



Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting

When: 25 March 2020

Where: MS Teams

Present (Board)

- Paul Burstow, chair
- Alex Fox
- Eustace DeSousa
- Jane Green
- Katie Brennan
- Margaret Lally
- Mary McKenna
- Ossie Stuart
- Rachel Armitage
- Sean Holland
- Margaret Lally

In attendance

- Tony Hunter
- Ewan King
- Emma Smale
- Helen Norbury
- Hugh Constant
- Keith Spink
- Pearl Sebastian
- Pete Fleischmann
- Sheila Fish
- Fiona Flowers (staff observer)
- Ryan Wise (staff representative)

Apologies

- Katie Brennan
- Margaret Lally
- Sue Gower
- Annie Hudson

Apologies and welcome

1. The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies from Katie Brennan, Margaret Lally, Sue Gower, and Annie Hudson.

Minutes of the Board meeting of 2 December 2019 and matters arising

2. The minutes were agreed.

Chief Executive's Report

3. The Chief Executive thanked the Chair for his support, and noted this would be his last report as Chief Executive.
4. The Chief Executive gave an overview of his report, and noted that a new Chief Executive would join shortly with EK leading in the meantime for continuity. SET is keeping staff up to speed with weekly messages and meetings.
5. The Chief Executive noted that we are talking to DHSC around how we might support work on COVID-19 but there are no detailed answers yet. The Chief Executive added that it is a difficult time to focus on the business plan but we want to run this process in tandem. ES is leading on the business plan, and if we had time we would want to go through it in more detail.
6. ES noted that there was a productive session at the Away Day, and we have assessed a set of criteria to agree business priorities and produced clear indicators regarding what to prioritise which we will bring to the Board asap.
7. The Chair added that to underscore the Chief Executive's point, colleagues are speaking to DHSC for additional information and to be clear on what the ask is.
8. The Chair noted that this is TH's last Board meeting and thanked him for his working style, and for moving SCIE from the 1.0 model to 2.0 and in position for the next stage of 3.0.

Audit and Risk Committee Report

9. EK noted that these are not the traditional reports which would be sent to the Board but comprise of the Year End 2019/20 and a review of 2019/20. The other report is a powerpoint on the Zero Based Budget strategy. At the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 19 March, we discussed the year end of review of the year, as well as the new programme of work. This brings together our financial position and strength of offer, and the impact of COVID-19. EK noted he is working closely with Chris Buttress and together they report to a weekly meeting comprised of the Chair, KB, and other trustees. EK and Chris Buttress are also then working with SET to involve them in decision making. As part of our COVID-19 impact analysis, we are looking

at three scenarios ranged from best to worst case. We are also looking at DHSC work and pensions, which are all folded into this piece of work.

10. CB stated that the zero-based budgeting work has commenced and will run to mid-April. We are going through the budget line by line and examining it to help inform a range of proposals. CB is also supporting EK to put in place new financial controls and report weekly on the financial position of the business in terms of cash; we are also putting controls on recruitment, new commitments, and pricing of work. We also have a new set of budget accountabilities and KPIs. The main focus of work however is the zero based budget exercise.
11. OS queried regarding the co-production element of the process described, is there a role for OS to be involved? The Chair noted that the other aspect of reporting is having the notes of the weekly oversight meeting shared with the Audit and Risk Committee, and it would be helpful if another trustee joined the meeting. It was agreed that OS would be invited to the weekly oversight meeting.
12. ED asked what the main obstacles to meeting the timescales shown in the slides are. CB responded that there are no major obstacles yet and we are slightly ahead of schedule, but the hard part is converting information into proposals. We are not anticipating delays but the major risks are around illness or a delay in getting information.
13. RA asked if the government's Job Retention scheme is being considered which would cover 80% of employee salaries. EK responded that we are looking at all opportunities including the scheme although it's not as good as it looks since it is capped at £2,500 and includes pensions and on-costs. EK felt that the biggest priority is DHSC.
14. The Chair queried the commercial strategy. EK noted we are also looking at a consultancy balance sheet so we can understand the contributions of all staff. We can use Business Central to track use of time. We are also looking in depth at things like in-house skills, use of associates, and drilling down to what it means for our operating model. CB added we are also looking at the commercial side of the business to ensure it is set up properly and we understand our costs and income. We do also have a large associate bill which totalled over £1m a year as well as having a large in-house team. It will be culturally challenging and raise some questions, but there are significant opportunities here to improve commercialisation.
15. ED asked how this fits into the long term. EK responded that this is where we can't lose sight of the business plan. ES is leading on this and it incorporates the 3.0 model covered by the Chair, and a three year plan. There is lots of emergency activity but this builds on the three year plan sent to the DHSC. CB added we are trying to think about the shape and nature SCIE 3.0 needs to be and how to deliver that, e.g. diversification of income and use of associates. There are some strategic questions which we are starting to grapple with. We are trying to ensure we are resilient and can respond quickly when the current disruption is over. For most scenarios we think we can get the balance right. The Chair added that the write up of the Away Day also helps us to shape some of this work.

