



For the future you want

## **CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

### **APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING OF 03 MARCH 2020**

**15:00, Boardroom, Milton Road Campus**

**Present:** Bruce Cassidy; Lesley Drummond (Chair); Gwen Raez; Azra Sharif-Qayyum

**In attendance:** Nick Croft; Audrey Cumberland; Jane Grant; Michael Jeffrey; Alasdair Mathers (Midlothian Council); Marcus Walker (Clerk)

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

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Carla Ford and Ann Landels
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Alasdair Mathers, Communities & Lifelong Learning Manager at Midlothian Council, to the meeting for Item 5.1.

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

- 2.1 None.

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

- 3.1 The Committee APPROVED the minutes from 19 November 2019 as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING REPORT**

Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.

#### **5. RELATIONSHIPS REPORT**

##### **5.1 MIDLOTHIAN COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

- 5.1.1 The Committee NOTED a verbal update on matters relating to the Midlothian Community Planning Partnership (CCP). The Communities

& Lifelong Learning Manager outlined key priorities within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan relating to the following priority areas: (i) Health & social care; (ii) community justice; (iii) improving opportunities; (iv) sustainability; and, (v) 'getting it right for every child', and how these priorities were captured in the Midlothian CPP structure.

- 5.1.2 The Committee NOTED that Midlothian Council had reduced staffing levels as part of its efforts to achieve a balanced budget. The Communities & Lifelong Learning Manager advised the Committee that continued efficiencies in the Council's Schools & Learning Department meant that partnership working would be of particular importance going forward.
- 5.1.3 The Committee NOTED that Midlothian Council was the fastest growing local authority in Scotland, following a significant increase in the construction of new homes in the area, and that continued growth was projected. The Communities & Lifelong Learning Manager informed the Committee that education and training needs within the region had subsequently increased in scale, and accounted for significant portion of Midlothian Council's annual budget.
- 5.1.4 The Committee welcomed the verbal update provided by the Communities & Lifelong Learning Manager and DISCUSSED the following matters:
- (i) The ongoing work taking place with SDS to re-engage communities with Adult and lifelong learning;
  - (ii) the high number of SMEs in Midlothian and the need for the Council and the College to better coordinate its employer engagement and business development support;
  - (iii) the excellent work taking place with the College to develop the regions early years education provision, to meet national targets set by the Scottish Government;
  - (iv) the growth of STEM and digital skills within the region and the potential impact of funding through the City Region Deal;
  - (v) the potential for collaboration between the College and the University of Edinburgh in Midlothian, following the continued development of the Roslin Institute and the School of Veterinary Studies in the region.
- 5.1.5 The Committee DISCUSSED transport and the proposed bus pass scheme outlined in the Draft Budget 2020/21. The Principal advised the Committee that, as requested by the Academic Council, she would be writing to the SFC regarding funding for student travel by train. The Committee NOTED that trains from Midlothian to Edinburgh stopped at both the Midlothian and Milton Road Campuses.
- 5.1.6 The Committee Chair thanked the Communities & Lifelong Learning Manager for engaging with members in discussion.

***The Communities & Lifelong Learning at Midlothian Council left the meeting***

## 5.2 RELATIONSHIP UPDATE

- 5.2.1 The Committee NOTED a Relationships Update which outlined key developments in relation to stakeholder engagement, CPPs, community and third sector outreach, major partnership projects and Board engagement.
- 5.2.2 The Committee NOTED that the College had developed a 'Third Sector Offer', in partnership with third sector interface organisations across the region. The Head of Communication, Policy and Research advised the Committee that the proposal included:
- (i) An increase in the volume of personal and organisation training/development opportunities through the Commercial Team to third sector organisation;
  - (ii) more student placement and project opportunities in third sector organisations; and
  - (iii) improved access to College buildings and third sector meetings and events.
- 5.2.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the Third Sector Offer and the impact of external usage on specialist equipment / facilities. The Vice Principal Corporate Development indicated that an asset audit was currently taking place to ensure that equipment was maintained and appropriately insured. The Committee NOTED that very few external groups wished to use specialist equipment, and improved access to the College generally referred to the use of meeting rooms.

## 6. COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING REPORT

### *The Head of Commercial joined the meeting*

### 6.1 COMMERCIAL, INTERNATIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING UPDATE

- 6.1.1 The Committee NOTED a report on the year-to-date commercial income of the College in the academic year 2019/20.
- 6.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the Commercial UK Team had performed strongly and were expected to meet their annual activity targets. The Head of Commercial advised the Committee that the College expected to spend its full Flexible Workforce Development (FWDF) allocation in the coming months, and had expressed an interest in additional funding from the SFC should there be an underspend in the sector.
- 6.1.3 The Committee NOTED that the Head of Commercial had attended a Scottish Government consultation for the FWDF 2020/21. The Head of Commercial informed the Committee that it was anticipated that FWDF would double in value from the next academic year, however, the sector was now awaiting a report on the proposed FWDF model and apprenticeship levy from Scottish Government.
- 6.1.4 The Committee NOTED that the College was actively monitoring developments related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The Head of Commercial informed the Committee that the International

Team were currently unable to travel to China for planned engagement activities due to school closures in affected areas. Further to this, the Committee NOTED that planned Summer School activity remained in limbo due to the extent of the coronavirus outbreak across Europe.

