

## CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

### CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 07 APRIL 2020 AT 4:00 PM VIA SKYPE

#### **Present:**

Andrew Barnes (Chairman), Corrienne Peasgood (Principal), Jill Lanning, Noel Bartram, Andrea Blanchflower, Emily Staley, Nikki Gray, Bree Sherwood, Denise Troughton, Philip Richardson

#### **Attendees:**

Jerry White (Deputy Principal), Martin Colbourne (NES MD), Julia Buckland (Vice Principal, FE Curriculum and Quality), Clare Johnson (Clerk to the Corporation), Sue Millions (Administrator)

---

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Sophie Gray and Jonathan Barnard. Aiden Little was not in attendance.

#### **2. Declaration of Interest**

In the interest of transparency and in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Corporation, all Governors of the Corporation Board are asked to make a written declaration of relevant pecuniary interests on appointment. Governors were requested to make known any relevant pecuniary interests relating to any items on the agenda and it was noted that all declarations will be recorded.

There were no new declarations of interest given at the meeting.

#### **3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 31 March 2020** (Paper 02)

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2020 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

#### **4. CEO Report** (Paper 03)

The CEO Report, previously distributed, was fully discussed at the meeting and the following additional key points were highlighted:

The college is required to provide onsite provision for a limited number of students, and it was noted that those vulnerable students who have a social worker will be included in this provision in the summer term. This number could be in excess of 150 students, and maybe up to 200. The Principal, Jerry White and Julia Buckland will risk assess those in this category as soon as possible and the Principal will continue her daily meetings with Children's Services staff.

Ofqual have notified colleges that students due to take A Level and GCSE exams will be graded by their teachers and then ranked individually within each group of students. This ranking is particularly challenging for GCSE Maths and English as Ofqual currently expect this to be done as single cohorts, across all three sites, involving in excess of a thousand students and a significant number of staff over a two-week period. This won't be undertaken until the end of the week commencing 20 April at the earliest.

Additional support and guidance will be provided to those establishments with over 500 students. The grading information will then be submitted to the Awarding Organisation and uploaded into their data system and a 'raw' grade produced. It is hoped that the finalised grades will be given to all students no later than the usual results days in August.

Vocational and technical qualifications are far more complex and offered by a large number of Awarding Organisations. Ofqual are now working urgently with all sectors to explore options. It is hoped guidance will be provided in the next few weeks. Access to HE guidance to date has not been explicit enough and the final guidance is awaited. Emails have been sent to all students and a dedicated mailbox has been set up for students to email their queries.

Governors raised their concerns about one ranking per qualification per organisation, particularly in GCSE Maths and English, as they believe that this approach could be flawed as well as requiring a significant amount of work for staff. It was recognised that the College have outstanding teachers who are dedicated professionals and they will be working tirelessly to prepare the information Ofqual require.

It was noted that OfS have removed the cap on unconditional offers students made to students and a number of CCN students have now had a conditional offer turned into an unconditional offer from their preferred Universities. It was noted that CCN HE will not be changing their offers to applicants in this way.

The Principal reported that she has a weekly catch-up call with their link ESFA Manager, Lucy Walker. The ESFA have concerns about cashflow in general, but CCN are not a concern at the moment. Announcements are expected very soon on the ESFA's approach to the Adult Education Budget and it is possible that they will cease clawback on unearned AEB. Martin Colbourne informed the Board that the College made a £1.5m mid-year claim against the original £1.8m allocation. The risk to cashflow is included within the Risk Register and Martin Colbourne informed the meeting that he and his team are keeping a close eye on cash balances and the national funding position.

Students have been informed that even if they don't have exams and assessments this academic year, it is the skills and knowledge that they will acquire through continuing to learn that will support them in their progression and all students should be accessing their work from home, the majority through Blackboard Collaborate but other platforms and methods are also being used. The Principal informed the Board how quiet the College seems, but she is amazed by all the brilliant work being undertaken and made available online.

Safeguarding arrangements continue and an "Annex to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy" was previously circulated for Governors' consideration and approval. Following discussion on the policy, approval was given by all those present.

It was noted that the College have been approached by the NHS for a positioning of a possible field hospital on the Easton site, but this will not go ahead at the present time, but accommodation has been offered to N&N Hospital staff, if required. East Anglia Air Ambulance Service have also enquired about using training facilities, but no definite plans have yet been finalised.