16. AF stated that it is useful to think in terms of three phases, and added there is something immediate around showing the sector we are responding to what matters to them now, and then giving space for more fundamental thinking around what people need in a post COVID world.
17. MM asked what timescales we are thinking about. EK responded we will be looking at the scenarios later in the meeting but at the moment we are anticipating about a six month period of disruption. RA noted that at the RCNI they are also anticipating some return to normality in six months, but have also done a one year and three year plan, with three months being the minimum. RA added that they are assuming profitability will drop 50% over the next few months.
18. The Chair noted that if social distancing is effective, the effect will be to make the escalation of numbers more shallow but also longer term. This will give time to prepare and disseminate a vaccine, and also give the NHS time to prepare.
19. ED felt that we need to be looking at the next year to eighteen months. Once a vaccine has been produced, we are looking at another eighteen months for manufacture and it will then have to be cascaded and we also don't know what will happen if the virus mutates. Even when this is done, there will be a huge amount of catch-up on postponed work and activities.
20. EK gave an overview of the target spending model and CB added this is related to the financial controls which have already been discussed. There were no questions.
21. PS gave an overview of end year 2019/20. EK asked if there were any questions for PS.
22. The Chair queried the figure on the reserves needed to move to the 3rd floor seems bigger than expected and asked if it would be possible for this to be discussed in more detail at the oversight meeting on Friday. PS advised that she would also send through the more detailed paper setting out options.
23. ED asked if there was any learning around last year's financial assumptions. PS stated that these would likely become clear when the zero-based budget exercise is complete and the budget has been examined line by line rather than making assumptions based on previous years. MM added that she has been an accountant and it is never possible to get assumptions right as there are so many moving parts which is why it is better to have stretch targets. ED noted that his only concern is that we might be drawing down reserves in a way that is not sustainable.
24. AF asked how we are making ourselves the place for people to go during the COVID-19 crisis. AF added it is also easy to think about the drop in income, but there is also a huge amount of need out there and there will be some big opportunities as local authorities need to rebuild. EK responded that we will go out to our contact database to see what people most want help with. EK added we are also setting up an online panel of people like AF, and we are repurposing our NICE guides and offer to DHSC. EK added there is also something about our connection with TLAP and other sector bodies for a partnership approach. AF felt that SCIE has the opportunity to partner with organisations who have content but perhaps a small platform.

25. HN advised that we are gathering intel and building a revised marketing schedule. We are also developing new products to support sector resilience and reflect remote working and social distancing. HN welcomed ideas. We are well positioned but there is lots to do.
26. SH stated he has talked to social care employers, and the workforce is undergoing a lot of flux with a number of people joining from the hospitality sector. There is a lot of interest in online learning for these new joiners. There are also a lot of leavers. We need a way of getting in quickly and efficiently. HN responded that this reflects the enquiries we have been receiving. SH noted that a lot of this is being done at speed and there is a lot of regulatory relaxation for instance around DBS checks.
27. KS advised that we are working with DHSC and we have launched our new COVID web hub.
28. OS advised he has blogged about COVID-19 and had a lot of reactions. People feel there is no information from local authorities. Guidance and more human stories are needed. EK responded that he was going to come to OS later around the gap in PAs and carers. EK/OS to discuss outside of this meeting. JG added that she also has a lot of members whose carers/PAs are off sick and are struggling to get their needs met as a result, so she has plenty of stories to share. The Chair noted the need to curate stories to needs that must be addressed and how we can help.
29. RA, SH, AF gave their apologies for the rest of the meeting.

Business continuity

30. EK gave an overview. HN noted that the scenarios are based on a lot of unknowns as the situation changes. We expect the impact to be ongoing and continue to the end of the year. We are on track for a 30% hit but we expect more than that as time goes on so we are also looking at scenarios of a 50% and 80% hit. The pipeline is stable at the moment, but we anticipate major impact as decisions are taken. EK asked for views or advice from the Board.
31. The Chair noted that some discussions have taken place already. The Chair added there is an issue around bandwidth and capability and how we protect that so we can take on more business. MM added that the issue is about being agile so we need to be honest with ourselves and be ready to change depending on how things change.
32. OS asked what the human cost of 30% is versus 80%. The Chair responded that the work CB and EK described is taking place currently so we may not have a precise answer yet. EK added that there are implications for staffing levels but we are not ready to go there yet and are optimistic about conversations with the DHSC.
33. The Chair asked who is filling the DHSC gap with DfE. EK responded that he has been doing some thinking around this and may work in partnership with RiP. ES added that there are a handful of organisations in that space, e.g. LGA/ADCS. We need to think about how to get the DHSC offer right and build on that. We have also discussed the potential for greater join-up between adults and children's and we are

well placed to do that. RW added that there is a great value in building partnerships with other key stakeholders outside of government. The Chair noted that he and EK have a call with Dez Holmes in April.

- 34. The Chair queried what is being done to support staff now working from home. EK advised that guidance was sent out last week on the office closure. MG added that she has sent several pieces of guidance out including how to ensure workstations are set up properly based on advice from the NHS, as well as guidance on how to maintain mental wellbeing based on advice from the WHO and the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework.
- 35. The Chair queried what is being done for associate wellbeing. HN responded that they were all emailed last week to check they are all ok and we will continue to keep in touch.
- 36. ED stated that the WHO has published guidance on how to stay fit while working from home and offered to send this to MG.

2020/21 budget finalisation and sign off process

- 37. The Board discussed the sign off process. Following the completion of the zero based budget exercise a budget will be submitted to the board for its approval.

Board annual agenda

- 38. The agenda plan was noted.

Any other business

- 39. EK gave an overview of the latest email from DHSC.
- 40. MM asked if we know when we will have the pensions review paper. PS advised that she has chased this morning and we should receive it later today so she will circulate it then. The Chair noted the need to write around with recommendations once the Board has had a chance to digest the information.
- 41. ED felt that the quick response from DHSC given their restricted bandwidth seems very positive. The system out there is on its knees and there is lots SCIE can do. Maybe we could use DHSC to go to NHSE. An immediate example is the 250k volunteers and need for systematic support. The Chair noted he will update on UKRI with EK later.
- 42. ED and MM felt that the COVID hub work was very strong.

Approved: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date:
