

CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 28 MAY 2024

15:10, Sighthill Campus Boardroom

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

In attendance: Lucy Dingle; Michael Jeffrey; Shona Pettigrew; Marcus Walker (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 The Committee NOTED apologies from Bruce Cassidy and Kirsty MacKenzie.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 7 March 2024 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 The Committee NOTED that, despite the closure of Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) programme, the College's Commercial UK activities remained on target. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange informed the Committee that the College continued to engage with employers previously accessing the FWDF. The Committee NOTED that it was important to highlight to the Board that the closure of the FWDF had not negatively impacted upon the College's financial performance in 2023/24.

5.2 The Committee NOTED that the Gatsby Foundation funded College Innovation Network project was now complete, with Gatsby colleagues supporting the development of a final report which would be completed before the end of the

month. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that, as part of the final report discussions, partners were considering next steps and potential funding sources which could be accessed in support of a continued collaborative approach.

- 5.3 The Committee NOTED that a request had been submitted to the Home Office to increase the College CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) allocation, to facilitate the enrolment of a greater number of student visa students. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that International student recruitment continued to develop in a positive direction with 68 qualified applications currently being processed for the academic year 2024/25.
- 5.4 The Committee DISCUSSED a recent news article relating to a new centre in West Lothian opened by Mitsubishi to train approximately a 1,000 people to install heat pumps. The Committee NOTED the financial and political considerations relating to such decisions, and the mindset of large-scale project coordinators to build new bespoke training facilities rather than accessing existing facilities within the region. The Vice Principal advised the Committee that through its partnership with the Forth Green Freeport, the College aimed to put forward the case for the use (and development) of existing training facilities.

6. GRANTON WATERFRONT NURSERY UPDATE

- 6.1 The Committee NOTED that, at its meeting on 7 March 2024, it had agreed that a profit & loss statement for the Granton Waterfront Nursery would be produced to guide a strategic discussion on its future. The Vice Principal Corporate Development advised the Committee that the financial information requested could not be provided at the current time.
- 6.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the challenges faced by the Vice Principal Corporate Development to fully illustrate commercial activity within the current management accounting system used by the College.
- 6.3 The Committee AGREED that, to progress this matter in a timely manner, a profit and loss statement would be circulated to Members via email – for further consideration. The Committee AGREED that Members should select one of the five potential options previously considered for future Nursery management and operations - via correspondence. The Chair advised the Committee that, if appropriate, a selected option would then be put forward to the Board of Management for consideration at its next meeting.

7. RELATIONSHIP REPORT

- 7.1 The Committee NOTED that the Principal and the Executive Team remained in regular contact with Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Government, the SFC and Colleges Scotland regarding the impact of recent government college sector resourcing and budget decisions.
- 7.2 The Committee NOTED that the Edinburgh College Development Trust (ECDT) had approved a new organisational strategy, building on their past funding strategy

work. The Vice Principal Corporate Development informed the Committee that the new Strategy would help progress the ambitions of the Trust and the College, as defined in the relevant 2023/24 Memorandum of Understanding.

- 7.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the ECDT Strategy and the current staffing requirements of the Trust. The Committee NOTED that, with regards to recent press articles around the boycotting of Baillie Gifford funded events due to its investments in Israel, it would be prudent for the Trust to consider drafting an ethical statement around the acceptance of funding. The Director of Enterprise & Knowledge Exchange advised the Committee that while the Trust did not currently receive funds from Baillie Gifford, the asset management firm was currently open to funding proposals for community-based projects.

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 the College would soon be publishing its '*Our Capital, Our College*', which outlined both Edinburgh College's reach and provided an insight into its social and economic impact. The Vice Principal Corporate Development presented a draft of the document to the Committee, prior to its consideration by the Senior Management Team.
- 8.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the '*Our Capital, Our College*' document and its potentially valuable impact for supporting both Board and committee decision-making. The Vice Principal Corporate Development informed the Committee that it was hoped that the document could be shared with Board Members before the end of the academic year.
- 8.4 The Committee NOTED that the number of individuals viewing the Edinburgh College website was currently down 28% (year on year). The Committee DISCUSSED the reasons why website views had decreased and NOTED that other social media platforms (such as Tik Tok) were becoming increasingly more popular and required more active management by the Communications Team.
- 8.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the potential for social media 'takeovers' of College accounts by students, within controlled parameters, to connect with current and prospective students through peer-to-peer engagement. The Marketing & Communications Manager advised the Committee that more innovative approaches to social media usage by the College were being considered.

9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK APPETITE STATEMENTS

- 9.1 The Committee NOTED that it was good practice for boards of management to review their risk appetite statements on an annual basis. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee that, given that the College's Risk Appetite Statements were agreed in October 2023, it had been decided that a light touch review would take place in the current academic year – with committees of the Board reviewing statements within their remit.

9.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the Risk Appetite Statements relating to *Reputation* and *Commerciality*. The Committee AGREED that it was content with the current Statements and levels of risk appetite indicated.

10. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2023/24

10.1 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION 2023/24

10.1.1 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.

10.1.2 The Committee AGREED that its operation was compliant with its terms of reference, as outlined in 'Part 1' of the evaluation form.

10.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED its performance over the academic year and AGREED that members' feedback should be relayed directly to the Chair and the Clerk, prior to a finalised version of the report being recirculated to the Committee (out-with the meeting cycle) for approval.

11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

11.1 DEPARTURE OF A STUDENT BOARD MEMBER

11.1.1 The Committee NOTED that the tenure of the Student Board Member, Skye Marriner, would end on 30 June 2024. The Chair, on behalf of the Corporate Development Committee, thanked Ms Marriner for her significant contribution to the Committee throughout the past two academic years.

12. FOR INFORMATION

12.1 COMMITTEE PROGRAMME OF WORK 2024/5

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

12.1.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the potential future deep dives and AGREED that allotted times should be made for sessions focusing specifically on commercial income and stakeholder engagement. The Chair advised the Committee that she would consider future sessions, and their scheduling, with the Vice Principal Corporate Development and the Clerk.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1 To be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 17:15