EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 28 MARCH 2017

14:00 Boardroom, Milton Road Campus

Present: Neal Black; Bob Downie; Alan Johnston (Chair); Azra Sharif-Qayyum; Ian Young.

In attendance: Annette Bruton; Alex Craig; Michael Jeffrey; Ian McKay; Sheena Stone (Observer); Marcus Walker (Clerk); Richard Whetton.

1   WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1   Apologies were received from Bruce Cassidy.

1.2   The Committee Chair welcomed Sheena Stone, the newly appointed Fundraising Development Manager for the Edinburgh College Development Trust, to the meeting as an observer.

2   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1   The Committee NOTED that, in relation to Item 7; City Regional Deal, the Committee Chair sat on the Court of the University of Edinburgh and was a member of its City Regional Deal Committee.

3   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1   The Board APPROVED the minutes from 25 January 2017 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 Media Training *(Minute 6.5/19.01.16 refers)*

The Committee NOTED that media training for selected members of senior management and the Board would be developed through the Business Transformation Plan, under the Leadership Development PID. The Assistant Principal (Income & Product Development) informed the Committee that a more detailed update would come forward to the next meeting.

5   COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

5.1   The Committee NOTED a draft Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy, presented by the Head of Corporate Development, which would replace the Communications & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Marketing Strategy previously agreed by the Board.

5.2   The Committee NOTED that the document outlined the college's strategic approach to communications, marketing and engagement in support of the achievement of organisational objectives. The Head of Corporate Development advised the Committee that the Strategy proposed the following vision for the College's approach to Communication, Marketing and Engagement:

"To grow awareness and understanding of Edinburgh College and build its reputation as: a leading regional FE college that works closely with stakeholders, communities and partners, providing students with a wide range of study options to develop the skills they need to succeed; a place of work where staff can thrive and develop their careers; a trusted partner that meets the needs of industry and positively engages with surrounding communities; and an institution that is supporting the delivery of a prosperous economy."

5.3   The Committee NOTED the strategic aims, key drivers and principles that would underpin the college's strategic approach to communications, marketing and engagement. The Head of Corporate Development outlined the key strategic objectives within the strategy, as agreed by the Executive Team.

5.4   The Committee welcomed the draft Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy and DISCUSSED the following points:

(i)   The level of consultation around the strategy and the 'communicative elements' discussed with key stakeholders, including the Students' Association;
(ii)   the six objectives outlined, particularly 'Objective 1' and the general awareness of the college brand and its core values internally and externally;
(iii)   the addition of testimonials from college partners within the strategy, to highlight the work of the college further;
(iv)   the need for greater emphasis on alumni and a consistent message around the Development Trust;
(v)   the college's aspirations around a systematic approach to market intelligence and horizon scanning;
(vi)   the resource implications for implementing the Strategy, and the awareness of the Committee of restrictions on spending in this area;

(vii)   the position of the college as a leader in the Scottish and UK further education sectors, and the need to make this clear in the Strategy.

5.5   The Committee NOTED that the Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy was a high-level strategic document, and would crosslink with a full suite of college strategies in the future.

5.6   The Committee APPROVED the Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy, subject to minor amendments as outlined under Paragraph 5.4.

5.7   The Committee AGREED that, in order to monitor progress on the implementation of the Strategy, an action plan should come forward to the next meeting of the External Engagement Committee for review.

6   COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP REPORT

6.1   The Committee NOTED an update on Edinburgh College's work as part of the regions Community Planning Partnership (CPP), which included a national and regional report from the Head of Corporate Development.

6.2   The Committee NOTED draft guidance on how public bodies should look to respond to the regulations around participation requests, a key part of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Head of Corporate Development advised the Committee that the overall aim of the Act was to further empower the notion of community planning by encouraging and giving the means for further community participation in public life. A key element of this included encouraging community bodies to try and take ownership of land and buildings, and for public bodies to make further attempts to consult with communities.

6.3   The Committee DISCUSSED the following aspects of participation requests, and the national focus on community participation:

(i)   The systems required by the college to track such requests going forward, including the appointment of a lead officer;
(ii)   the definition of a community group, and where organisations such as charities will be required to comply;
(iii)   the potential benefits in terms of community engagement, and the college's history of positive engagement around shared spaces;
(iv)   the need to incorporate such requirements into the Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy.

6.4   The Committee welcomed the update on participation requests and looked forward to further updates on the implementation of new regulations in due course.

6.5   The Committee NOTED recent activity with the three regional CPPs: East Lothian; City of Edinburgh; and, Midlothian.

6.6   The Committee DISCUSSED the requirements placed on college attendance at CPP meetings, and the difficulties (in terms of reputation and workload) of maintaining a consistent voice across these multilayered engagements. The Principal informed the

Committee that the Executive Team were aware of such issues and were monitoring senior level engagement with CPPs to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place.

7 CITY REGIONAL DEAL REPORT

7.1   The Committee NOTED a report on progress with regards to the City Regional Deal. The Depute Principal informed the Committee that the six local authorities which constitute the Edinburgh and South East Scotland 'City' region were working collectively on a bid to the UK and Scottish Governments for a City Regional Deal.

7.2   The Committee NOTED that the college had been involved within sub-committees set-up around the key themes of; skills, infrastructure, culture, knowledge and innovation, housing and digital. The Depute Principal advised the Committee of progress to date, and the next step for project proposals within each of the sub-committee themes.

7.3   The Committee NOTED the strategic implications of the City Regional Deal for the college, and the need to align future bids with available skills and employability funding. The Depute Principal informed the Committee that particular consideration around curriculum planning would be required, as plans currently existed within the City Regional Deal to construct 50,000 new homes within the region.

7.4   The Committee DISCUSSED the following matters relating to the City Regional Deal:

(i)   The potential for an additional 600 apprenticeship per year, and how these would be split across colleges, local authorities and Skill Development Scotland (SDS);
(ii)   the college's focus on construction and digital, two key areas within the skills agenda;
(iii)   the disproportionate weighting of investment in the innovation agenda in comparison to the skills agenda;
(iv)   the potential for the college to position itself around innovation projects and formailse relationships by providing technical skills training.

7.5   The Committee NOTED that, regardless of the potential investment coming through the Regional City Deal, it was essential that the college continued to maintain an awareness of skills and employment trends in the region.

7.6   The Committee NOTED that as the City Regional Deal initiative continued to progress rapidly it would remain a standing item on the Committee's agenda.

8 MARKETING REPORT

8.1   The Committee NOTED a verbal update from the Assistant Principal (Income & Product Development) on marketing related activity within the college. The Assistant Principal informed members that the e-Prospectus, as presented to the Committee at its last meeting, had received more online traffic than any other college in the UK since its launch.

8.2 The Committee NOTED that the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science, Shirley Anne Somerville MSP, would be attending the college on 11 May 2017 to speak at the STEM Assured launch.

9 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT SUB-GROUPS

9.1 COMMERCIAL & INTERNATIONAL SUB-GROUP

9.1.1 Minutes 02.03.17

The Committee NOTED the Commercial & International Sub-Group minutes and actions arising from the meeting on 02 March 2017.

The Committee NOTED that the new Head of Commercial Development, Jane Grant, had attended the Sub-Group. The Committee Chair informed members that the Sub-Group had welcomed steps taken by the Executive to breakdown barrier between commercial and international under the new Head of Faculty.

The Committee DISCUSSED the financial benefits of the college's international work and the need to capitalise on the reputation of the Edinburgh College brand.

9.2 BOARD ENGAGEMENT SUB-GROUP

9.2.1 The Committee NOTED that the Board Engagement Sub-Group had not met since the last meeting of the Committee. The Vice Chair informed members that he had held discussions with the Head of Corporate Development to consider Board relations in the context the Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy.

10 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

10.1 None

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next meeting would be held at 14:00hrs on 23 May 2017 at the Milton Road Campus.