

**Minutes of the meeting of the SOUTH BANK COLLEGES BOARD
held on Thursday 22 May 2025, 4:00 PM — 6:30 PM BST
LSBTC Nine Elms Campus Belmore Street London SW8 2JY**

Present

Ruth Farwell (Chair)
Steve Balmont
Sue Dare (Vice Chair)
Issa Issa (*until item 5*)
Thesia Kouloungou
Mee Ling Ng
David Phoenix

Apologies

Nyla Rae Graham

In attendance

Anna Bazeos, Committee Secretary
Alex Bush, Chief People and Legal Officer
Samuel Curtis, Group Company Secretary
Simon Cruickshank, Group Chief Finance Officer
Deborah Johnston, Deputy Vice Chancellor
Chris Knell, Vice-Principal, Finance and Operations
Monica Marongiu, Principal Lambeth College
Fiona Morey, CEO
Henry Robson, Deputy Vice President, Students Union
Wayne Wright, Principal LSBTC

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed Trustees to the meeting, extending a special welcome to the Board Secretary attending her first meeting, as well as to the LSBU Deputy Vice Chancellor, who was present in an observer capacity. The apology noted above was acknowledged.

The Chair noted that the Board had just attended a development session which provided Trustees with an update on how the HR and Finance functions were being integrated to support the Group model.

The Chair also updated Trustees on the recruitment process for the replacement of the Principal at LSBTC, reporting that it was progressing well and that a positive outcome was anticipated.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting of 4 March 2025 and 3 April 2025.

4. **Matters arising**

The Board considered the matters-arising document and agreed that only the final four actions would be carried forward. The remaining actions were marked as complete.

The Board further noted two additional actions that had arisen from the extra Board meeting in April - circulation of Counsel's note and an updated Phase 2 timeline highlighting key dates and decisions.



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

The Board received a verbal update from the Vice President of the Students' Union (SU).

The Board noted the wide range of events, initiatives, and opportunities for student engagement in 2024/25 to date. A highlight was the Student Voice Conference.

The Board was informed that the SU elections had been launched, with four candidates standing for the role of President. The outcome would be announced after the half-term break.

Trustees were also updated on other key events throughout the year, including *Love Your Culture*, *Anti-Bullying Week*, *International Women's Day*, the *Refreshers Fair*, and weekly planning meetings aimed at promoting student voice across college life.

The Board noted the report of the Students' Union.

6. **Executive Principal's report**

The Executive Principal provided an overview of the Report, highlighting key points: budget delivery risk for 2024/25, funding allocations for 2025/26, uncertainties around the decant affecting curriculum delivery and growth plans in 2025/26, and the risk of over-recruitment without matching funding.

Concerns were raised about learner attendance, with overall figures described as disappointing. The LSBTC Principal noted strong attendance among construction apprentices but identified that some mechatronics students were not well-suited to the course. Consequently, the college plans

to take a more active role in recruiting next year's cohort, in collaboration with CBRE.

The Board discussed the potential need for additional meetings before July due to pending decisions, financial constraints, and rapidly evolving external factors.

The Board noted that management is planning to control expenditure by stopping agency staff recruitment and focusing on hiring permanent staff for next year.

The 2.5% pay award was also discussed. Although the budget currently assumes 2%, all funding scenarios will be modelled and presented at the upcoming meeting.

ACTION: CK to prepare funding models with a range of options for discussion at the July meeting or an alternative session if required.

The Board reviewed predicted achievement, noting it is expected to be lower than the previous year. While grades, especially in GCSE English and Maths, are expected to improve, attendance remains a concern at 88% - below the preferred target of around 90%. The Board noted that there was an increased number of candidates compared to last year.

The Board noted the report of the Executive Principal.

7.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

8. Vice Principal's Finance Report

The Board discussed the approved budget principles from the 4 March meeting. It was noted that the budget aligns with the SBC vision and risk appetite, with ongoing work on curriculum planning and departmental budget meetings providing sufficient detail for the 2025/26 budget and 10-year financial model. The Board also acknowledged that upcoming spending reviews and announcements would impact the final budget decision in July.

The Executive acknowledged the importance of accurate finance and HR data and outlined plans to reduce reliance on agency staff through the recruitment of permanent employees. Trustees emphasised the need to

maintain credibility with the LSBU Board.

The Board requested further information on how updates were communicated to the LSBU Board and what criteria LSBU, as the parent company, used to assess SBC. It was agreed that this matter should be discussed at the upcoming Strategy Day. [REDACTED]

The Board discussed the capital amount and its classification as capital, given that it related to the repayment of the LSBU loan. Trustees sought clarification on what constituted income and operating expenditure, and whether the principal repayments should be shown separately. The Vice Principal agreed to meet with the Chair of the Audit Committee to discuss possible options.

[REDACTED]

The Board noted the Vice Principal's finance report.

9. **Health & Safety Annual Report 2023/24**

The Board received the annual Health and Safety Report for the period September 2023 to August 2024.

The Board discussed the timing of when this report was presented and agreed that it should be scheduled for the autumn term in future.

ACTION – AB to amend the yearly planner to ensure the report is scheduled at a more appropriate point in the cycle.

The Board approved the Annual Health & Safety report 2023/24

10. **Accountability Agreement**

The Board discussed the annual Accountability Agreement, which outlined how SBC was responding to key national, regional, and local skills demands. It was noted that the Agreement would be shared with the DfE and published on the SBC website in the autumn term. The Board also noted that the DfE would review progress against the Agreement at the annual strategic conversation in the summer term.

The Board approved the annual Accountability Agreement, subject to an amendment to revise the attendance improvement target from 8% to 3%. It was noted that 3% remained a positive target.

The Board approved the Accountability Agreement.

11. **SBC Curriculum Plan for 2025/26**

The Board discussed the annual Curriculum Plan. It was noted that the overall direction of travel remained the same, but the plan had been updated to reflect recent changes in policy.

The Board approved the report as presented; however, they noted that due to the anticipated decant issues, the delivery of certain courses might be subject to change. It was agreed that if any modifications concerning specific courses became necessary, proposals would be circulated to the Board for approval in advance or presented at the July meeting.

The Board approved the Curriculum plan for 2025/26.

12. **Any other business**

The Chair expressed gratitude to David Pheonix, who would be stepping down as Group CEO on 31 May. She acknowledged the exceptional contribution he had made to SBC and the LSBU Group and wished him well in his future endeavours.

The Board noted that Deborah Johnston would take on the role of Accounting Officer on an interim basis whilst the recruitment exercise was underway.

Date of next meeting
Tuesday 15 July 2025 at 4pm

Confirmed as a true record



(Chair)

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