

## 1.1 BOARD MINUTES COMPANY CONFIDENTIAL

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 10.00am -13.00pm, Work.Life Holborn

**Present:** Baroness Nicky Morgan (NM) (Chair)  
Dame Julia Cleverdon (DJC)  
Mohammed Samir (MS), Virtual  
David Baldwin (DB)  
Fiona Millar (FM)  
Neil McLean (NML)  
Ashwin Mistry (AM)  
Oli de Botton, Chief Executive (OdB)  
John Yarham, Deputy Chief Executive (JY)

**Apologies:** Mo Isap (MI)  
Ife Awotunbo (IA)  
Sara Mohideen, Internal Operations Senior Manager (SM)

**In attendance:** Paul Lewis, Chief of Strategy and Communications (PL)  
Nicola Hall, Director of Education (NH)  
Kevin Ronan, Director of HR (KR) Virtual  
Elizabeth Kingsley, Head of Operations (EK) Virtual  
Alice Coventry, EA to CEO/DCEO (AC)

### Notes

#### 1. Welcome and Introduction

NM opened the meeting and welcomed the group. The Board welcomed FM to her first board meeting.

NM informed the Board that DJC has agreed to extend her term as a Non-Executive Director at CEC and that the extension has been approved by the Nominations Committee. Board members expressed their happiness at this news.

##### 1.1. Minutes from the Last Meeting

The minutes from the board meeting on 29.11.23 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

##### 1.2. Table of Actions

The Board discussed the open actions.

##### 1.3 Committee Minutes

###### 1.3.1 Audit Committee

The Board noted the minutes and that it was the first Committee chaired by AM.

**Action:** EK/AC to arrange for AM and NM to meet with the audit partner before the next Audit Committee meeting.

###### 1.3.2 Impact & Evaluation Committee

The Board noted the minutes and acknowledged the very clear trends and messaging coming through from the data.

## 2. Company Update

### 2.1. Performance Overview

OdB gave an update on highlights from the past quarter and the top three strategic risks/opportunities.

The Board had a discussion around challenges/issues surrounding these strategic risks/opportunities.

**Action:** OdB/JY to update on the three strategic risks/opportunities at the next meeting.

The Board shared their desire for a clearer understanding of what is meant by 'skills' and discussed the different aspects of skills. The Board agreed that a future session would be useful.

**Action:** AC to add a session on skills to future Board meeting agenda.

NH gave an update on Primary and highlighted positive sign up for Wave 3 as well as the ongoing dialogue with the Department for Education.

### 2.2 Workstream Updates

The Board noted the following update papers:

- 2.1.1 Network and Employers

JY gave an update on devolution and changes in LEPs, as well as highlighting the focus and targeting of resource towards disengaged areas/schools.

The Board discussed rising NEET figures and the role that careers education can play in early-stage NEET prevention. OdB confirmed that the evidence shows a 5-10% impact from careers education, with other factors playing larger roles. He also noted the relationship between Gatsby Benchmark achievement and NEET reduction at 16 and 18. Learning from Youth Futures Foundation (YFF) research on long-term youth unemployment is now helping steer the work going forward. The board noted the work being led by JY to connect CEC to other organisations to maximise NEET prevention work.

**Action:** AC to add a session on NEET for future Board meeting – joined by YFF.

- 2.1.2 Data and Digital

JY provided highlights from the past quarter, with a focus on the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ), which now has 140,000 responses this academic year.

The Board discussed next steps for the FSQ and suggested that sharing information regarding the FSQ to school Governors may increase awareness and sign-up.

**Action:** D&D team to consider a webinar on FSQ for school Governors.

**Action:** AC to send FSQ questions to board members.

- 2.1.3 Education Development

NH gave an update to the Board on her team's key priorities including raising quality through the adoption of the Careers Impact System (the peer-to-peer review process) and boosting equity of careers provision for disadvantaged learners.

NH also informed the Board that Gatsby is entering into a phase of refinement of the Gatsby benchmarks after their 10-year review. CEC and Gatsby are working closely on the new benchmarks, to launch messaging and on the year-long implementation process. This will have implications for CEC's data collection tools.

- 2.1.4 Strategy and Communications

PL provided an overview of the work relating to S&C. This included National Apprenticeships and National Careers week, positive media coverage and partnership/relationship building, the release of the Now & Next and Labour Together reports; Employer Standards (which is nearly at the 600 target) and outreach to FTSE companies.

The Board discussed possible challenges the team may face in the future and the mitigations in place.

- 2.1.5 Operations

KR flagged key areas of focus in the Operations team, which included:

- The new law incoming in April regarding flexible working. KR informed the Board that the new policy will be ready to launch in the next couple of weeks, ahead of changes in the law and that flexible working requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with both the needs of the business and the fair and equitable treatment of staff taken into consideration.
- The rollout of the bank holiday policy, which has received positive feedback across the organisation.
- The success of the ISO certification audit and the move to a new IT provider, who will provide proficiency and expertise in data breaches and information security.

### 2.3 Management Accounts

EK presented the January 2024 management accounts and flagged that budget is on track – with one exception relating to Careers Leader Training, which may have some underspend resulting from challenges with uptake due to lack of capacity within schools.

### 3. Awards Reflection

NM provided thanks to all of those involved in the Careers Excellence recognition event in March 2024. The event was diverse, with young people at the heart, it influenced, and it celebrated worthy exemplars. It was a successful corporate moment and gained good media coverage.

The Board discussed possible routes to replicate/build on the event for the future – including hub run local recognition events or Mayor led events. NM suggested the national event might be bi-annual, not least because things may look different next March,

PL will report back with their thoughts on next steps.

### 4. Any Other Business

The Board visited Westminster Kingsway College's, Kings Cross Centre to meet with the Senior Leadership Team, the Careers Team and a range of students.

Westminster Kingsway College is one of the largest Further Education colleges in central London with a diverse student body of around 14,000 learners, who travel to its outstanding centres in King's Cross, Victoria, Regent's Park, and Soho, to study vocational and academic courses. Each centre offers an extensive range of courses for 16-18-year-olds and adult learners, with a specialist centre in Camden for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The Board were very grateful for this visit and were impressed with the staff and students that they met with.

The Board agreed that the June meeting in Newcastle will have a later start of 10.30am, to allow for travel on the morning of the meeting.

**Date of next meeting: 12 June 2024, 10.30 – 13.30, visit: 13.30-16.00, Newcastle**