NMITE

Board of Trustees

MINUTES

Friday 11th June 2021, 9.30am

via Teams

Members Present Mr Terence Jagger, Chair

Mr Ian Falconer

Mr Jon Gorringe

Mr Martin Hitchin,

Vice-Chair Ms Rowena Innocent

Mr Richard Lindsay-Davies

Professor Peter Scott

Ms Karen Usher

In attendance Ms Tina Benson (Finance Director) for minute 21/38

Ms Harriet Dearden (Head of Fundraising) for minute 21/37 Professor Beverley Gibbs (Chief Academic Officer) Professor David Langley (Chief of External Engagement)

Ms Clare McCauley (Institutional Company Secretary)

Mr James Newby (Chief Operating Officer)

Professor Elena Rodriguez-Falcon (President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO))

The minute record contains copies of all written papers or reports to which reference is made below unless otherwise indicated.

**21/30 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

*Reported* that:

The following new interests had been declared and had been added to the Register:

1. The Chair of the Board had been appointed a Trustee of the National Biodiversity Network
2. The CEO had been appointed Chair-elect and a non-executive director of The Engineering Development Trust (EDT).

**21/31 Minutes**

 *Approved:*

 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2021 (BD.21.06.01a).

 *Considered:*

 The Action Log (BD.21.06.01b).

 *Agreed that:*

The action on the in-person public launch event of NMITE should be removed from the action log. The event had been coupled with the next Annual General Meeting (AGM). It was noted that private companies were no longer required to hold an AGM, although NMITE's current Articles of Association mandated one. The newly proposed Articles of Association, for which consent to changes had been submitted to the Charity Commission, removed this requirement. It was expected that these Articles would come into effect for the 2021/22 session.

**21/32 Chair’s Report**

(a) Thanks

The Chair, on behalf of the Trustees, extended thanks to the Institutional Company Secretary who would leave NMITE at the end of June 2021.

(b) Recruitment of Trustees

*Reported that:*

The campaign to recruit new Trustees was progressing well, and any further suggestions on prospective candidates should be forwarded at the earliest opportunity to the Director of HR.

(c) Board and Retreat (July 2021)

*Reported that:*

The next Board meeting was due to take place on Thursday 8 July, followed by a strategy session on Friday 9 July in person in Hereford, with dinner on Thursday evening for those who were available. Some Trustees had given apologies for the strategy session. Given the executive focus on preparation for the new academic session and the advent of new Trustee members, the Chair was considering moving the strategy session to later in the year. A final proposal would be brought to members for consideration*.*

**21/33 Chief Executive Officer's Report**

*Considered*:

The CEO report (BD.21.06.02).

*Reported* that:

1. The receipt of applications for the first student cohort continued to be slow and would be covered in more detail later on the agenda.
2. NMITE's onboarding and induction with UCAS were now complete. NMITE could now maximise opportunities for Clearing activities to recruit students to start the MEng in September.
3. Meetings were held with the CEOs of other institutions, including Roehampton, who were keen to explore a partnership with NMITE to co-deliver engineering education.
4. Mr Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), had visited Skylon Park in early June and met with Professor Hairstans, Director of the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology.
5. Hereford had been awarded £22.4 million from the government's Towns' Fund for projects that supported post-covid recovery and would enhance economic growth through creating new jobs and helping to train local people. NMITE was central to the proposals, and further updates would be provided in due course.
6. In discussion, the possibility of leveraging engagement with the Summer of Discovery to boost recruitment was explored, including the promotional use of short video clips of presentations. This would be considered as part of the recruitment campaign.

**21/34**

*(This section of the minutes is exempt from publication under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act)*

**21/35**

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**21/36 Property Update**

*Considered*:

Key property developments (BD.21.06.04).

