

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Board
held at 4.00pm on Thursday, 26 September 2024
in Board room, Clapham campus, Gateway College**

Present

Ruth Farwell (Chair)
Sue Dare (Vice Chair)
Steve Balmont
Nigel Duckers
Issa Issa
Mee Ling Ng
David Phoenix

Apologies

Thesia Kouloungou

In attendance

Chris Knell
Monica Marongiu
Fiona Morey
Jacqueline Mutibwa
Wayne Wright
Andreas Raffel, Chair of the LSBU Board (observer)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the trustees to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed Andreas Raffel, the Chair of LSBU Board, who was attending the meeting as an observer. The above apologies were noted.

The Board had just had a development session about the consultation on the draft LSBU group 5-year strategy, its vision and mission (last reviewed in 2019) discussed at the group engagement day held in September 2024. The 3-year curriculum plan and the apprenticeship provision and addressing performance issues were also discussed.

2. Declaration of Interests

There was no declaration of interest in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the previous meetings

Board Meeting – 23 July 2024

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2024 as an accurate record and their publication, as redacted (the redaction to include declarations of interest - item 2).

Board Meeting – 10 July 2024

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024 as an accurate record and their publication, as redacted.

Board Strategy Day – 6 June 2024

The Board approved the notes of the strategy day held on 6 June 2024 as an accurate record and their publication, as redacted.

4. Matters arising

The Board noted the update on matters arising from the previous meetings and that most actions were being progressed and are still ongoing. The Board emphasised the need to circulate the draft committee minutes to the full Board once the Chair of the committee had approved them and also that quality and learning should be embedded in the board development and effectiveness activities.

Update on the external governance review

The Board noted the update on the external governance review following the Board meeting on 10 July 2024. The Board approved the proposed membership of the task and finish group that would consider the recommendations in detail. The group would comprise: the Vice-Chair of the Board (as Chair), the Staff Trustee, Clerk to the Board, Group Director of Governance and Executive Principal. The Group Director of Governance would consider the impact of the recommendations on the operations of the group.

5. Executive Principal's Report (LSBTC, LGC reports and Safeguarding matters)

The Board discussed the key matters since the last meeting in July 2024.

The Board discussed:

- the 2023/24 predicted achievement which was below target but showed an improvement from last year. Student success was about the “distance travelled” i.e. progression, destination and value added. 2023/24 final achievement data would be presented to the Board at the meeting in November 2024.
- the apprenticeships performance which was still below target and there was a risk to the provision given achievement rates remained below threshold levels. The provision would be reviewed by the Further Education Commission in November 2024. There was concern about the provision with the Board wanting to understand in more detail the implications for the risk register and an understanding of how the current position had been reached. This would be discussed further at the next board meeting in November 2024.
- the 2024/25 recruitment. The current figures were positive and above budget target in particular for 16-18 year olds. On adults, it was anticipated that the budget target would be achieved. There had been further growth in 16-18 recruitment building on a previous growth up from 2018/19 to 2023/24 of 35%, and over the same period 87% in Level 3 provision for young people and 42% growth for adults. Growth on T level, Level 4 and apprenticeship provision was still low. The risks were ensuring the retention of new starters post 42 days in order to meet the 2024/25 funding targets, the challenges concerning teacher recruitment and the use of agency teachers due to growth in student numbers. The situation regarding use of agency staff was being monitored.

- the 2023/24 attendance performance which had improved. It was still below target and continued to be a key area of concern. English and Maths attendance remained a challenge. Significant work had been undertaken to improve attendance which had a positive effect, and this would continue.
- an update on the 2024/25 staff pay award. FE sector had not been included in the 5.5% national pay award for teachers and AoC was lobbying the Government on the matter. There were campaigns concerning the matter with AoC encouraging Colleges to contact their local MPs about the matter. Some individual trustees would also be doing this. Staff recruitment and retention challenges were noted and also that the pay award should be accompanied by match funding.
- an update on the relocation of the Lambeth patisserie courses to LSBU within the National Bakery School (NBS) at LSBU Southwark. The newly established integrated patisserie and bakery offer has started in September 2024 with growth in Levels 2 and 3 recruitment in patisserie; the FE and HE integration had gone well.
- an update on the changes to the College's leadership team. Helen Drewery, Director of Career Pathways had left, and Laura Kavanagh had been appointed to replace her. Asma Ahmad, Director Young Peoples Essential Skills would be leaving in October 2024 and Hale Pearce, Curriculum Head for ESOL Young People had been appointed to replace her. The Executive Principal's report would include an update on HR matters including staff turnover data with benchmarking data for the next meeting in November 2024.
- the establishment of Link Governors with senior leadership team initiative, a recommendation under the AoC guidelines. The table was noted and trustees who preferred another area of focus would contact the Executive Principal.

The Board received updates on LSBTC and LGC performance, risks and developments.

Safeguarding and Prevent Matters:

Safeguarding & Prevent Policy 2024/25 and Annual Report 2023/24

Sue Dare, Safeguarding Lead Trustee presented the 2024/25 updated policy and the 2023/24 annual report. She noted that the documents had been reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval by the Quality & Improvement Committee (via email).

The 2024/25 updated policy had been reviewed against the statutory framework including the updated statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024 (KCSIE Sep 2024). The Board noted the key changes and updates to the policy which were minimal this year as the policy was last updated in January 2024 (to include the updates from the KCSIE December 2023). There was discussion about how the policy and procedures would be implemented which

would be through: the reporting procedure, training and raising awareness and regular monitoring.