The Risk Register will be a focus for the college leadership team next week and the key risks which are under review, relating to the current situation, were highlighted in the CEO's Report. The full Risk Register will be reviewed at a later date.

Governors asked if the way that the College is working now would mean that the College may do anything differently when the on-going situation is resolved. The Principal informed the Board that some changes are likely to be continued while some things will return to normal. It is likely that the use of on-line methods, e.g. for meetings and teaching and other ways of working will continue to be used in combination with more normal face-to-face approaches.

Governors asked if there is a gap in recording work undertaken, grading, etc. and it was noted that all staff are keeping an electronic trail of their interaction with students and are encouraged to continue to use track student progress. The Principal also noted that daily returns are forwarded to the DfE on student and staff physical attendance on site.

The question was asked if the current on-going issues will have an effect on the enrolment process for September 2020. The Principal informed Governors that the process will be elongated, and it is hoped that Ofqual will roll-out results earlier than the end of August so establishments can engage earlier with students. A strategic review will be undertaken in the coming weeks.

The full content of the report was received and noted.

The Chair thanked the Principal for her full and comprehensive report.

## 5. Finance Report

(Paper 04)

The content of the Finance Report was presented at the meeting. The full content of the report was noted and the following highlighted:

The latest management accounts for the seven months to the end of February 2020 were presented and they show a Year to Date operating deficit of £430k compared to a budgeted deficit of £451k, producing a favourable variance of £21k. It was noted that this does not reflect the situation post lockdown, but it was agreed that it was a good set of pre-Covid-19 accounts which shows a close to break-even position as at the end of February and close to the combined budget for seven months.

The following was highlighted:

- Apprenticeships - the funding outturn reports £5,017k resulting in a £340k favourable variance.
- Adult Education Budget - the outturn recognises a full year shortfall of £163k for core funding resulting in a £94k adverse variance to date.
- Tuition Fee Income - Adverse variances in commercial fees £106k, HE fees £242k and Adult loans £116k. The income recognised is based on actual invoices raised with a withdrawal estimate but no estimate for later year fees. A £69k favourable variance for Education contracts (ytd Nursing Associate £43k and £26k for prior year CITB fees).
- Staff Costs - Favourable variance £71k, Easton staff costs incurred by NES total £240k resulting in a £169k total adverse variance, this is as a result of large changes to staff sessional contracts and backfilling for Easton merger costs.
- NES Bought in Services - Adverse variance of £215k, Easton staff costs £266k (including redundancies and a £51k credit received for the August services).
- Redundancies - A favourable variance of £305k, costs incurred by NES total £26k.
- Legal & Professional - An adverse variance of £165k, a total of £145k is due to the Easton merger (£294k work at Easton for legal and professional fees partially offset by the £150k budget recognised in January).
- Payroll – is under budget.

Martin Colbourne informed the Board that the apprenticeship line pre-March was doing very well and in a favourable position. The tuition fees and adult income are both pressure areas. Marketing and communications have made savings, but these were expected. Income is on-track and payroll is breaking even. A good discipline is being seen around non-payroll.

It was noted that it is a comprehensive budget and will be the last set of accounts seen without the Coronavirus implications included.

The Principal informed the Board that the College can participate in the furlough process for some staff, e.g. those working in commercial funding areas but are still awaiting important national advice from the AoC.

It was noted that this is a complex issue, but time is on the College's side as the process is open until the end of April, for those eligible. In line with advice from the Cabinet Office for publicly funded bodies to continue to pay suppliers. The awarding organisations have been paid in full. Governors queried payments to suppliers such as cleaning and catering companies if they are furloughing their staff and claiming payment from the Government. Governors wanted to be reassured that those companies involved will not make a furlough claim and therefore be double funded. Governors asked for an update on the furlough process at the next meeting. It was noted that Hilary Bright, Head of HR, is keeping in touch with the national network and keeping an eye on the moving picture. The Principal agreed to provide an update summary to the next meeting with information already agreed.

The ESFA had agreed that the Integrated Financial Model submission could be deferred until the end of April. This is the new way of providing financial information from the college back to ESFA. The Principal informed the Board that the Principal of Suffolk New has requested that they submit the normal three-year return and it was proposed that CCN do the same. Following discussion, the Board gave their approval for the Principal to do the same and ask to submit the normal three-year plan with the ESFA.

