



## CAPITAL CITY COLLEGE GROUP BOARD: 22<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2020

### TELEPHONE CONFERENCE MINUTES

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	Alastair Da Costa (Chair), Roy O'Shaughnessy (CEO), Sarah Ebanja, Amelia Sussman, Maarten Zuurmond, Amanda Dickens, Mel Brookstone, Anthony Smith, Chris Hyams, Shane Chowen, Sharon Saxton, Sanna Jordansson, Lord David Triesman, Keyan O'Donnell, Lisa Weaver-Lambert
<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	Graham Drummond (Clerk), Kurt Hintz, Rachael White
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	None
<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	None

#### 1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted and approved as a correct record.

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING

The Board noted the following:

- With respect to item 2, the CEO and Director of Governance's performance targets were circulated on 8<sup>th</sup> April;
- With respect to item 7 and the FE Commissioner's visit, a response to the draft report had been submitted prior to the deadline of 24<sup>th</sup> April. The final version of the report has yet to be received. The Director of Governance will chase for a response.

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All other matters arising were included within the agenda.

#### 3. BOARD ORGANISATIONAL BUSINESS

A membership update report was considered and received. It is the view of the Search Committee that the following independent members continue to bring relevant and up to date professional expertise required by the Board and that they are to be re-appointed for the following terms of office:

- Shane Chowen to be appointed for four-years, as of 31<sup>st</sup> July;
- Amelia Sussman to be appointed for three years, as of 31<sup>st</sup> July;
- Anthony Smith to be appointed for three years, as of 31<sup>st</sup> July;
- Lord David Triesman to be appointed for two years, as of 31<sup>st</sup> July.

The Board approved these recommendations.

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The Search Committee has met on three occasions since the Board's last meeting and has considered the current governance arrangements in some depth. The committee is of the view that the Board should consider altering its governance arrangements so that it can take greater ownership of quality issues, and strengthen the lines of accountability for senior leaders with respect to group quality. The following additional measures were also proposed:

- The adoption of some guiding principles to ensure that the Board's governance arrangements are fit for purpose. One of these principles is a one college approach to the leadership and governance of the Group;
- With the anticipated fall in revenue associated with activities currently managed within Capital City College Training (CCCT), a number of options are being considered with

respect to its role. With this in mind, it is the view of the Search Committee that the decision to establish a separate education board to oversee CCCT should be reviewed;

- The Board is to consider the inclusion of the oversight of governance within its current committee structure.

The Board approved the following recommendations:

- The principles as detailed within section 3.1 of the report are to be adopted;
- A quality oversight group is to be established which is responsible for:
  - monitoring quality at group level and holding senior leaders to account for the delivery of a consistently high standard of teaching and learning;
  - co-ordinating the role played by education boards. From September onwards they will be asked to consider and advise on specific issues relevant to their particular colleges;

An initial draft set of terms of reference for the quality oversight group are to be adopted. These will be reviewed by the oversight group and brought back to the Board for formal approval;

- Education Boards are to continue to fulfil their current role for the remaining part of the calendar year. A review of their role will be carried out in January 2021;
- A revised set of terms of reference for the Search Committee are to be adopted, as detailed within the report;
- To note that a set of terms of reference will be drafted for the finance oversight group and will be recommended for approval by the Board in due course.

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A paper outlining proposed changes to the Board's committee membership was considered and received. The changes were approved.

A question was asked about how the Board will ensure that its committees and oversight groups do not operate in isolation. It was noted that the Board receives reports on issues from each committee or oversight group, and that the Director of Governance attends all meetings to ensure that the Board is kept abreast of key issues as they arise.

#### **4. INTERNAL AUDIT SCHEDULE**

Subsequent to a meeting between the newly appointed internal audit service (RSM), senior leaders and the Chair of the audit committee, an internal audit schedule for the remaining part of the calendar year, was considered and received. It was further noted that initial discussions also took place about the internal audit service returning to the provision of a full assurance service and it was noted that in the view of the audit committee this should commence for 2020/21.

#### **5. QUALITY OVERSIGHT**

A quality update providing a summary of the Group's approach to teaching, learning and assessment since the start of lockdown was considered and received. The following was noted:

- Teaching staff have been working and continue to work on the submission of estimated grades to awarding bodies. This process is due to complete on 17<sup>th</sup> June at which point the final, moderated grades will be submitted;
- In the most part, online teaching will cease in the second week of June and in some cases has done so already. The chart which gave participation data on the second page of the report was therefore close to being the full year data. The level of unmarked registers is significantly lower at Westminster Kingsway, however it was noted that this was due to the way in which data is collected and processed rather than an aberration in performance;
- Government guidance allows 16-18 learners groups who have exams in 20/21 and apprentices to return to college in June. Planning is taking place as to how and when this will take place. The way in which students who are studying for licence to practice qualifications will be allowed to complete their courses is also being considered;
- With respect to enrolment for 2020/21, the use of online processes has been brought forward and will start in July. Where possible, enrolment will be carried out online without the need for face to face contact, however all three colleges have traditionally relied on a

high proportion of 'walk-in' enrolments and ways in which this can continue are being planned. It was further noted that the Group is moving to the use of EBS (a Management Information System owned by Tribal) across all sites;

- It is anticipated that whilst there will be a return to face to face teaching in September, social distancing restrictions and strict cleaning protocols will be in place. The number of students allowed into buildings will also need to be restricted; online learning will therefore continue to form a significant part of the learning experience for the foreseeable future.

The risk associated with meeting enrolment targets was noted, as well as with ensuring that students are engaged with the blended approach to learning, and do not withdraw from courses because of the reduced proportion of face to face contact. The Board discussed these issues and emphasized the importance of ensuring that the design of the Group's curriculum offer was sufficiently nimble to cater for students whose aim will be to re-enter the workforce. The following was discussed:

- The issue of whether the Group should consider reducing fees because of the reduction in the amount of face to face teaching. For the majority of students, this is not an issue because their fees are remitted, however for some students e.g. HE students this may be an issue which will need further consideration;
- The level of demand for courses will need to be monitored very closely, with those receiving little or no demand being closed, or merged into other courses early on in the academic year. It was further noted that some courses such as Health and Social Care are receiving an increase in demand as applicants respond to employment trends. Data in relation to applications is monitored and informs the nature of marketing activities and campaigns;
- At a local level, the impact of the pandemic will continue to impact the most disadvantaged members of society in a disproportionate manner. The Group will need to be nimble in responding to government funding streams from non-traditional sources, such as from the Department of Work and Pensions to deliver training and education that responds to these needs;
- Students who have not achieved at least a grade 4 in their GCSE English or Maths as part of the estimated grade process will be given an opportunity to take the examination. Also, all students are being contacted to confirm their progression intentions and if necessary arrangements are being put in place to ensure that their progress is not adversely affected by the pandemic.

It was view of the student board member that the online learning experience since lockdown has mostly been a positive one. Experiences have varied with some students responding better than others. It was further noted that for a lot of students, motivation has been an issue and the ability for teachers to provide inspiration online is limited.

The Board noted that the Government will be issuing a white paper on Further Education in the Autumn, as well as a response to the Augar Review of Higher Education.

The Chair concluded this agenda item, by asking members whether a further meeting should be organised in June to discuss some of the issues raised as part of this agenda item. For example, the extent to which the Group is adapting its curriculum to the current environment is an issue that may need to be considered in greater depth. It was agreed that the Director of Governance would find a mutually convenient date for board members to discuss strategic issues in a more open manner.

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## 6. STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT

An update report was considered and received. The CEO presented the report and started by acknowledging the work and commitment of staff in these challenging times.

- Members of the Group Leadership Team (GLT) have met with the trade unions as part of a working group arrangement, to discuss how staff will return to work at college sites. A return will only take place when assurances can be provided that tests (including the tests highlighted by trade unions at a national level) can be met. As of yet, no date has been agreed for this return, however it is anticipated that the Kings Cross and Angel sites will be opened first so that some initial face to face teaching can take place for 16-18 A Level

students. It was further noted that all staff, including the trade unions are keen to find a safe way for staff and students to return to college sites;

- The GLT has put a communication plan in place which includes a weekly update to all staff, a bi-weekly conference call led by the CEO with all staff and a letter from the CEO every three weeks. Forums with students have also been held so that the student voice can inform decision making.

