

## CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF MEETING OF 23 NOVEMBER 2023

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

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

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

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 No apologies were received.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 None.

#### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 7 September 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.

##### 4.2 *Terms of Reference [Minute 5.3/07.09.23 refers]*

4.2.1 The Committee NOTED that the Board of Management on 26 September 2023 had approved a recommendation by the Corporate Development Committee to ensure it had appropriate flexibility to hold quorate meetings. The Chair advised the Committee that it would be quorate 'provided that at least three Board Members, two of whom were Non-Executive Members, were in attendance'.

**4.3 Granton Waterfront Nursery [Minutes 4.2.3/07.09.23 refers]**

4.3.1 The Committee NOTED that a strategic planning update relating to the Granton Waterfront Nursery would be considered in Semester 2 of the 2023/24 academic year - once the outcome of National Bargaining negotiations was known.

4.3.2 The Committee NOTED that the Nursery had recently received a successful outcome from its Care Inspectorate Visit. The Committee DISCUSSED the excellent quality of service provided by the Nursery and AGREED that the Director of Communications, Policy & Research should write to the Nursery Team, on behalf of the Corporate Development Committee, to commend the outcome of the Visit.

**4.4 Board Communication [Minute 8.1.4/07.09.23 refers]**

4.4.1 The Committee NOTED that the Principal had held a briefing session for Non-Executive Board Members on 19 September 2023 regarding communications around local and national industrial action. The Chair advised the Committee that written guidance had subsequently been circulated to Board Members.

**5. COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING REPORT**

5.1 The Committee NOTED that there had been no communication from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) regarding the continuation of the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) or potential Year 7 funding. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange informed the Committee that the Scottish Government would publish its 2024/25 Budget on 19 December 2023, at which time further information would be forthcoming.

5.2 The Committee NOTED that Year 6 FWDF activities had progressed as planned, with training to the value of £300k delivered as of 31 October 2023. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that the remaining funds (£384k) were fully allocated and would be delivered by the end of December 2023, in line with funding guidance.

5.3 The Committee welcomed progress against the in-year FWDF activity target and DISCUSSED both the potential impact of the Scottish Budget announcement and ongoing work to develop the College's bespoke activity prospectus. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange highlighted to the Committee that through an improved prospectus offer, further training opportunities could be added to existing FWDF activity (- if funding was continued) or provided as standalone bespoke training.

5.4 The Committee NOTED that, in addition to the delivery of bespoke and FWDF activities, the Business Development Team were focussed on diversifying its commercial portfolio and strengthening stakeholder relationships. The Committee DISCUSSED developments in the commercial portfolio and the work undertaken in Quarter 1 (2023/24) to ensure a sustainable approach to non-SFC income.

- 5.5 The Committee NOTED that full-year income targets relating to international student recruitment had exceeded expectations, with the potential for additional income aligned to January 2024 recruitment. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange highlighted that the International Team were currently focussed on increased levels of student recruitment to address any shortfall arising from the conclusion of partnership activities with Hainan Province in 2023/24 - a year earlier than expected - following the reallocation of in-country funds by the Chinese Government.
- 5.6 The Committee DISCUSSED the income data appended to the Commercial, International and Alternative Funding Report and AGREED that the Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange should consider the points raised relating to the inclusion of sales pipeline data, and the separation of SFC and non-SFC income.
- 5.7 The Committee DISCUSSED the commercial opportunities associated with the College Estate. The Committee AGREED that it would welcome a further update on venue hire at its next meeting, with particular emphasis on the current pricing structure and engagement with community-based partners.
- 5.8 The Committee DISCUSSED the resourcing of the Commercial Strategy 2023-26 to meet the income targets outlined within the Strategy. The Committee AGREED that a further update on the resourcing of the Commercial Strategy, in the context of a cross-college approach to commercial activities, should be provided to its next meeting.

*Kirsty Mackenzie joined the meeting*

## **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. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that engagement and partnership activity within the report had been aligned to the External Engagement Plan 2023-28, and its key outcomes.
- 6.1.2 The Committee NOTED that a recent mapping exercise of external engagement activity undertaken by College staff had indicated extensive engagement with the College Development Network (CDN) on a wide range of topics. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that staff across the College were engaged nationally with several curriculum improvement groups facilitated by CDN.
- 6.1.3 The Committee NOTED strategic planning activities across the three Community Planning Partnerships relating to 'Community Wealth Building'<sup>1</sup> (CWB). The Director of Communications, Policy & Research informed the Committee that the CWB approach was designed to harness the economic

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<sup>1</sup> [Community wealth building - Cities and regions - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/cities-and-regions/community-wealth-building)

leverage of 'civic anchor organisations', like the College, to tackle structural inequalities and generate local economic growth. The Committee DISCUSSED progress to date and NOTED that a further update on key actions and outcomes arising from agreed CWB plans would be shared with the Members in due course.

6.1.4 The Committee NOTED that the College's long-serving Events & Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Diane Gordon, would be retiring in February 2024. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that the Senior Management Team would consider resources requirements across the Events and Stakeholder Engagement Team to ensure that activities continued to meet the strategic requirements of the College.

## 6.2 MAJOR PROJECTS LIST UPDATE

6.2.1 The Committee NOTED an overview of major projects in which Edinburgh College was currently engaged. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research highlighted to the Committee that although updates on major projects were covered within the Relationship Update, the more detailed Major Projects List aimed to provide Members with further assurance on the status of individual projects.

6.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the RAG ratings provided to individual projects and NOTED that a single 'Amber' rating referred to delays in the project timescales – rather than issues related to project delivery. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that funding was in place for each of the major projects listed, with budgetary requirements fully considered prior to any project commencing.

*The Principal left the meeting.*

## 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 Graduation 2023 had been a major success with 600 students graduating at the McEwan Hall on 2 November 2023, with over 1,800 guests in attendance across three ceremonies. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated the College on hosting the Graduation event, which was one of the highlights of the College calendar.

7.3 The Committee NOTED that a recent Scottish Government's Workforce Challenges Report<sup>2</sup> published by Audit Scotland, which indicated that the Government and their agencies could no longer afford to pay for public services in their current form, largely due to 'locked in' pay increases. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research highlighted that the Report outlined ways public bodies, including colleges, could undertake further work to improve data gathering and analysis, and planning around workforce matters.

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<sup>2</sup> [The Scottish Government's workforce challenges \(audit-scotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/publications/2023/06/2023-workforce-challenges-report)

7.4 The Committee NOTED that recent insights into the current state of poverty in the City of Edinburgh had been released by the Edinburgh CPP. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that these key 2022/23 insights included:

- i. The narrowing of the poverty related attainment gap by 3%.
- ii. Advice services enabling Edinburgh citizens to claim an extra £20m.
- iii. 1 in 5 children still living in poverty, and of those 25% experienced poverty because of housing costs.
- iv. 28,000 Edinburgh citizens still earned below the real living wage.

7.5 The Committee DISCUSSED current Scottish Government policy related to working parents and guardians, and the work done by the College to ensure staff and students were aware of any benefit entitlements. The Director of Communications, Policy & Research advised the Committee that whilst progress had been made in tackling poverty in the City of Edinburgh, it remained incumbent upon all public sector organisations, including the College, to continue their efforts to minimise the effect of poverty on students and staff across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

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

8.1 None.

## **9. FOR INFORMATION**

9.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2023/24

9.1.1 The Committee NOTED its proposed programme of work for the upcoming academic year 2023/24.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10.1 The next meeting of the Corporate Development Committee will take place on 7 March 2023.

**Meeting closed at 16:25.**