The Board discussed the 2023/24 annual report. There was an increase in safeguarding disclosures compared to last year which was regarded as positive and due to the reporting on the two campuses. Mental Health remained the highest disclosure type followed by gangs & youth violence and housing/homelessness. There would be further discussion outside the meeting between the Executive Principal and Issa Issa about students' concerns around housing and welfare/grants. The College's response to addressing student mental health and the support and resources in place were noted and that it was also working closely with external agencies to address the concerns.

The safeguarding aspect of the sub-contracting and partnership delivery had been included in the annual report, but the Board asked for assurance about the arrangements in place to monitor the work and expected to see this in the next SAR.

The Board thanked Elaine Smith, Director of Student Engagement and Well-Being for the positive and comprehensive report.

The Board:

- approved the updated 2024/25 Safeguarding & Prevent Policy.
- noted the Safeguarding & Prevent Annual Report 2023/24.

6. 3 Year Curriculum Plan

The Board discussed the curriculum plan for the Phase 2 scheme. The plan had been discussed at the board development session and the Executive's direction of travel recommended to the Board.

The curriculum plan for Phase 2 scheme agreed by the DfE had changed due to Block D which would not be built. The amended plan would be submitted to the DfE for approval. The Board discussed the curriculum strategy which was aligned with Local Skills Improvement Plans and the DfE targets. The priorities were growth in 16-18 yr olds and Level 3 provision.

The Board discussed the challenges which were mainly due to the space constraints as Block D (Business, Design and employer engagement) would not be built. The impact on the curriculum offer and the anticipated income were raised. Courses would be offered in different ways (i.e. classes in the evening, weekend and online) and off-site options would be explored such as the relocation of the patisserie course.

The management of space in the scheme and the work being undertaken to address the shortfall in space was discussed.

The Board supported the direction of travel on the curriculum plan for Phase 2 scheme and that further work would be done. The Project Working Group would consider the plan in detail prior to the Board meeting in November 2024.

7. Accounting Officer's Report

The Board discussed the key matters since its last meeting in July 2024.

The Board discussed:

- an update on the Integrated Facility Management (IFM) contract. The transition and mobilisation had been completed and had gone well. The reporting of the contract performance against the KPIs agreed would be presented in the Accounting Officer's report at the next Board meeting. Extending the IFM contract to SBA was being considered in order to provide a more streamlined cost-effective service and enable efficiencies.

8. Chief Financial Officer Report

The Board discussed the 2023/24 year-end financial position and 2024/25 current financial performance.

The Board discussed:

- the draft 2023/24 year-end financial position. The year-end operational deficit was £1.5m, a £200k adverse variance to the 2023/24 budget (£1.3m budgeted operating deficit). The variance was due to an increase in total expenditure of £400k. A 'Requires Improvement' financial health grade was expected from the ESFA. The year-end figures were subject to year-end accounting and audit adjustments which had not yet been finalised.
- the key risks to delivering the 2024/25 budget in order to deliver a break-even operating position and the mitigations in place. Forecast was that income would exceed the budget target, but the key risk was the funding for the student growth and the associated agency staff costs. The Vice Principal Finance and Performance noted the forecasting and business planning work being undertaken especially on the risk concerning staffing costs i.e. reviewing the staffing structure and delivery model efficiency to ensure that costs are within the agreed staffing budget. There would also be some contingency in the budget.
- the cash flow position remained an area of concern which was mainly due to the capital programme as a result of the delayed land sale proceeds. The risk was being closely monitored. SBC needed to achieve an operational budget surplus and build cash reserves in order to sustain it and make future capital investments especially relating to maintaining equipment at Nine Elms.
- the management accounts. The Board at its meeting in June 2024, agreed that monthly management accounts would be circulated to the Board from October 2024 with the September management accounts being the first set of accounts. Key Performance Indicators would be included in future reports.

9. Recruitment of Trustees

The Board discussed the recruitment of trustees on the SBC Board and a co-opted member on its Audit Committee. The Board asked that the recruitment process

commenced as soon as possible to enable potential candidates to be considered at the Group Nomination Committee meeting in October 2024. SBC Board succession planning would also be considered.

The Board:

- noted that Ruth Spellman had stepped down as a board member in July 2024.
- formally approved the appointment of Steve Balmont as the new Chair of the Audit Committee from 1 September 2024.

10. Declaration of Interests – Update

The Board authorised the new declared interests of Issa Issa, independent trustee and David Phoenix, LSBU Vice Chancellor (Accounting Officer). The Board noted the updated trustees register of interests 2024/25.

11. Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference – Review

At its meeting of 7 November 2023, the SBC Remuneration Committee discussed and agreed an amendment to its terms of reference (TOR) to include the remuneration review of the two College Principals (1st part of the meeting) and that the TOR are recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board approved the TOR of the SBC Remuneration Committee.

12. Updated Health & Safety Policy 2024/25

The 2024/25 updated policy had been reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit Committee (via email).

The Board noted the key changes and improvements to the policy. The Board approved the 2024/25 updated Health & Safety Policy. The 2023/24 Health & Safety annual report would be presented to the Board in early 2025.

13. Updated Single Equality Scheme 2024/25

The Board approved the 2024/25 updated Single Equality Scheme and noted that more work needed to be done when the policy is reviewed next year.

14. Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy 2024/25

The Board was presented with the updated Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy 2024/25, which had been reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval by the Quality & Improvement Committee (via email).

The Board noted the key changes and updates and approved the updated Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy for 2024/25.

15. Board Annual Work Plan 2024/25

The Board noted the annual work plan and meeting dates for 2024/25.

16. Any other business

There was no other business.

**Date of next meeting
4.00 pm on Wednesday, 20 November 2023**

Confirmed as a true record

(Chair)

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