

1.1 BOARD MINUTES
COMPANY CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 19th March 2025, 10am-1.30pm, No. 1 Aire Street, Leeds

Board: Baroness Nicky Morgan, Chair (NM)
David Baldwin (DB)
Mo Isap (MI)
Mohammed Samir (MS)
Ashwin Mistry (AM)
Neil McLean (NML)
Fiona Millar (FM)
Ife Awotunbo (IA)
Rylie Sweeney (RS)
Oli de Botton, Chief Executive Officer (OdB)
John Yarham, Deputy Chief Executive (JY)

Apologies: N/A

In attendance: Paul Lewis, Chief of Strategy and Communications (PL)
Nicola Hall, Director of Education (NH)
Kevin Ronan, Director of HR & Compliance (KR) – online, joined for Agenda Item 2
Elizabeth Kingsley, Head of Finance (EK) – online, joined for Agenda Item 2
Max Rowe, Associate Director of Grants and Development (MR)
Robin Thomas CFRE, CEO, Morgen Thomas Ltd. (RT) – joined for Agenda Item 3
Sara Mohideen, Company Secretary and Internal Operations Senior Manager (SM)
El Thurston, PA to CEO/DCEO (ET)

	Notes
1.	<p>Welcome and Introduction/Governance</p> <p>NM opened the meeting and welcomed the Board.</p> <p>1.1 Minutes of last meeting – 03.12.24</p> <p>The minutes from the Board Meeting on 3 December 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 Action Log</p> <p>The Board discussed the open actions and noted that Dame Julia Cleverdon is now officially a patron of CEC.</p> <p>1.3 Audit Committee Minutes – 12.02.25</p> <p>The minutes from the Audit Committee meeting on 12 February 2025 were received. AM provided a brief update on the topics discussed, including the reappointment of Crowe & Co as the CEC's Auditors, increased indemnity cover for Cyber Cover, the of changing position on ED&I in the USA and the potential impact on third-party funders, and the challenges of acquiring 'end customer feedback'.</p> <p>1.4 Impact & Evaluation Committee Minutes – 19.02.25</p> <p>The minutes from the Impact & Evaluation Committee meeting on 19th February 2025 were received.</p> <p>1.5 Nominations Committee Minutes – 03.12.24</p> <p>KR provided an update on the ongoing Non-Executive Director recruitment; the recommended appointments will be ratified at the upcoming Nominations Committee in April 2025.</p>

2.	<p>Items to note</p> <p>2.1 Performance overview (CEO/DCEO update)</p> <p>OdB provided an update on recent activity and performance across CEC. Key highlights included the launch of the Equalex pilot, fostering local ownership of Careers Hubs, and high completion rates of the Future Skills Questionnaire and Employer Standards. The Board discussed current strengths and opportunities relating to CEC.</p> <p>2.2 Workstream Updates</p> <p>2.2.1 Network & Employers</p> <p>JY provided an update on developments within Hubs, particularly in preparation for the delivery of the Work Experience (WEx) Guarantee. The Board discussed the benefits and challenges of these shifts, including a stronger focus on impact and the potential to translate learnings from the Teacher Encounters programme into a more sustainable structure.</p> <p>2.2.2 Data & Digital</p> <p>JY presented an overview of CEC's digital development since the last meeting and future plans. The discussion covered the value of CEC's datasets and the need to balance a consistent, steady approach against rapid innovation. It was noted that significant efficiency gains have been achieved through digital tools, including the introduction of a chatbot to support customer service.</p> <p>2.2.3 Education Development</p> <p>NH provided an update on the work of the education development team, highlighting the surge in demand for Careers Leader training, strong performance in the National System Review on disadvantage, and future considerations for the Primary Programme. The Board discussed the allocation of WEx funding, with three key priorities identified: enhanced support for schools serving disadvantaged communities, universal support for schools, and increased readiness through reduced administrative burden. The Board also discussed CEC's approach to verifying the quality of providers listed in the Provider Directory. The Provider Community of Improvement serves as a platform for promoting best practice, standards and expectations.</p> <p>2.2.4 Strategy & Communications</p> <p>PL provided an update on recent communications activities, including a visit with Liz Kendall, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, submissions to the SEND and FE & Skills inquiries, and engagement during both National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week. The Board highlighted the importance of communicating CEC's work on the WEx Guarantee. PL confirmed that extensive work is being undertaken in collaboration with local mayors to support this.</p> <p>The Board also discussed the challenge of mental health and disability in relation to the careers sector and the increasing number of young people classified as NEET. It was noted that CEC's role involves supporting skill development and work experience as early intervention measures.</p> <p>The Board recognised opportunities for Board members to assist in promoting key messaging and expanding the reach of CEC's communications. It was agreed that the Strategy and Communications Team should contact the Board to support with key messaging as appropriate.</p> <p>2.2.5 Operations</p> <p>KR provided an update on ongoing operational work, including preparations for the DfE Grant Funding Agreement and the upcoming ISO Surveillance Audit in May 2025.</p> <p>2.3 Management Accounts</p> <p>EK presented an update on the Management Accounts, confirming that overall spend is in line with budget.</p>
3.	<p>Government Plus Deep Dive</p> <p>RT joined the meeting and presented the findings of the recently published report. The Board discussed the content and potential advantages and challenges and approved further research to inform next steps.</p>

	<p>Action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MR to conduct further research for presentation at June Board meeting.
4.	<p>Youth Advisory Group Update</p> <p>IA provided an overview of CEC's Youth Advisory Group (YAG), including its function, structure, and recent activities. RS outlined the vision for the future of the YAG, with key areas of focus including increasing diverse representation, particularly among NEET and T-Level students. It was noted that efforts are being made to integrate the YAG as a foundational step in CEC project development, strengthen the connection between the YAG and Youth Board Members, improve the feedback loop regarding next steps and impact, and enhance the mechanism for contributing ideas and insights between monthly meetings.</p> <p>The Board discussed ways to enhance the value of Board Member involvement in YAG days, suggesting a more structured approach to ensure two-way communication. It was proposed that Youth Board Members be involved in senior appointments at CEC, particularly in the upcoming Non-Executive Director recruitment, to emphasise the CEC's commitment to youth voice and provide candidates with insight into the YAG's work. It was also noted that Board agendas and deep dive topics can be shared with Youth Board Members further in advance of Board meetings so that YAG discussions can align with Board-level topics where appropriate.</p> <p>MS delivered a presentation on young people's use of Generative AI in relation to careers guidance, based on a YAG discussion. The YAG highlighted that AI can enhance the accessibility of careers guidance, and MS noted that young people are already actively using AI for this purpose. The Committee discussed AI's potential impact on CEC's work, including shifts in the economy and skills landscape and AI-driven careers advice solutions. Challenges related to AI, particularly ethical concerns and quality assurance, were also considered.</p> <p>Action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ET to arrange virtual meetings between Youth Board Members and NED candidates. ET to work with Youth Engagement Officer to coordinate Board Members involvement in YAG days. ET to share agenda and deep-dive topics with Youth Board Members in advance of Board meetings. NH to provide feedback at the upcoming YAG day on the impact of YAG involvement in the equalex project and next steps.
5.	<p>AOB</p> <p>NM thanked MS on behalf of the Board for his contributions in the role of Youth Board Member from 2023 to 2025.</p>

Date of next meeting: 11 June 2025, 10.00 – 13.00