*Reported* that:

1. A detailed progress report had been provided to the Property and Infrastructure Committee in May.
2. There was continued work to balance the need to create sufficient capacity in learner spaces, student accommodation, and office space to support the planned student and staff populations.
3. However, the current uncertainty in student number expectations created difficulties in capacity

planning and in dealing with property developers. Property acquisition plans were being slowed down in line with student number expectations.

1. It was expected that a decision on Gardner Hall would need to be made imminently. Agents had been engaged to dispose of 6a, but this was proving difficult, given the nature of the different lease and ownership agreements.
2. Discussions were taking place with Herefordshire Council on extending the occupation of Station Approach as this was felt to be more prudent than signing additional long-term lease agreements.
3. In discussion, it was noted that the occupancy estimation of student accommodation had been set at 75%, and this would be refined as student decisions on accommodation became clearer. A view was expressed that 75% was too low, given that there was no private accommodation market, even for second-year students.

**21/37 Fundraising Progress**

*Considered*:

An update on fundraising (BD.21.06.05).

*Reported* that:

1. The recently announced Stronger Towns deal could lead to an award to NMITE of £3,644m, predominantly capital. The award could be used to leverage other gifts, for example, from Goldsmiths, who were the catalyst for the Skills Foundry concept.
2. *(This section of the minutes is exempt from publication under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act)*
3. *(This section of the minutes is exempt from publication under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act)*
4. The easing of lockdown had led to increased fundraising activity, particularly related to the Summer of Discover programme.

Thanks were extended to all board members who had engaged with Ignition, NMITE's regular giving programme. This sent a strong message about NMITE's philanthropic culture, and this message would greatly aid the team in their external engagements.

**21/38 Finance Report**

**(a) Finance Update**

*Considered:*

A report on the monthly position (BD.21.06.06).

*Reported* that:

1. The year-to-date position (30 April 2021) was:

Income £3,746,573

Expenditure £3,479,933

Net Surplus £266,640

1. The accounts showed an in-month surplus of £40k. The forecast for the year-end was a surplus of £214k.
2. The year-to-date position utilised £3.45m of the DfE allocation and £31k from the Garfield Weston allocation.
3. The fundraising team secured £35k of income in month, and a further £5k was received from the Government Kickstart Programme.
4. All ESF posts (except for one) had been filled, and the Project Initiation Visit was scheduled for the beginning of June. In total, the project was valued at £855k over 32 months.
5. In terms of income and expenditure, there was no significant movement from previous months. Expenditure remained low, except for marketing.
6. The cash forecast presented was structured on the position reported as the 'Baseline' budget in the budget setting paper (BD21.06.06).

**(b) Budget and Financial Planning 2021/22**

*(This section of the minutes is exempt from publication under section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act)*

**21/39 EDI Strategy**

*Considered*:

A draft Strategy (BD.21.06.08).

*Reported* that

1. The Strategy was developed under the aegis of NMITE's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Group. This Group was a self-convened group of staff who had an interest and care in the agenda at NMITE and volunteered accordingly.
2. The Steering Group comprised the staff members of NMITE, with Herefordshire Council's Race Equality Development Officer as an external member. It was expected that students would join the Group in due course.
3. Under NMITE's new internal governance arrangements, the Group shall sit under and report to the Resources Committee, responsible to the Executive Board on matters relating to Equality and Diversity through the receipt of regular updates on initiatives and considerations of NMITE's annual EDI report.
4. In discussion, it was noted that the Group might usefully consider other characteristics such as neurodiversity.

***Resolved****:*

1. The Strategy.

The receipt by the Board of a bi-annual report of progress with the strategy implementation, with effect from Autumn 2021.

**21/40 Report from Academic Council**

*Received:*

The report (BD.21.06.09).

**21/41 Date of Next Meeting**

*Reported* that:

The next meeting of the Board would be confirmed shortly.

**21/42 Any Other Business**

*Agreed* that*:*

Plans for student welcome and induction be brought forward to the next meeting of the Board.

**21/43 Review of Meeting**

*Endorsed:*

The productive discussion of critical issues and the time distribution accorded to the agenda items.