Update reports on the Soho and Regents Park sites were appended. It was noted that:

- A pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) process has been carried out with respect to identifying an architect for the potential re-build of the Regents Park site. A list of four firms has been identified who will shortly receive the tender pack for the final shortlisting process. It is anticipated that a recommendation for appointment will be made to the Board's July meeting, with a full proposal for the site to be brought to the Board's meeting in December; RO
- With respect to the Soho site, Westminster City Council have informed the Group that all their capital investment has been put on hold. Due to this, the project to re-develop the site may need to be reviewed. The Board will be kept informed of this review, which may include a re-focus of the Group's commercial strategy towards lettings of excess space, once restrictions with respect to the lockdown have been relaxed. The Board will be kept informed of any development in this regard as well as the Group's commercial strategy which needs to ensure that between 4% and 14% of total income is derived from sources other than from public expenditure. RO

With respect the executive principal position, it was noted that a recruitment process had taken place, but no appointment has been made yet. This decision had been endorsed by the Search Committee. The recruitment process will re-commence at the start of the academic year with a view that a permanent appointee will start in January '21. The Board emphasized the importance of this role going forward, and it was agreed that members would be kept informed of progress with respect to the associated recruitment process. RO

The CEO informed members that the budgeting process for 2020/21 had commenced and the following was highlighted:

- Currently the Group's cash in hand days is around 40 days. The intention is to improve this to between 60-65 days;
- The intention is set a budget which ensures that the payroll to turnover ratio is 65%;
- Changes to staffing arrangements which had originally been planned within CIC (including some student services arrangements) have not been made within this financial year and therefore the resultant savings will not be realised. Despite this, the intention is to agree a budget for the Group which will result in a break-even position within 2020/21. Options to deliver the required savings prior to the end of July are being considered, including the possibility of conducting a voluntary redundancy programme. It was further noted that:
  - Trade Unions will be consulted about any proposals to make staff savings, and employee views will also be sought through other means as well, such as employee forums;
  - Senior leaders will seek to reduce the risk of knowledge and skills loss as much as possible, as well as the impact on the quality of service provided to students.

## 7. FINANCE OVERSIGHT

The management accounts as at the end of month 8 were considered and received. The following was noted:

- The impact of COVID-19 is anticipated to impact on the Group negatively by £2m in the year with the full year operating deficit forecast to be a £4.6m deficit;
- The EBITDA position is forecast to be positive at £5.8m, and it is anticipated that the Group will move back into good financial health for the year ending July 2020, as defined by the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA);
- Tight controls in expenditure remain in place, and included within the report was an updated action plan on progress in achieving planned savings and efficiencies. At the time of the meeting, there were no unknown reasons why the last four months of the financial year should not remain on profile, with respect to income or expenditure. It was further noted that an internal audit of financial controls would take place in October;

- Compared to other colleges within the sector, the Group was coping well with the impact of the pandemic. It is known that some colleges have had to ask banks for credit facilities, in order fulfil salary commitments.

With respect to the 20/21 budget it was noted that senior leaders would be in a position to report on this in more detail by mid-June. The financial oversight group will be meeting to discuss the budget prior to the Board's next formal meeting in July. Included within this budget will be summary details of capital and IT expenditure, however it was requested that an initial £2m of IT capital expenditure and £1m of estates capital expenditure is approved by the Board, so that the facilities and IT department can place purchase orders to prepare for students and staff to return to college sites, in a safe manner. This request was approved.

It was further noted that as a result of national negotiations between the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) and National Education Union (NEU) the following pay settlement has been agreed for sixth form teachers for this financial year:

- 1.5% from 1 September, 2019
- a further 1.25% from 1 April, 2020

It was noted that this pay award has a cost implication of £81k on this year's accounts, but has been accrued within the budget. In line with the Board's practice to honour nationally negotiated pay settlements, the pay award to sixth form teachers was approved.

#### **8. NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT RATE TABLES (NART)**

A report was considered and received. The following was noted:

- CCCG's overall achievement rate is 2% below the national average for General Further Education Colleges (GFEC) in 18/19.

#### **9. INTERNAL AUDIT SCOPING REPORT**

The scoping reports for funding assurance and sub-contracting internal audits were noted and received.

*The next formal meeting will be on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 9:30am*

Signed as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_

Alastair Da Costa, Chair of the Board