

**Minutes of the meeting of the SOUTH BANK COLLEGES BOARD
held on Tuesday 15 July 2025, 3.30-6.30pm
Clapham Campus, 45 Clapham Common South Side, London, SW4 9BL**

Present

Ruth Farwell (Chair)
Steve Balmont
Sue Dare
Deborah Johnston
Mee Ling Ng
Lydia Song (from item 3)

Apologies

Issa Issa
Thesia Kouloungou

In attendance

Anna Bazeos, Committee Secretary
Samuel Curtis, Group Company Secretary
Chris Knell, Vice-Principal, Finance and Operations
Monica Marongiu, Principal Lambeth College (via Teams)
Fiona Morey, CEO
Wayne Wright, Principal LSBTC

1. Chair's Business

The Chair provided the Board with an update from the LSBU Board including that Paul Kett had recently been appointed as the new CEO and Vice Chancellor of the LSBU Group.

The Board noted the written resolution that was passed via online resolution on 4 July regarding the approval of the non-consolidated pay award of £126k from the DfE.

2. Consideration of proposed new trustee

The Board considered the appointment of Lydia Song as a Trustee. After due consideration, the Board approved the appointment of Lydia Song to the Board of Trustees.

3. Declarations of Interest

Ruth Farwell and Deborah Johnston declared an interest in the item relating to Estates on the agenda, by virtue of their membership of the LSBU Board.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 22 May 2025.

5. **Matters arising**

The Board considered the matters arising document and noted that all the items were either complete or on the agenda.

The Board noted that the report on sustainability work would be carried forward as the only outstanding item and noted that the Vice Principal would be attending a future meeting on LSBU Group sustainability. The remaining outstanding action of the Health and Safety Annual Report timings would be added to the annual meeting planner.

The Board noted at minute 8 of the previous meeting, a further report from the Vice Principal would need to be added to the action log.

ACTION – The Vice Principal to prepare a revised version of his November 2024 paper and submit it to the next Audit Committee for review.

6.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7. Executive Principal's report

The Executive Principal highlighted key areas to the Board. She thanked the Principal at LSBTC for his work on the Technical Excellence bid, noting that the College was the largest provider of construction education in London.

The Board discussed a decline in engineering and science enrolments. It was noted that science enrolments at Nine Elms had doubled and continued to grow. The Board agreed that addressing these issues would require a two- to three-year plan rather than a one-year approach.

The Board noted that three Low Carbon Technician apprentices had entered the regional WorldSkills competition, and that one apprentice had successfully progressed to the finals of the national competition.

8. Accounting Officer's Report

The Board received an update from the Accounting Officer.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

9. **Vice Principal's Report**

The Vice Principal briefly summarised the 2024-25 forecast performance. The Board noted the May month-end management accounts, which had been circulated between meetings.

[REDACTED]

10. **Budget approval 2025-26**

The Board noted the budget principles presented on 3 April 2025 and the draft budget reviewed on 22 May 2025. The final version, presenting a break-even position, was subsequently endorsed by the Group Executive on 25 June 2025 and by the Task and Finish Group on 9 July 2025.

The Board acknowledged the break-even target and was assured that, should it not be achieved, swift corrective action would be taken. Members expressed concern that the current year's financial outturn remained significantly dependent on the delivery of the proposed estates strategy.

The Board noted that the contingency allocation in the budget of 1.5% was particularly tight and questioned its adequacy in managing emerging risks. Members queried the affordability and timing of potential pay commitments, including whether it would be prudent to defer decisions such as the staff pay award, pending greater financial clarity.

In discussing the budget assumptions, the Board examined the headline 25% growth projection and sought clarification on the composition of this figure - specifically, the proportion attributable to student number increases versus changes in per-pupil funding. The Executive confirmed that the projection incorporated a level of ambition and was based on anticipated lagged funding, rather than direct student growth. The Board also noted positive year-on-year growth in the 16–18 age group and acknowledged sectoral

uncertainty around the pay award.

The Board agreed that a further Task and Finish Group meeting should be convened in early autumn to explore growth assumptions in greater depth and to assess financial progress ahead of the December Board meeting.

Action - Governance team to arrange a further Task and Finish Group for early autumn.

The Board approved the 2025/26 budget.

