



POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 03 JUNE 2015

14:00 Boardroom, Granton Campus

Present: Sandra Cairncross; Martin Crewe; Alan Johnston; Ian McKay; Nigel Paul; Robin Stimpson; Ian Young (Chair).

In attendance: Su Breadner; Annette Bruton Penny Davis; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson.

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Jan Cutting.
- 1.2 The Committee Chair welcomed the new Principal, Annette Bruton, to the meeting.
- 1.3 The Committee welcomed the Chair of the Academic Council, Sandra Cairncross, as a new member.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 None.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 The Board APPROVED the Minutes from 08 April 2015 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 MATTERS ARISING

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

4.1.1 CURRICULUM REVIEW (minute 8.1.6/05.03.15 refers)

The Committee NOTED comments on progress and were content with assurances received from the Executive relating to the ETO rationale for staff relocations following the curriculum review.

4.1.2 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING (minute 6.3.3/08.04.15 refers)

The Committee NOTED that the Director of Finance and the Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee would meet with selected Board and Executive members in July to consider the presentation of financial information to the Board.

5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN REPORT

SFC Outcome Agreement Managers, Ken Rutherford and Seamus Spencer joined the meeting

5.1 DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

5.1.1 The Committee NOTED that, following Board approval, oversight of the development plan had transferred to the Policy & Resources Committee. The Committee Chair welcomed Ken Rutherford and Seamus Spencer to the meeting as representatives of the SFC, under the new governance arrangements.

5.1.2 The Committee NOTED an update on progress towards achievement of the key milestones within the development plan.

5.1.3 The Committee NOTED the development plan risk register, and DISCUSSED the need to identify risk owners and align the document with the 'summary of key risks' outlined by the Principal. The Committee AGREED that this information should be included in future versions of the risk register.

5.1.4 The Committee NOTED that the new Principal would consider a 'fresh' approach to presenting College data to the Board and its committees. The Principal informed the Committee that the College had developed its capacity to collate key performance data, with the aim of fostering a more intelligence-led approach.

The Committee DISCUSSED the need for a more analytical and strategic approach to data presentation at Board-level, whilst acknowledging the need for the Board to remain consistent in its information requests. The Committee AGREED that KPIs should be presented to a future meeting for consideration by its Members and representatives of the SFC.

5.1.5 The Committee NOTED that the College's SFC Outcome Agreement Manager welcomed the progress outlined by the Principal, and the opportunity to consider KPI data.

5.2 VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE SCHEME UPDATE

5.2.1 The Committee NOTED that, following SFC approval, the Voluntary Severance (VS) Scheme had launched on 09 May and would remain open until 08 June.

5.2.2 The Committee NOTED the number of applications received to date, and the process for their review and (if appropriate) approval. The Director of OD & Communications confirmed that VS applications from the Executive Team would be considered by the Remuneration Committee.

5.3 ENVIRONMENT SCAN PROJECT UPDATE

5.3.1 The Committee NOTED an update on the current status and remit of the Environmental Scan Project. The Principal informed the Committee that the Project aimed to assess the needs of external stakeholders, in order for the College to deliver a coherent and needs-based curriculum.

5.3.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the scope of phase one of the Project ('identifying stakeholder asks'), and the importance of engaging with local businesses directly, rather than assess secondary information through local government. The Committee NOTED that the Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and other employer forums could provide a useful insight into current trends in the region.

The SFC Representatives present also highlighted the 'City Deal' and regional 'Invest in Youth Groups' as potential areas of coverage within the environmental scan.

5.3.3 The Committee NOTED that a report on the initial phase of the Project would be consider by the Executive in due course.

5.4 SFC POST-MERGER EVALUATION

5.4.1 The Committee NOTED a letter from the Chair of the SFC, Professor Alice Brown, to Angela Constance MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning) regarding Edinburgh College's Post-Merger Evaluation. The Committee NOTED that the Principal and Chair had each received a copy of the letter on 15 May.

5.4.2 The Committee NOTED that the SFC proposed to carry out another post-merger evaluation in 2016, to review progress relating to merger implementation and the College's Development Action Plan.

5.4.3 The Committee NOTED that the SFC would liaise with the Principal, and counterparts at other colleges, to determine how best to conduct future post-merger evaluations. The Committee DISCUSSED their preferred evaluation methodology, including the use of a self-evaluation model, and the need for a collective approach to setting out recommendations arising from the Education Scotland and SFC reviews.

The College's Regional Outcome Agreement Manager informed the Committee that the SFC would aim to reduce the burden of reporting placed on the College and the Executive Team.

5.4.4 The Committee NOTED the impact of the ONS Reclassification on the college sector and the challenges arising from its implementation. The Committee DISCUSSED the incompatibility of the ONS Reclassification with the College's charitable status, and the need for the sector to move quicker in its 'transition' to the ONS model.

5.4.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the language used in the SFC letter regarding the post-merger evaluation. The Committee AGREED that the SFC should consider changing the evaluation's title to a 'development plan review', to separate it from the College's merger in October 2012. The College's Regional Outcome Agreement Manager agreed to discuss this matter further with the SFC Chief Executive.

Ken Rutherford and Seamus Spencer left the meeting.

6 LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Jane Robinson, Head of Human Resources, joined the meeting

6.1 ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

6.1.1 The Committee NOTED a revised Leadership Strategy for Organisation Development, which had been updated to align with the College's development plan and the Curriculum Strategy.

6.1.2 The Director of OD & Communications provided a presentation outlining the internal and external context in which the Strategy had been developed. The Committee NOTED the Department's achievements and progress to date, and the 'key development themes' moving forward.

6.1.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the following aspects of the Organisation Development Strategy:

- (i) the template for the Leadership Strategy document, and the need to indicate clear 'tactics' at departmental level;
- (ii) the risks and challenges faced by the Department, including the need for greater accountability at each level of the organisation;
- (iii) the proposed 'annual' staff survey and the appropriateness of such a regular survey as a tool for positive change;
- (iv) the Student Reviewer scheme and its situ with the Quality Team.

6.1.4 The Committee AGREED that the Leadership Strategy template should be reconsidered to create a more concise document, which focused on key departmental 'tactics' to achieve the College's overarching strategy.

6.1.5 The Committee APPROVED the revised Organisation Development Strategy 2013-18, subject to the requested template change (paragraph 6.1.4 refers), and the removal of references to an 'annual' staff satisfaction survey.

6.2 HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

6.2.1 The Committee NOTED a revised Leadership Strategy for Human Resources, which had been update to align with the College's Development Plan and the Curriculum Strategy.

6.2.2 The Head of Human Resources provided a presentation outlining the Department's achievements and progress to date, and the 'key development themes' moving forward.

6.2.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the following aspects of the Human Resources Strategy:

- (i) the risks and challenges faced by the Department, including the relationship with EIS-FELA and the need to further develop the the College's partnership working model;
- (ii) the role of HR in the College and the effectiveness of the Department's working relationship with middle managers;
- (iii) the important role of performance management in developing the culture of the College;
- (iv) the need to priorities key HR functions within the Strategy, in light of the broad range of ongoing activities in the Department.

6.2.4 The Committee APPROVED the revised Human Resources Strategy 2013-18, subject to the requested template change (paragraph 6.1.4 refers). The Committee AGREED that within the amended template the Strategy should outline further the key HR priorities, and the College's approach to developing and engaging staff in middle management roles.

Jane Robinson, Head of Human Resources, left the meeting

7 FINANCIAL REPORT

7.1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Committee NOTED the financial performance of the College, as highlighted in the Financial Accounts to April 2015.

7.2 STUDENT SUPPORT FUNDING

Julie McCran, Vice Principal Quality, Performance & Student Experience, entered the meeting.

7.2.1 The Committee NOTED an update on matters relating to student support funds. The Vice Principal Quality, Performance & Student Experience outlined

current Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) funding arrangements across the college sector.

7.2.2 The Committee NOTED an overview of the process for applying for funds to support EMA students aged 19 to 20 years. The Vice Principal Quality, Performance & Student Experience informed the Committee that any student presented with an EMA award by the College remained eligible (in principle) to apply to the discretionary fund.

7.2.3 The Committee NOTED a Student Funding Partnership Agreement, which recognised that the College and the Student Associations (ESCA) agreed to jointly support the management of all student support funds. The Committee NOTED that the Agreement would last for one year, and would cover bursary, childcare and both the FE and HE discretionary funds.

7.3 TUITION FEES POLICY

7.3.1 The Committee NOTED a proposed College Tuition Fees Policy for 2015/16, which (in line with other colleges in the sector) included an inflationary increase to part-time course fees. The Director of Finance informed the Committee that for 2015/16, Full-time Advanced and Non-Advanced courses had seen no fee increase, nor had International or Commercial Fees.

7.3.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the importance of aligning the College's fees with those set in the UK and Internationally. The Committee AGREED that, in future, it would welcome additional information related to market intelligence, and the current number of students within individual fee paying brackets.

7.3.3 The Committee NOTED that the Tuition Fees Policy 2015/16 had been circulated to members of the Academic Council for further consideration. The Committee NOTED the feedback provided, and DISCUSSED the need for the Policy to undergo an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - prior to its publication.

7.3.4 The Committee APPROVED the Tuition Fees Policy 2015/16, subject to the completion of an EIA.

7.4 INDICATIVE BUDGET 2015/16

7.4.1 The Committee NOTED an Indicative College Budget for 2015/16, as put forward by the Executive Team. The Committee NOTED that the budget had been set with a view to achieving a breakeven position by the year end.

7.4.2 The Committee Chair welcomed the opportunity for the Committee to consider the Indicative Budget, and praised the format of the documentation.

7.4.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the Indicative Budget and whether the Executive considered it an 'optimistic' budget. The Director of Finance confirmed that the budget provided a realistic plan for the College, with the consideration of future staffing requirements central to its development.

7.4.4 The Committee DISCUSSED the implications VS Scheme on the Budget, and the potential impact of future pension scheme contribution rates increases. The Committee AGREED that the Executive, prior to Board approval, would consider the effect of a 1% uplift in staffing costs and incorporate this into the 2015/16 budget presented to the Board.

Sandra Cairncross left the meeting

7.4.5 The Committee NOTED an executive summary of the ECSA 2015/16 funding request. The Committee DISCUSSED the funding bid and were content with the reassurance provide by the Executive.

The Committee NOTED the benefits of the 'Wider Educational Achievement Record' outlined in the funding bid, but AGREED that such a scheme should be led by Student Services with the support of ECSA.

7.4.6 The Committee AGREED to recommend the Indicative Budget 2015/16 to the Board for approval, subject to the inclusion of 1% uplift projection (paragraph 7.4.4 refers).

8 ORGANISATIONAL AND STAFFING REPORT

8.1 *Paragraph 8.1 presently exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30, Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs.*

8.2 TEMPORARY STAFFING EXPENDITURE

8.2.1 The Committee NOTED a report highlighting temporary staffing expenditure against budget of; additional hours, temporary staffing from agencies and contracted temporary resources.

8.2.2 The Committee NOTED that the utilisation of temporary staff across curriculum areas and support functions had increased since January 2015, due to the high level of student activity in Semester 2. The Committee NOTED that curriculum expenditure had increased beyond the College's initial projection in Semester 2 due to a (then unknown) flaw in the budget setting process at the start of the academic year.

8.2.3 The Committee welcomed the information provided, but AGREED that costs related to temporary staffing needed to be minimised.

9 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE OPERATION

9.1 The Committee NOTED that the Committee is required to review its operation and performance on an annual basis.

9.2 The Committee DISCUSSED a review checklist circulated to Members, and AGREED to remit the completion of the document to the Committee Chair, Principal and Governance Director. The Committee AGREED that the checklist would

subsequently be circulated to Committee Members (for review) and noted at its next meeting.

10 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

None.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

12 CLOSED BUSINESS

No closed items of business were considered.

Meeting closed at 16:30