

CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 7 MARCH 2024

15:00, Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present: Bruce Cassidy, Stewart Darling; Fiona Doring; Kirsty MacKenzie; Gwen Raez (Chair)

In attendance: Audrey Cumberland; Nick Croft; Lucy Dingle; Michael Jeffrey; Greig Robson (Skills Development Scotland); Shona Pettigrew; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Skye Marriner.
- 1.2 The Committee welcomed Greig Robson, Regional Skills Planning Lead (Skills Development Scotland) to the meeting to present an update on the *Edinburgh, East & Midlothian Regional Skills Assessment* (Item 3 refers).
- 1.3 The Committee welcomed Lucy Dingle, Communications & Social Media Manager, to the meeting. The Chair advised the Committee that the Communications & Social Media Manager would be invited to future meetings to provide updates on matters relating to Brand & Reputation.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

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

5.1 REGIONAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT CITY OF EDINBURGH, EAST & MIDLOTHIAN - OCTOBER 2023

5.1.1 The Committee NOTED a presentation from the Regional Skills Planning Lead on high-level outputs within the Regional Skills Assessment (RSA) Report for City of Edinburgh, East Lothian & Midlothian published in October 2023. The Regional Skills Planning Lead advised the Committee that the purpose of the RSA was to provide a robust evidence base to support partners in strategic skills investment planning.

5.1.2 The Committee NOTED that between 2013 and 2023 employment in the region grew by 16.1%, in comparison to a national increase of only 4%. The Regional Skills Planning Lead highlighted to the Committee that the workforce across the region was forecast to grow by 3.6% over the next 3 years, ahead of a Scotland-wide increase of 2.2% over the same period.

5.1.3 The Committee NOTED that the forecast sectoral mix (employment by industry) was expected to remain stable over the next three years, with the greatest employment growth across *Human Health and Social Work Activities*. The Regional Skills Planning Lead advised the Committee that *Manufacturing* was forecast to have the greatest employment contraction over both the mid-term (3 years) and long-term (up to 10 years).

5.1.4 The Committee NOTED that the largest employing occupation groups in 2023 were *Science and Technology Professional* and *Business and Public Service Professionals*, with the prior grouping expected to experience the greatest growth over both the mid and long-term. The Regional Skills Planning Lead advised the Committee that, in 2023, 60.5% of employed people in the region were in 'higher-level' occupations, which was a higher percentage of the workforce than the Scotland-wide average (47.9%).

5.1.5 The Committee DISCUSSED current regional workforce requirement, which consisted of a combination of both 'replacement demand' and 'expansion demand'. The Regional Skills Planning Lead summarised that the number of people required to replace workers leaving the labour market (i.e., retirement, relocation, or change in job role) within the region ensured that there remained a wide range of job opportunities across sectors and occupations.

5.1.6 The Committee DISCUSSED the role of the College in responding to RSA data, and the challenges associated with the timely fulfilling of skills pipelines for future growth areas. The Committee NOTED the work of the College over recent years to broaden the skills base of its students - to ensure that graduates could meet the demand of current and future employers. The Regional Skills Planning Lead informed the Committee that both further education and the apprenticeship system were likely to be the key to ensuring that regional demand pipelines were filled, since most of the forecast demand was at SCQF levels 5 through to 10.

5.1.7 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to learn more about the RSA and medium to long-term skills and employment trends within the region. The

Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Regional Skills Planning Lead for presenting to the Committee and engaging with its members.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP UPDATE

5.2.1 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.

5.2.2 The Committee NOTED that the Scottish Government's Draft Budget for 2024/25, announced on 19 December 2023, had outlined unprecedented financial pressures for Scotland's colleges – including the removal of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF). The Principal advised the Committee that the College was actively engaging with its staff, stakeholders and partners to raise awareness around the potential impact of the Budget.

The Director of Communication, Policy & Research left the meeting

6. COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING REPORT

6.1 The Committee NOTED that, following the Scottish Government's Draft Budget for 2024/25, the College had received notification from the SFC that the FWDF programme would close with immediate effect. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that no funding would be forthcoming in the form of year seven or eight allocations.

6.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the plans in place to address the 'FWDF gap' and ensure that the surplus generated via non-SFC funding streams was maintained. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange informed the Committee that the withdrawal of FWDF could potentially allow the Commercial Team to focus on both the growth of existing and new income streams. The Committee NOTED that the focus of the College was to support its staff in becoming more agile to respond to commercial opportunities and develop new income streams.

6.3 The Committee NOTED that a tender for Skills Development Scotland (SDS) funded Modern Apprenticeship activity was submitted in January 2024. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange highlighted to the Committee that this was the first time in four years that contract holders had been able to make a case for increased, or revised, provisions in line with employer demand.

6.4 The Committee NOTED that a new Edinburgh College Venue Hire Prospectus had been launched in February 2024. The Committee DISCUSSED the promotion of the Prospectus and its dissemination across regional partners and businesses.

6.5 The Committee welcomed the non-SFC income data shared within the appendix to the Commercial, International and Alternative Funding Report and DISCUSSED potential improvements to current reporting. The Committee AGREED that, whilst it was broadly content with the information it received, the Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange should consider what further enhancement could be made to the Report.

Bruce Cassidy, Support Staff Board Member, joined the meeting.

7. GRANTON WATERFRONT NURSERY UPDATE

- 7.1 The Committee NOTED that, at its meeting on 7 September 2023, it had agreed that a paper on the strategic future of the Granton Waterfront Nursery (with accompanying recommendations) would be considered by Members in Semester 2 of the current academic year. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Committee that, whilst the outcome of National Bargaining negotiations was not yet known, the College had developed five potential options for future Nursery management and operations.
- 7.2 The Committee welcomed the opportunity to review the five options in the level of granularity provided. The Committee DISCUSSED the outlined options and AGREED that the various possibilities should be developed further, and a full profit and loss statement for the Nursery incorporated into the report. The Committee NOTED that Stewart Darling, a Non-Executive Board Member, had also offered his services to help the Vice Principal Corporate Development consider the feasibility of an additional option.
- 7.3 The Committee AGREED that a revised paper, which was cognisant of wider discussions around the financial sustainability of the College (- following the publication of the Scottish Government's Draft Budget), would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on 28 May 2024.

8. BRAND AND REPUTATION REPORT

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that an internal communications plan was successfully delivered to support engagement with the Hive Staff Survey – resulting in a 76% completion rate. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, commended the level of staff engagement with the Hive Staff Survey and welcomed the opportunity to receive a high-level overview of the initial results at the Board of Management on 26 March 2024.
- 8.3 The Committee NOTED that industrial action communications continued to be distributed to staff, students and stakeholders, including communications specific to the ongoing resulting boycott. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Committee that students had been made aware of the potential implications and provided with further sources of information, advice, and support.

9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- 9.1 DEPARTURE OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, POLICY & RESEARCH
- 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED that the Director of Communication, Policy & Research, Nick Croft, would be leaving the College on 29 March 2024 -

following over six years of service. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Director of Communication, Policy & Research for his significant contribution to the Corporate Development Committee over his tenure.

10. FOR INFORMATION

10.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2024/25

10.1.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the upcoming academic year 2024/25.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next meeting of the Corporate Development Committee will take place on 28 May 2024.

Meeting closed at 17:00.