The balance sheet was discussed, and the full content noted.

## **6. Fees Policy**

(Paper 05)

The paper previously distributed contains the fee level proposals for the College for forthcoming years. The Policy builds on the Fees considerations presented to the February Business Committee and following the merger with Easton College.

The paper summarises the agreed "principles" for each type of fee and provides proposals for the forthcoming years and the purpose of the paper is to set out the key fee rates of the 2020/21 FE course fees and eligibility statement to provide for effective advice and guidance to be provided to students for the upcoming academic year.

It was noted that the policy does not present 2021/22 HE fees, as the College are completing a small amount of additional analysis regarding HE fees alignment between both Norwich and Easton prior to making a proposal to Governors by mid-May. It was noted that the FE fees are published six months in advance and the HE fees, 18 months in advance. The question was asked when fees are seen by potential applicants, and it was noted that HE fees for 2021/22 will be agreed in late May (18 months in advance) and when published by UCAS will be the first time they are seen by eligible students.

Discussions followed on the proposals made and Governors were asked to consider each proposal and form an agreement on the fee levels to be set for the college fees and eligibility statement.

The following was discussed and agreed:

**Proposal 1** – CCN full-time classroom-based fee increases by 1.8% to £2,400. This will be a single fee across all sites. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 2** – The Access to HE fee rates are applied in 2020/21 based on the ESFA published rates set out in Table 1 of the Fees Policy document. This is the maximum rate possible. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 3** – To continue the principle that the fees for other (non-Access to HE) 19+ loan funded provision is calculated using the principle of using the ESFA published rates to determine the rate. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 4** – All examination registration fees are reviewed against the published awarding body costs for 2019/20 as these are a fixed cost and apply a 1.8% increase. It was noted that with the permission of the Principal the College can approve adjustments above the 1.8% figure where there is evidence that the 1.8% increase will not cover the awarding body fee increases. (i.e. awarding bodies have informed the college that fees will increase significantly after we have approved this policy). **Agreed.**

**Proposal 5** – It is proposed to increase 2020/21 fees by 1.8% as per Table 2 of the Fees Policy document. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 6** - For 2020/21 the international classroom based full time fee increases by 1.8% to £7829. Part-time students will be charged the non-funded fee rate from Table 2 of the Fees Policy document. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 7** – For 2020/21 the college will set the fees for levy paying employers and non-levy paying employers as set out in table 4 of the Fees Policy document, using the 5% contribution rate for non-Levy employers. It was noted that the College need to demonstrate that active discussions have taken place with employers. Governance formally recognised that fees can be competitive, but they can't afford to lose fees and that financial income is needed. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 8** – For 2020/21 the Executive Team have the ability to review and negotiate fees for apprenticeships to ensure the college remains competitive with employers. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 9** - For 2020/21 the college increase the 2019/20 funding rates by 1.8%. It was noted that the number of students applying fee matrix is in single figures. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 10** - The approach continues that additional support fees will be charged on top of the standard programme costs for 14-16 students, where deemed as a requirement of the college in order to effectively support the student. These will be calculated using the standard ALS costing procedures on the basis of direct costs (including staffing on-costs), plus a 15% management fee. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 11** - The college applies a 1.8% inflationary increase to Nursery fees (with rounding of increase to logical nearest £1 or £0.50 amounts for simplicity). It will be noted that some fees will be 1.6% up to 2% when rounded up / down. **Agreed.**

**Proposal 12** - For 2020/21 it is proposed that inflationary increases will be added to the residential costs as indicated in the table within the Fees Policy document. This will be the first time that residential fees have been considered. The question was asked as to whether all halls will be full, and it was noted that they will not be. Andrea Blanchflower suggested that the price is not a factor and the standard of accommodation is more important to students. She suggested that money could be spent on unfilled rooms as an investment. The Principal explained that more understanding is needed as the facilities were built for land-based investment, but it was agreed that price is not the driver. **Agreed.**

The volatility to the economy, post Covid-19, was discussed and it was noted that there may be flexibility in-year if necessary and this would be discussed with the Board, if required. The inherent risk was noted by Governors.

The full content of the Fees Policy was received and noted, and all proposals were formally agreed by all Governors present.

