

## CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

### CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 31 MARCH 2020 AT 4:00PM VIA SKYPE

#### Present:

Andrew Barnes (Chairman), Corrienne Peasgood (Principal), Jill Lanning, Noel Bartram, Andrea Blanchflower, Emily Staley, Nikki Gray, Jonathan Barnard, Bree Sherwood

#### 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)

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#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Denise Troughton. Sophie Gray and Aiden Little were not in attendance. Philip Richardson had connection issues and it was agreed that Jill Lanning would contact him in the near future to provide an update of the meeting.

#### 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. Proposal for Governance from April to July 2020 (Paper 02)

The Principal confirmed that face to face delivery had stopped on site on 18 March 2020 except for those children of critical workers and vulnerable young people. The procurement of BlackBoard Collaborate was completed to provide staff and students with a software for online working.

The Principal also confirmed that as of 23 March 2020 Ego, Eaton Vale, International Aviation Academy and the Paston site had all fully closed. Easton Site remains partially open to provide animal care.

The Principal also confirmed that the College were in regular discussions with Norfolk County Council, Eastern Region AoC group and the AoC Nationally which has been very beneficial for support and information sharing.

The Principal informed Governors that she and the Chair have reviewed the way in which governance can operate for the rest of the academic year using the following key principles.

- Meet requirements of the Code of Good Governance for English Colleges.
- Abide by government guidance during the Coronavirus outbreak.
- Focus on key matters only and pause reporting on others.
- Keep report writing to a minimum, recognising that the situation is changing so
- quickly information will be out of date before it is presented.

It has therefore been proposed to review the 'must' / 'should' items in the Code of Good Governance and any additional items from the approved Schedule of Business for 2019/20. This information is available in Annex 1 of the document previously circulated to all Governors and focus will be on the items highlighted in the paper, going forward.

It is proposed to hold monthly meetings for all governors to discuss the papers highlighted in 'Reports to Governors April to July 2020' (Annex 2), supplemented by monthly verbal update meetings. The proposed meeting schedule going forward is:

- Tuesday 7 April – meeting with papers
- Tuesday 21 April – verbal updates
- Tuesday 5 May – meeting with papers
- Tuesday 19 May – verbal updates
- Tuesday 2 June – meeting with papers
- Tuesday 16 June – verbal updates
- Tuesday 30 June – meeting with papers
- Tuesday 7 July – meeting with papers

All meetings will begin at 4:00pm, via Skype, unless otherwise informed.

The Principal asked Governors whether this proposal would provide them with enough information to meet their governance needs during the Coronavirus outbreak and a positive response was received by those present. It was agreed that the Board trust the Executive Team to take the necessary and appropriate actions during the outbreak but are more than happy to provide support and advice where available and appropriate.

It was noted that if Governors access their CCN email accounts (@ccn.ac.uk) they will be able to view the daily updates provided by the Principal and her team.

Following discussion, the Plan for Governance between April and July 2020 was unanimously approved by all present.

It was agreed that the Principal and Executive Team will contact some, or all Governors, if there is a need to seek advice and / or obtain Board agreement for any proposed action.

#### **4. Finance Report and Emerging Picture**

(Paper 03)

The content of the Finance Report previously circulated highlights the issues featured in recent discussions between Martin Colbourne and members of the Business Committee. It was pointed out that the report does not take any account of the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak. This will be reflected in the future. The full content of the report was noted and the following highlighted:

The latest management accounts for the six months to the end of January 2020 were presented and they show a Year to Date operating deficit of £396k compared to a budgeted deficit of £24k, producing an adverse variance of £373k but with a favourable variance of £239k for January 2020.

The full year to date accounts were compared to the emerging picture and the information highlighted in the grey and pink columns within the income and expenditure accounts for six months to January 2020.

It was noted that the emerging picture will change from the effect of the current situation and a review of the current position will be viewed at the next meeting.

Governors were informed that the Adult Clawback for 2019/20 will not be reclaimed by the ESFA and it is believed that more financial information will be made available to colleges in the coming days. Governments grants for 16-18 are locked in but it was noted that the loss of apprenticeship income could be in the region of £150k; Adult Education in the region of £100k and the loss of commercial income could be closer to £200k. Financial staff are working through what this means to the emerging picture. The College is working with Apprenticeship employees as they deal with the furlough process for their employees and therefore not delivering their apprenticeship programmes. Any income which may be lost in respect of apprenticeship programmes was noted.