- 6.1.5 The Committee DISCUSSED the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on International activities, and NOTED the need to maintain positive working relationships with partners through remote methods.
- 6.1.6 The Committee NOTED that the Customer Records Management System (CRM) would be made available to users across the College following the planned roll-out of Office 365 in March 2020. The Head of Commercial advised the Committee that going forward the CRM would be incredibly important for maintaining relationship with existing partners and industry.

### ***The Head of Commercial left the meeting***

#### **6.2 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: COMMERCIAL INCOME**

- 6.2.1 The Committee NOTED that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, at its meeting on 10 March 2020, would consider an internal audit review which provided independent assurance on the design and operational effectiveness of the controls in relation to commercial income. The Chair advised the Committee that given the reports relevance its remit the Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee was content for the report to be shared with members.
- 6.2.2 The Committee DISCUSSED the recommendations highlighted within the report and NOTED that further updates on commercial income would be reported through the quarterly Commercial, International and Alternative Funding Update.
- 6.2.3 The Committee NOTED that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee would continue to monitor management action and progress against the recommendations outlined within the report.

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

### **7.1 BRAND AND REPUTATION UPDATE**

- 7.1.1 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.
- 7.1.2 The Committee NOTED that the College had developed its first Annual Review 2019, which would be published on the week commencing 16 March 2020. The Head of Communication, Policy and Research informed the Committee that an electronic version of the Annual Review would be circulated to all staff and students, and a wide range of external stakeholders.

7.1.3 The Committee NOTED that a major projects list and performance dashboard had been reviewed by the Senior Management Team. The Head of Communication, Policy and Research advised the Committee that the major projects list currently outlined 33 major change projects, delivery of which would be monitored by the Project Management Officer. The Committee DISCUSSED the major projects list and AGREED that the Board may welcome an opportunity to review the list at a future meeting.

## 7.2 DEEP DIVE: EDINBURGH COLLEGE WEBSITE

7.2.1 The Committee NOTED an update on the Edinburgh College website which was originally launched after merger in October 2012. The Head of Communication, Policy and Research advised the Committee that the website had undergone various re-designs since 2012 to align with the College brand.

7.2.2 The Committee NOTED the current position of the website and the challenges faced by the Marketing Team to ensure web content was consistent and accessible (in line guidance for public sector bodies<sup>1</sup>). The Head of Communication, Policy and Research informed the Committee that, although there were a number of challenges, the College website had received a 16% increase in visitors over the past year.

7.2.3 The Committee NOTED the response of the College to the current challenges and its work to improve the existing website. Further to this, the Head of Communication, Policy and Research advised the Committee that a project team, reporting to the Senior Management Team, had been established to oversee the development of a new website - and a procurement exercise had been undertaken.

7.2.4 The Committee welcomed ongoing developments to the existing website, and DISCUSSED the following in relation to the proposed development of a new website:

- (i) The procurement advice to approach known suppliers not on the APUC framework following an unsuccessful tender process - in alignment with the APUC guidelines;
- (ii) the flexibility offered by purchasing an 'off the shelf' website development option, as used by other Scottish colleges;
- (iii) the timescale associated with the development of a new website - to support student recruitment for January 2021 starters;
- (iv) the need to ensure that the course offer made by the College was appropriate, so the time promoting desirable courses could be maximised;
- (v) the position of business development of the website, and the importance of the platform for acquiring new business.

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<sup>1</sup> September 2020 - Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps>

- 7.2.5 The Committee AGREED to endorse the direction of travel outlined by the Head of Communication, Policy and Research in relation to the website. The Chair advised the Committee that further updates on the development of a new website would be provided through the Brand & Reputation Update.

## **8. HORIZON SCANNING REPORT**

- 8.1 The Committee NOTED a Horizon Scanning Report which outlined major political, economic, social, technological, legal and/or environmental developments that could impact on the five strategic plan aims of the college. The Head of Communications, Policy and Research advised the Committee that further to this, the report also indicated what the College was doing to address these impacts.
- 8.2 The Committee NOTED that, on 23 January 2020, the UK Parliament's European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 had been granted Royal Assent. The Head of Communications, Policy and Research informed the Committee that the Act made legal provision for the UK to leave the EU on 31 January 2020, and for the UK Government to negotiate future working arrangement with the EU Parliament during the transition period.
- 8.3 The Committee DISCUSSED the impact of EU withdrawal on current and prospective college students, College staff, College finances and the wider City and regional economy. The Head of Communications, Policy and Research advised the Committee that the College had not witnessed an adverse impact on EU student numbers as yet, although recruitment would continue to be monitored as changes following EU withdrawal were implemented.

## **9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

- 9.1 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA PLANNER 2019/20
- 9.1.1 The Committee NOTED an agenda planner for the academic year, which aimed to provide members with an opportunity to review upcoming items of business. The Chair advised the Committee that it was important to follow an appropriate plan of work in order to ensure that future agendas cover all areas within the remit of the Committee.

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

- 10.1 The next meeting of the Corporate Development Committee shall take place on 26 May 2020, in the Boardroom, Milton Road Campus.

***Meeting closed at 17:05***