The Chair asked for thanks to be passed to Jerry White and the Registry team for their hard work and help with this process.

## **7. DigiTech Report** (Paper 06)

The DigiTech Report was previously distributed and in discussion the following key points were noted:

- It was noted that the Steering Group will be meeting this week and the full project programme and final costings will be discussed and finalised at a meeting taking place with the contractors and CCN on 9 April.
- The timeline will be running behind the original timeline provided and proposed occupancy will be moved to summer 2021 rather than May 2021.
- It was confirmed that the changes to the planned building being negotiated in order to reduce the original costings will not impact on students and their educational experience.
- The question was asked if the delay and changes will reduce the impact of the original plan and it was agreed that it would not.
- A further update will be provided following the meeting taking place on 9 April and the full content of the presentation was noted.

## **8. Items for Approval**

### **8.1 Cleaning Contract Extension** (Paper 07)

The current Contract with Churchills Contract Services, who provides City College Norwich and Norfolk Educational Services with cleaning services commenced on 1 September 2016. The initial contract length was for three years, expiring on 31 August 2019. The contract allowed for an extension for a further period of one year plus one year should the Group consider that the Contractor has achieved all service and performance standards during the duration of the contract. The contract was extended by one year until 31 August 2020. One further extension to the contract of one year remains.

It was noted that the incumbent has performed well, achieving good standards of cleaning and quality of service and NES are recommending that the contract is extended for an additional year.

The anticipated extension will commence on 1st September 2020 and run for 1 year, expiring on 31st August 2021. As this will be the last possible extension, a tender process will have to take place early 2021 in order for a contract to be in place by 1 September 2021.

Following discussion, it was formally agreed that the Board recommends the 12-month extension and the tender agreement will be signed by the Chair when convenient.

### **8.2 Catering Contract Extension** (Paper 08)

The current catering Contract between Transforming Education in Norfolk (“TEN”) and Edwards and Blake Limited commenced on 1 August 2017. The initial contract length was for three years, expiring on 31 July 2020. The contract allows for an extension for a further period of one year, plus one year, should the Group consider that the Contractor has achieved all service and performance standards during the duration of the contract.

The incumbent has achieved demonstrable improvements in the quality of service, compared to the previous contractor and NES are therefore recommending that the contract is extended for an additional year.

The anticipated extension will commence on 1 August 2020 and run for 1 year, expiring on 31 July 2021, with a possibility of extending for a further 1 year.

Following discussion, it was formally agreed that the Board recommends the 12-month extension and the tender agreement will be signed by the Chair when convenient.

### **8.3 Staff Forum Election Procedure** (Paper 09)

The paperwork, associated with the Staff Forum Election Procedure, was previously distributed and has been revised and amended by the Clerk to the Corporation.

Following discussion, it was noted that the changes have been made to enable a Staff Forum to be set up at Easton, in the same way as it is at both CCN and Paston sites.

All those present agreed the proposed changes.

## **9. Meeting Minutes**

### **9.1 FE Student Forum**

The notes from the FE Student Forum Meetings held in February and March 2020 were previously circulated and the full content noted.

### **9.2 Student Parliament**

The minutes from the Student Parliament Meeting held on 19 March 2020 were previously circulated and the full content noted.

## **10. Chairman's Remarks**

The Chair thanked all staff for their continuing hard work and commitment to the College and its students.

The Chair asked the questions of Governors as to whether they are happy to continue in the format discussed at last week's meeting? Everyone said they were content with the programme going forward.

Jill Lanning informed Governors that she attended the AoC Webinar for Governors on the Covid-19 impact on governance. Governors were informed that all webinars that AoC have produced can be found on-line and downloaded.

It was suggested that approval from Governors can be given via Passageways, not just verbally, if necessary, for a number of important issues.

## **11. Any Other Business**

Andrea Blanchflower asked the Board to be more aware as phishing and cyber-attacks are on the increase and the Principal agreed that she will invite John Pollitt to provide a verbal update at the next meeting.

## **12. Confidentiality**

There were no items deemed confidential at today's meeting.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

The next CCN Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 21 April 2020 at 4:00pm, via Skype. This will be in the form of a verbal update. A Skype invitation will be issued before the meeting.

All business having been concluded; the meeting was closed at 5.50 pm.



Andrew Barnes 04/22/2020 14:55 BST

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....  
**(Chairman)**