

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Board  
held at 4.00pm on Thursday, 29 February 2024  
in Room 04.02/03, Vauxhall Campus, LSBTC**

**Present**

Ruth Farwell (Chair)  
Andrew Owen (Vice Chair)  
Steve Balmont  
Sue Dare  
Nigel Duckers  
Thesia Kouloungou (online)  
Mario Meizah  
Mee Ling Ng  
David Phoenix (online)

**Apologies**

Jacqui Dyer  
Wayne Wright

**In attendance**

Michael Broadway (online)  
Monica Marongiu  
Fiona Morey  
Jacqueline Mutibwa  
Ian Rule  
Sam Curtis (observer)  
Melissa Drayson, Rockborn (observer)  
Peter Ryder, Rockborn (observer)

**1. Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed the trustees to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed the following people who were attending the meeting as observers: Sam Curtis, the newly appointed LSBU group Company Secretary, Melissa Drayson and Peter Ryder, Rockborn Management Consultants.

The above apologies were noted. The Board noted that Jacqui Dyer had been unwell and wished her a speedy recovery and good health.

The Board had just had a lesson observation of teaching and learning and also a discussion about the external quality reviews carried out by college peers to enable continuous improvement of teaching and learning and to share good practice.

The session was followed by a curriculum presentation on T level provision by Helen Drewery, Director Career Pathways.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

Sam Curtis, the newly appointed LSBU group company secretary declared an interest in agenda item 11 on the appointment of SBC company secretary and would not participate in the discussion.

### **3. Minutes of previous meetings:**

#### 9 February 2024

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2024 as an accurate record.

#### 22 November 2023

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 as an accurate record and their publication, as redacted.

The Board also approved the notes of the development session held on 22 November 2023 as an accurate record.

### **4. Matters arising**

The Board noted the update on matters arising from the previous meetings and board development sessions. Most actions had been completed or were being progressed and are still ongoing. The updated Single Equality Scheme 2023/24 would be presented at the next meeting. A high-level directors accountability chart (distinction between the responsibility of LSBU Board and SBC Board) would be presented later in the year.

Sue Dare, the Safeguarding Lead trustee had met the College's safeguarding team and the safeguarding aspect of the sub-contracting and partnership delivery would be included in the monitoring and annual reports considered by the Quality & Improvement Committee and the Board.

The action sheets from previous meetings would be presented in one document and also the status of the action would include the timescale for completion.

### **5. Update from the Students' Union President**

The Students Union (SU) President gave a report on the recent and upcoming activities. He noted that SU was concerned about not having an SU office at the Nine Elms Campus where they could hold meetings and events and suggested whether they could use the digital spine on the second floor. The space challenges at Nine Elms campus were noted and that space could be provided in a practical way and the long-term arrangements considered after the decant. There was also concern about the card payment, which was the only payment option at Nine Elms canteen and had an impact on student experience. The CFO would follow up on the matter.

Recent SU activities included LGBTQ+ events across the colleges, promoting diversity and inclusivity and raising awareness.

Upcoming activities included celebrating international women's day (7 & 8 March), motivational speakers had been invited to the event to encourage students. A leavers event to celebrate the students achievement at the end of 2023/24 academic year and a SU soft launch to inform students of the forthcoming 2024/25 SU elections.

The Board asked about the level of student engagement in the activities and that some evidence would be helpful.

## **6. Executive Principal's Report (Update on EDI matters, LSBTC and LGC reports)**

The Board noted the key matters since its last meeting in November 2023.

- The Ofsted inspection report for SBC Nursery (24 January 2024), the overall effectiveness continued to be 'Outstanding'. The Board asked for their thanks and congratulations to be passed on to all the staff involved in producing this outcome.
- 2023/24 in-year recruitment and retention were in line with target. In year KPIs were progressing well.
- 2024/25 curriculum planning, the plan would focus on growth in level 3 and 4, apprenticeships and T levels. The curriculum plan along with the accountability agreement would be presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting.
- The key risks facing the College included the budget risk and achievement risk on LSBTC study programme especially in English and Maths and Level 3 vocational courses where performance was below national average; strategies were in place to address the areas. Staff recruitment continued to be a challenge in terms of securing staff with the appropriate levels of experience and expertise and strategies were being explored to address the matter. Attendance had dropped since the last meeting (79% against a target of 90%) especially in English and Maths and tutorial sessions.
- The Board was concerned about student attendance which continued to be a significant challenge for the College despite the various interventions in place. At its meeting of 7 February 2024, the Quality & Improvement Committee discussed the attendance performance in detail i.e. the reasons for low attendance, the change in reporting, the strategies that were in place to address the matter and that more work needed be done to improve the performance. It noted that targeted interventions had been put in place with some success. The Quality & Improvement Committee would continue to monitor the risks concerning attendance and achievement.

- DfE's recent announcement on the new minimum classroom teaching hours for English and Maths resits, condition of funding policy and the removal of the 5% tolerance threshold which would take effect from 2025/26. The College was already meeting the minimum teaching hours, the issue was the additional hour for maths. The financial implication of the removal of the 5% tolerance rule on the condition of funding policy was noted and would be factored into the business planning.
- Student progression was positive, the increase in students applications to university and to LSBU in particular was noted. The Group Pathways brochure (12 educational pathways) had been published and was well received by internal and external stakeholders; the brochure was circulated.

The Board noted the updates on the developments at LSBTC and LGC.

#### Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Matters

The Board noted an update on the EDI work undertaken by the College in particular the work on addressing the widening achievement gaps over the past two years regarding adult female students, achievement was 4.3% lower than adult male students in 2022/23 (2.5% in 2021/22).

### **7. Updated Safeguarding and Prevent Policy (January 2024 Update)**

The Board was presented with the updated 2023/24 (January 2024) policy, which had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Quality & Improvement Committee at its meeting on 7 February 2024.

The policy had been updated to include the working together to safeguard children statutory guidance that was published in December 2023. The Board noted the key changes and updates to the policy. Staff would be informed about the new legal obligation for all staff and trustees to complete an annual review of safeguarding status (page 93, section 3). A board development session on the key changes, especially the online safeguarding issues would be considered.

The Board:

- approved the updated Safeguarding & Prevent Policy 2023/24 (January 2024 update), subject to the inclusion of a glossary of the acronyms used in the policy.
- noted the safeguarding monitoring report for term 1 2023/24 and the initiatives and activities that promote and support safeguarding and welfare at SBC.

Reports and policies would include a glossary of acronyms used in the document.

### **8. Chief Financial Officer Report**

The Board discussed 2023/24 mid-year financial performance.

The Board discussed:

- the 2023/24 mid-year position. As at January 2024, the full year forecast showed a £900k adverse variance in forecasted income which was due to a reduction in income from the funding streams. Though the in-year growth funding of approx. £800k (16-19yrs) had helped mitigate the risk. There was also an overspend on staff costs of £991k related to Additional Learning Support (ALS) which was offset by a decrease in non-pay costs. SLT was analysing the variances and working on mitigating the risks to ensure that the 2023/24 budget was delivered.
- the underlying budget performance issues which needed to be addressed. These included improvement in budget planning, the effectiveness of the internal control processes on the operations and reporting, the timeliness of the management accounts which would have identified the risks earlier and a plan needed to address the overspend on staffing costs. The Audit Committee would request the internal auditors to consider this area of work.
- the cash flow position remained an area of concern which was mainly due to the delayed land sale proceeds which were expected in April 2024. The risk was closely being monitored and was manageable. Performance on financial contribution though still below budget, had improved compared to last year and was moving in the right direction.

The Board was concerned about the financial risk and that it needed to be addressed as soon as possible. The project working group would consider a detailed report on the savings needed to bring the overall budget position back on track (original budget position), analyse the overspend on staff costs and the mitigation plan to address the risk. The meeting would be held in March 2024.

## **9. Accounting Officer's Report**

The Board discussed the key matters since its last meeting in November 2023.

The Board discussed:

- an update on Phase 2 Blocks B and D projects which was progressing well. On the financial risk concerning the FE Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) grant of £10.5m, the capital grant would be secured following LPA consent on the development of the scheme. DfE would also provide additional support and contribute to the 10% inflationary costs of £1m.
- an update on the Integrated Facility Management (IFM) contract. The Board at its meeting of 9 February 2024, approved the award of the IFM contract to Mitie FM Ltd to deliver the SBC aspects of the contract from 1 June 2024 for a period of 5 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years. The contract would be signed in March 2024. The arrangements for managing, overseeing and the reporting of the contract performance was noted.
- the Phase 2 Estates Board Governance Structure. Following the NESC post project review, BDO, internal auditors report had recommended a review of the

estates project governance structure and arrangements in order to facilitate efficient and clear channels for communication, decision-making and reporting. The new Estates Board (an operational board) would be responsible for directing and overseeing SBC and LSBU estates project. The terms of reference, governance structure and oversight and reporting were noted. It was requested that the Board is kept informed about the business considered at the Estates Board meetings.

- the proposal that, as part of the honorary awards process at LSBU, SBC awards annually an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of individuals who have made an exceptional contribution to SBC or the communities it serves.

The Board approved:

- the proposal that SBC awards an Honorary Fellowship;
  - that SBC delegates authority to the Honorary Awards Joint Committee to select the individual; and
  - the proposed terms of reference of the Honorary Awards Joint Committee. An SBC nominee and the Executive Principal would be members of the committee.
- the proposal that SBC adopts the LSBU group Treasury Management Policy would be presented to the project working group and the Board at their next meetings.

#### **10. Tender for Internal Auditors**

The Board noted an update on the tender for internal auditors and the timeline which had been discussed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 13 February 2024. 2023/24 was the final year of the contract with BDO for the provision of Internal Audit services to the LSBU group. The appointment of an internal auditor was planned for June 2024 and would be an LSBU Board and an SBC Board decision.

*Sam Curtis left the meeting*

#### **11. Appointment of SBC Company Secretary**

The Board approved the appointment of Sam Curtis as SBC Company Secretary with effect from 4 March 2024.

*Sam Curtis joined the meeting*

#### **12. External Governance Review Update**

The Board noted the update on the external governance review and the full set of notes attached to the report.

#### **13. Board Development Plan 2024**

The Board noted the proposed development programme to be delivered in 2024.

**14. Report from Committees**

The Board noted the report from Committee meetings held since the last meeting in November 2023. It was agreed that minutes of the Committee meetings would be circulated to all Board members once the drafts had been considered by the relevant chair.

**15. Any other business**

The Board noted that Michael Broadway, SBC's Company Secretary would be leaving LSBU Group at the end of March 2024. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Michael for his work on the transfer of Lambeth College to LSBU and the setting up of SBC and wished him well in his future endeavours.

**Date of next meeting  
4.00 pm on Thursday, 9 May 2024**

**Confirmed as a true record**

(Chair)

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