It was noted that the off-the-job training element could continue. Jerry White informed the Board that some apprentices have already been made redundant. Conversations with commercial, leisure and learning organisations are continuing about the impact of the current situation going forward.

The question was asked as regard to Lloyds Bank attitude to the covenants on loans already in place and Martin Colbourne reminded the Board that four new covenants have been put in place at the time of the merger with Easton. Of these, the one causing concern is the debt to EBIT measure which requires CCN to have minimum cashflow of £5m.

Support has been received from the ESFA and the Relationship Manager at Lloyds, who is having four weekly meetings with both the Principal and NES MD for the foreseeable future; they have indicated that they currently have no concerns over the College's finances. It is not yet clear what Government financial support will be provided to Colleges.

The full emerging picture was discussed, and the full content noted. Those present agreed to deal with the situations as and when they arise, and the current finance situation will be reviewed and updated at each future meeting.

## **5. Chair's Summary of Curriculum and Standards Committee** (Paper 04)

As the Curriculum and Standards Committee did not meet formally in March 2020, given the priority to respond to the emerging and changing requirements, members were asked via e-mail, for their comment or questions on the papers that would have been discussed at the meeting and any received were summarised and the main points from the committee papers were collated for the Board's consideration and the following highlighted:

- Quality Report
- Teaching and Learning Report
- HE Report
- Easton Campus
- Curriculum Strategy

The Principal noted that this will be the last report for this academic year in this format and key areas will be monitored online.

It was noted that before the college closed to students some momentum was being seen in quality improvement at Easton and there was a sense that things were moving in the right direction of travel. It is hoped to kick-start the momentum again soon. Preparations for next year and CPD can be undertaken by managers and staff on-line after the Easter break and if any social distancing measures are removed for staff, it may be possible for some face-to-face training to be put in place.

Jerry White informed the Board that the National Achievement Rate tables received last week highlighted the national achievements for the preceding academic year compared to those at CCN.

It was noted that there were no surprises within the tables and as previously discussed a national 5% drop in achievement rates for A Levels was mirrored by CCN. CCN's apprenticeship achievement rate stands at 70%, 4-5% above the national average.

The Principal informed the Board that Colleges have been informed that no national data for 2019/20 will be published but college will continue with their own internal data to show to Ofsted when they visit.

FE Update – Julia Buckland informed the Board that all FE students are now accessing their learning online with some vulnerable students accessing learning on site.

All staff have risen to the challenge and everyone is changing their ways of working. It was noted that the college are very fortunate to have such dedicated and positive staff.

It was noted that the college is not required to deliver this learning, but it does provide structure for students. The College is still awaiting Ofqual's guidance on what has to be submitted in order to arrive at grades for GCSEs and A Levels, but this is likely to involve significant work by relevant staff.

It was noted that students who do not hold EHCPs but are considered vulnerable have been identified by Helen Richardson-Hulme and her team so that they can ensure that these students receive telephone well-being checks.

The Principal was asked if any decision had been made on the introduction of T Levels from September 2020 and it was noted that staff involved are using the draft specifications to put together lesson plans, etc. It is hoped that information will be received in the near future.

Julia Buckland informed the Board that staff are ready and would be upset if the introduction was deferred to a later date.

The full content of the Report was noted.

## **6. Chairman's Remarks**

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

DigiTech Building – it was noted that it is hoped that the contract will be finalised and signed in the next few weeks.

Norfolk Academies – all formal rebrokerage documents have been signed and Wayland Academy have transferred to Inspiration Trust and Wayland Junior Academy to Corvus Trust, both with effect from 1 April 2020. The transfer of Attleborough and Fakenham Academies to Sapientia Trust is on-going and a final date will be formalised as soon as possible. The Chair informed the Board that what happens in relation to the TEN Group and CCN will be discussed and finalised in the autumn term.

## **7. Confidentiality**

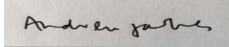
There were no items deemed confidential at today's meeting.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next CCN Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 17 April 2020 at

4:00pm, via Skype. A Skype invitation will be issued before the meeting.

All business having been concluded; the meeting was closed at 5:30 pm.



Andrew Barnes 04/20/2020 12:35 BST

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