

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Board  
held at 4.00pm on Wednesday, 15 January 2025  
via MS Teams**

**Present**

Ruth Farwell (Chair)  
Sue Dare (Vice Chair)  
Steve Balmont  
Nigel Duckers  
Issa Issa  
Thesia Kouloungou  
David Phoenix

**Apologies**

Mee Ling Ng  
Nyla-Rae Grahams

**In attendance**

Simon Cruickshank  
Chris Knell  
Monica Marongiu  
Fiona Morey  
Jacqueline Mutibwa  
Wayne Wright  
Hannah Catchpool, RSM External Auditors

**1. Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed the trustees to the meeting. The Chair noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the year-end reporting and approve the annual report and accounts for 2023/24. The above apologies were noted.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

No member declared an interest in any item on the agenda.

**3. Year-end Reporting and Approvals 2023/24**

The Chair of the Audit Committee provided assurance to the Board on the annual report and accounts and that the external audit report was positive.

RSM external audit findings

The delay in completing the external audit work was due to the ESFA funding audit that took place in the autumn. ESFA had taken 10 weeks longer than the 6 weeks initially advised which had an impact on RSM's external audit report. SBC had been granted a one-month extension to its accounts submission deadline by its regulators ESFA and OfS (since the SBC accounts are consolidated with those of LSBU).

Hannah Catchpool, RSM external auditors presented the external audit year-end report 2023/24 which had been discussed in detail by the Audit Committee (via email) prior to the Board meeting.

The audit of the accounts was substantially complete, subject to resolving the outstanding matters which were noted and were not material.

There was an update on the future of SW4 Catering Ltd (SBC's subsidiary). There was an intention to wind up the company within 12 months from the date of approval of the accounts as staff had been TUPEd to Mitie FM Ltd and trading had ceased in June 2024. Therefore, the accounts would be prepared based on a non-going concern which would be reflected in the audit report and accounts. This would only make textual changes to the report. On winding up the company any assets or liabilities would be transferred to SBC. The significant balance at year end which relates to intercompany accounts would be settled during the 2024/25 financial year. The accounts are consolidated into the SBC accounts.

SBC was still dependent on the continued support of LSBU and a letter of comfort to SBC to support the Going Concern assessment was noted.

The ESFA funding audit had no impact on the accounts and the outcome was positive with no material impact. The report would be considered by the Audit Committee at its next meeting in February 2025.

RSM gave an overview of the control environment assessing the effectiveness of the internal controls and that there were no significant risks. Most of the internal control recommendations relate to the funding assurance work and RSM commented that SBC was not an outlier in this respect. The recommendations would be considered and monitored by the Audit Committee and an update provided to the Board. An audit review of the internal controls would be considered to ensure that the control environment is sufficiently robust.

The Board noted that no material weakness had been identified. It was a positive audit with no major concerns and RSM would issue an unqualified audit opinion.

RSM thanked SBC staff for their help and support with the audit work during the year.

#### Letter of Representation to RSM

The draft letters of representation to the external auditors in connection with the audit of the financial statements and the regularity assurance engagement for the year ended 31 July 2024 had been reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 5 November 2024.

The Executive confirmed that all material matters had been disclosed to the auditors and that the representations were accurate and reasonable.

The Board approved the letters of representation in their final form and authorised the Chair to sign the letters on behalf of the Board.

## Annual report and accounts

The Board discussed the draft annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 July 2024 which had first been discussed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 5 November 2024 and further reviewed in detail prior to the Board meeting.

The Board received assurances from the Executive and the Accounting Officer that the content of the report and accounts were accurate and could be approved by the Board.

The Board approved the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 July 2024, subject to the textual changes being made and authorised the Chair and the Accounting Officer to sign on behalf of the Board.

### **4. Audit Committee Annual Report**

The Board received the Audit Committee Annual Report which had been discussed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 5 November 2024.

The Board noted the annual report and the Audit Committee's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the college's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency and the safeguarding of assets and that these arrangements are adequate and effective.

The Chair of the Audit Committee would sign the report when the accounts are signed.

### **5. Update on SBC's Finances and Recovery Plan**

The Board received a verbal update on SBC's financial performance following the Finance Task & Finish group meeting held on 17 December 2024. The Task & Finish group discussed the impact of 2023/24 outturn on 2024/25 current financial performance and considered the recovery plan that would bring the budget position back on track to the agreed budget position.

The management accounts for January 2025 would be shared with trustees to monitor the financial performance. The Task & Finish group would continue to monitor progress made on the recovery plan at its next meeting in February 2025 and provide an update to the Board at its next meeting in March 2025.

### **6. Update on Estates development**

Alternative development plans were still being explored depending on the likely financial receipt and an update would be provided to the Board at the end of January 2025.

### **7. Any other business**

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024/25

The draft 2023/24 SAR had been discussed at the Quality and Improvement Committee meeting on 28 October 2024 and further reviewed at the Board meeting on 20 November 2024. The Board approved the SAR 2023/24 and the updated QIP 2024/25 which would address the areas for improvement identified in the SAR 2023/24. A short version of SAR 2023/24 would be prepared.

Ofsted inspection

The Board received an update on the College's Ofsted inspection which would take place from 21-24 January 2025. It was a full inspection with 11 inspectors at both campuses. The preparation work was noted, and the feedback from the inspection would be provided on Friday 24 January 2025.

Recruitment of LSBU Vice Chancellor and group CEO

The Board noted with sadness that David Phoenix would be leaving LSBU in June 2025. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked him for all he has done and continues to do to enable the College to be successful. David's understanding of the FE sector was noted. The Chair noted that the recruitment process for his successor had commenced. SBC's views would be considered and also be represented at all stages of the process. Other stakeholders within and outside the group would also be involved in the recruitment process.

The Chair thanked trustees and staff for attending the additional meeting, especially Steve Balmont and Mee Ling Ng for their work on the year end approvals.

**Date of next meeting  
4.00 pm on Tuesday, 4 March 2025**

**Confirmed as a true record**

..... **(Chair)**