11. **SBC Strategic Plan**

The Acting Vice Chancellor informed the Board of the importance of allowing the incoming Vice Chancellor to contribute to the development of the Strategic Plan before its finalisation. In light of this, the Board would receive an update and be asked to endorse the general direction of the plan at an additional September meeting.

The Board welcomed the inclusion of data on student achievement in the current draft and agreed that the list of achievements was excellent and should be promoted across the College and on websites. The Board also recommended that future iterations include greater emphasis on T Levels and employer engagement activity.

The Board endorsed the plan in its current form and agreed that the Executive should continue its development ahead of the next stage.

12. **Corporate Risk Register and Risk Appetite 2025-26**

The Board noted that the Risk Register and Risk Appetite for 2025–26 had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee. It was further noted that no changes had been recommended.

The Board approved both the Risk Register and the Risk Appetite.

13. **Updated Financial Regulations**

The Board noted that no changes were recommended to the College's financial regulations at this time, in line with the approach endorsed by the Audit Committee in June 2025 and approved the continuation of the current regulations pending future updates to the LSBU Group financial regulations.

14. **Sub-Contracting and Partnerships Policy 2025-26**

The Board noted that the draft 2025/26 Sub-contracting and Partnerships Policy was under review by LSBU Legal to ensure alignment with legislative requirements. Recognising that it may be too late to consider the final version at the December meeting, the Board requested for an additional meeting or a proposal by email between September and October for its review and

approval.

ACTION – Governance to arrange a further meeting or a proposal by email to consider and approve the final policy.

The Board noted the current position.

15. **Tuition Fees Policy 2025-2026**

The Board noted and approved the Student Fee Policy for 2025/26, which contained only modest updates from the previous year. Key changes included revised payment plan thresholds, updated payment methods, and the addition of guidance on 'Free Courses For Jobs' funding allocation. No changes were made to the advanced learner loans section.

16. **KPIs 2025-26 (educational, financial and HR)**

The Board requested that separate attendance targets be set for adult learners, with an 85% target agreed, in contrast to the 90% target for the 16–18 cohort.

The Board expressed concern that the KPI dashboard contained only a single metric relating to cash, despite there being six separate measures for educational KPIs. Members noted that a more balanced level of detail was needed. The Vice Principal explained that several cash-related ratios were included and tracked within the budget paper. He undertook to consolidate this information and ensure that all relevant financial indicators were included alongside the KPIs in a single, accessible format.

The Board also noted its disappointment that several KPIs, particularly financial targets and class sizes, had not met their intended benchmarks.

It was agreed that the updated KPIs should be circulated well in advance of the December Board meeting, given that the academic year would already be underway. The Board emphasised the need for early visibility of the raw data and stressed the importance of determining how KPIs would be monitored under the new strategic plan.

17. **SBC Board Self-Assessment**

The Board noted that one-to-one meetings had been conducted between each independent trustee and the Chair. The discussions had been structured around a series of prompts shared in advance.

The Board noted the main themes and suggested actions which the Board wanted to do better or differently in coming years which included having a calendar for future development suggestions, work on succession planning and the opportunity for the Board to interact more with the LSBU Board.

ACTION – Governance team to prepare a calendar for the future development sessions and a succession plan

The Vice Chair provided the Board with feedback from her appraisal of the Chair. The overall sentiment was highly positive, with the Board expressing appreciation for the Chair's professionalism and structured leadership of meetings. Members felt well supported and viewed the Chair as a trusted advocate in interactions with the LSBU Board. The Board also noted the valuable support the Chair had provided to the Executive following the departure of the University Vice-Chancellor. A formal vote of thanks was extended to the Chair.

18. Any other business

There was no other business.

19. Board Effectiveness Review Action Plan – update

The Board noted the update of the Board Effectiveness Review Action Plan.

20. LSBU Group EDI Report

The Board noted the EDI Report, which had been previously reviewed by the Quality and Improvement Committee. It was further noted that additional data from SBC would be incorporated into the report in future iterations, including both student and staff data.

The Board also agreed that the leadership section of the report should include governance, not only for SBC but across the entire Group. This point was acknowledged and would be communicated to the report's authors.

Action - FM to provide feedback regarding the inclusion of governance under the leadership section.

Date of next meeting

4th December 2025

Confirmed as a true record



(Chair)

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