporate Development Committee. The Committee AGREED that the Chair and the Vice Principal Corporate Development should consider the inclusion of the following items within the programme of work:
- (i) Future Knowledge Exchange funding for the sector.
  - (ii) Commercial income within individual faculties.
  - (iii) Commercial reporting structures and forecasting.
  - (iv) The continuity of activities within the International portfolio.
  - (v) The development of the College CRM system.
  - (vi) The Granton Waterfront Nursery.
  - (vii) Research activity led by the Edinburgh College Research Unit.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The next meeting of the Corporate Development Committee will take place on 24 May 2022.

***Meeting closed at 16:45***