

# Note of Meeting

## Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group

2pm, Monday, 15 March 2020

### Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

#### Present:

Sir Geoff Palmer (Chair), [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

#### Apologies:

[REDACTED]

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

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To note that there had been two retrials from the Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Group (ESCLR) by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

The Chair wished to place his thanks on record for their input to the Group.

## 2. Note of Meeting of 15 December 2020 and Action Log 15 December 2020 and Matters Arising

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The minutes of the meeting of 15 December 2020, Action log of 15 December 2020 and revised terms of remit were presented.

#### Matters Arising

The Leeds City Council document was highlighted as being of interest and that further detail to the consultation would be welcomed by the ESCLR.

#### Decision

- 1) To agree the minutes of the Meeting of 15 December 2020.
- 2) To agree the action log of the Meeting of 15 December 2020.
- 3) To agree the Terms of Reference.
- 4) To agree more detail on the consultation which was underway by Leeds City Council would be brought to the next meeting.

## 4. Partnership with University of Edinburgh Update

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Sir Geoff Palmer had met with The University of Edinburgh (UoE) about its Review. A steering group is in the process of being set up which Sir Geoff has agreed to chair.

The Group was advised that the UoE was prepared to fund two interns on a part time basis over six months to support the City's independent Review. They will assist with information gathering on street names, monuments and buildings in scope for the Review. It was expected that the ESCLR Group Members would guide and support the interns, though the University will oversee supervision. The Group was advised by Sir Geoff Palmer that the Council would review the ESCLR's proposals for the Review before opening up to public consultation, and will provide feedback.

Sir Geoff wished for thanks to be recorded to the UoE for the offer of the two interns who would assist in compiling the information which the ESCLR Review Group will reference in drafting their recommendations.

The Members of the ESCLR Review Group agreed it would be useful to further define the relationship with the University's Review and the opportunities it presented for joint working, and that they would welcome sight of the aims and objectives of the UoE group when available.

Comments from the group were invited:

- Clarification was sought on the time commitment that would be on offer from the Interns.
- The difference in the reporting mechanisms, anticipated outcomes and the scope of study was highlighted between the UoE and the independent City Review.
- To note that Edinburgh World Heritage Trust offers to supply additional interns.
- To note that if there may be conflicts of interest with a joint research approach.
- That anything that could be provided or shared between the ESCLR and the UoE was important to do so to avoid duplication.
- To note that the report that the independent ESCLR Review would provide to the Council would highlight if there were areas of original research required.
- To note that the Advisory Group includes Council employees and to note that the members are helping with the safeguarding work that was underway.

### Decision

- 1) To agree that the Chair would clarify the offer from the UoE for Intern support.
- 2) To agree to define the relationship between the two Reviews and that the aims and objectives of the UoE Review would be shared with the ESCLR when appropriate and developed.

- 3) To arrange for a meeting between the Chair and University representatives to discuss management and remit of the interns.

## 5. Updated Features List Review

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The provisional list of Public Realm Features Linked with Slavery and Colonialism was discussed in context of potential models for the collation and presentation of contextual information for purposes of the Review.

On considering the UNESCO research approach, it was noted that this could be undertaken in conjunction with public engagement and presented thematically under categories such as politics, finance, religion, medicine, whereby the broader picture of Edinburgh's links with slavery and colonialism were clear and that there would be individual examples highlighted, rather than an exhaustive approach on all street names, building and monuments. The important aspect to address was the consequence of this and the report needed to make clear that a broad engagement strategy and public consultation informed this approach. It was suggested that the approach to work undertaken in Bristol would merit consideration for Edinburgh.

It was agreed that a Research Subgroup meeting will take place to explore potential themes each public realm feature might pertain to. The wider ESCLR Review Group will consider their suggestions at the next meeting.

The UNESCO research approach centres upon the objects in question, the broader societal context and then assessment of the assets within the present day. The Group considered this approach an appropriate methodology and noted that it would allow for a narrative to be scripted to demonstrate how these assets had links to slavery or colonialism and how this in turn had benefitted Edinburgh.

It was agreed the ESCLR Members would feedback their categories and themes for sharing with the Research Subgroup to substantiate this narrative, to give consideration to whether a commission would be required to bring in capacity to analyse this information and if this would require financial resources to be allocated to this task.

### Decision

- 1) To agree to form a Research Subgroup from existing Group members to consider public realm features linked with slavery and colonialism in detail and present findings back to the ESCLR Review Group.
- 2) For all Members to feedback their categories and themes to substantiate this narrative, and to give consideration to whether a commission would be required to bring in capacity to oversee compilation of this information and if this would require financial resources to be allocated to this task.

## 7. Research Information Presentation Approach

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Suggestions and models on how to present the findings of the ESCLR Group were discussed.

Members debated whether to limit the initial work stage to associations on slavery only rather than the broader remit which would include colonialism however this was not considered suitable as it would not fulfil the remit of the Review.

The agreement between ESCLR members was that the approach presented would be illustrative rather than comprehensive.

### **Decision**

- 1) To agree that the report produced would focus on slavery and colonialism in an illustrative format.

## **8. Any Other Business**

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It was advised that the Review had received press coverage and that the nominated media spokesperson for the group is the Chair, Sir Geoff Palmer.

A Member queried whether their names would be made public in the event of any Freedom of Information (FoI) requests being made to the City of Edinburgh Council regarding the ESCLR. It was confirmed that names of ESCLR members would be redacted from any FoI response issued by the City of Edinburgh Council as a direct result of concerns raised about online and offline abuse should names of individual Group Members be revealed.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the Council's obligations in terms of FoI requests.
- 2) To note the position on responding to press enquiries; that these would be responded to by the Chair, with support from CEC Communications Team.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

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To be confirmed.