

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Board  
held at 4.00pm on Tuesday, 4 March 2025  
in Board room, Clapham campus, Gateway College**

**Present**

Ruth Farwell (Chair)  
Sue Dare (Vice Chair)  
Nyla-Rae Graham  
Thesia Kouloungou  
Mee Ling Ng  
David Phoenix

**Apologies**

Steve Balmont  
Issa Issa

**In attendance**

Chris Knell  
Monica Marongiu  
Fiona Morey  
Jacqueline Mutibwa  
Wayne Wright  
Alex Bush, LSBU Group Chief People and Legal Officer (item 9)  
Alex Trifonov, SBC Head of IT services (item 10)  
Henry Robson, SU Vice President

**1. Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed the trustees to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed the following people: Nyla-Rae Graham, SU President, Henry Robson, SU Vice President, Alex Bush, LSBU Group Chief People and Legal Officer and Alex Trifonov, SBC Head of IT services. The above apologies were noted.

The Board had just had a session about the progress made and areas of focus for SBC which included: a presentation on SBC performance benchmarking by Phillip Moseley, ETIO, a trustee consultation on the draft SBC 5-year strategic plan (being reviewed) and the Ofsted report.

Nigel Duckers, Staff Trustee

The Chair informed the Board about Nigel Duckers' retirement from the College and Board on 3 March 2025. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Nigel for his contribution to the Board and the College and wished him well in his retirement.

**2. Update on Trustees Declaration of Interests and Declarations of Interest at the meeting**

The Vice Chair of the Board presented the report. The Board authorised the new declared interest of Ruth Farwell, Chair of the Board and noted the updated trustees register of interests 2024/25.

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

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

#### 14 February 2025 (special meeting)

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2025 as an accurate record. The minutes would be redacted prior to publication.

#### 15 January 2025 (additional meeting)

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025 as an accurate record and their publication, as redacted.

#### 20 November 2024

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 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 on the agenda of the meeting or had been completed. The outstanding actions were noted.

- 2023/24 external audit report, the internal control recommendations related to the funding assurance work would be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting in June 2025. The Board would be provided with an update at its meeting in July 2025.
- An audit review of the procurement controls to ensure that the control environment is sufficiently robust requested by the Board would be considered by the Audit Committee. The procurement controls would be reviewed as part of KPMG Financial Controls audit review in April/May 2025. An update would be provided to the Board at its meeting in July 2025.
- 2024/25 ESFA audit report on funding was being considered by the Audit Committee and an update would be provided to the Board at its meeting in May 2025.
- The governance matters i.e. a high-level directors accountability chart (distinction between the responsibility of LSBU Board and SBC Board), SBC's regulatory framework and the governance roles would be considered at a future meeting.
- The Further Education Commissioner's report (November 2024) on the apprenticeship provision would be shared with trustees as soon as possible.

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

The Students Union (SU) President and Vice President gave a report on the recent activities undertaken by the SU and upcoming activities.

Recent activities included Games Night, the January Refreshers Fair and Love Your Culture Day to help reconnect students with the college community and raise awareness of the resources and opportunities available to them. The Global Money Week, Project CREATE initiatives and the mentoring that students would receive were noted. SU officers had the opportunity to meet the Ofsted inspectors to discuss their role and experiences in the college community.

Upcoming events included LGBTQ+ events across the colleges, promoting diversity and inclusivity and raising awareness.

There was a discussion about the initiatives to support students' progression to LSBU.

## **6. Executive Principal's Report (LSBTC and LGC reports)**

The Board noted the key matters since the last report in November 2024.

- The outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection (January 2025), the College continued to be assessed as 'Good'. The full report would be published at the end of March 2025. Progress made since the last inspection in 2022 included the opening of LSBTC, a 3-year improving trend of student achievement and the significant student growth. Areas of strength included strong adult provision, the LSBU group pathways, focus on inclusivity, the quality of teaching and learning and teacher CPD. Apprenticeship provision continued to be an area for improvement. The final report would be shared with the trustees and discussed in detail at the Strategy Day in June 2025. The Board thanked all the staff involved in producing this outcome.
- 2024/25 in-year student achievement, attendance and retention showed improvements. On the apprenticeship provision, the Further Education Commissioner's report was positive though it remained a risk and continued to be reviewed by ESFA. 2024/25 predicted achievement was expected to be better due to improvements in attendance and retention.
- 2025/26 recruitment was positive with a three year upward trend in applications. The risk was the conversion of applications to offer and then enrolment. A KPI on the application to enrolment conversion rate with a target would be considered in order to benchmark the performance against other FE colleges and would align with the group's strategic pillar on 'access to opportunity'. Student application to LSBU was positive (up 63% on last year) which was due to the growth in level 3 students. The work being undertaken to enhance the progression journey within the group was noted.
- 2025/26 proposed curriculum plan was largely the same as the current offer and in line with the 5-year plan submitted to the ESFA (autumn 2024) which the

Board had approved. The plan was strongly aligned with key stakeholders' needs, skills priority areas and Labour Market information. The plan would continue to support growth in level 3 and 4, T levels and adult apprenticeships (the new funding levy). The Board supported the direction of travel on the proposed curriculum plan. The final plan along with the accountability agreement to ESFA would be presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting in May 2025.

- The key risks facing the College included the agency staff costs and a plan to make savings in year was being implemented and monitored by the Board Finance Task & Finish Group. There were funding risks concerning the ESFA additional FE funding (delay in communication of the details), in-year growth funding and the 5% reduction in funding for adult education for 2025/26. The impact on the subcontracting and partnership provision and the need to grow the in-house delivery was noted.
- The outcome of the autumn 2024/25 staff survey on engagement. The results were positive (74%) with an improving trend over the previous years. The response was low (42%) due the cyber security incident. Areas that staff felt least satisfied with were around communication and line management. The findings of the survey would be shared with the Curriculum Heads in order to drill down to departmental level and ascertain the causes of dissatisfaction. An action plan would be prepared to address the areas of concern and shared with the Board. The staff survey report was noted.

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

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

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Update on the IFM contract performance

The contract was generally progressing well. The financial risk concerning the high maintenance cost of the fixed assets at Clapham campus due to age was noted. A decant this year would help to address the risk.

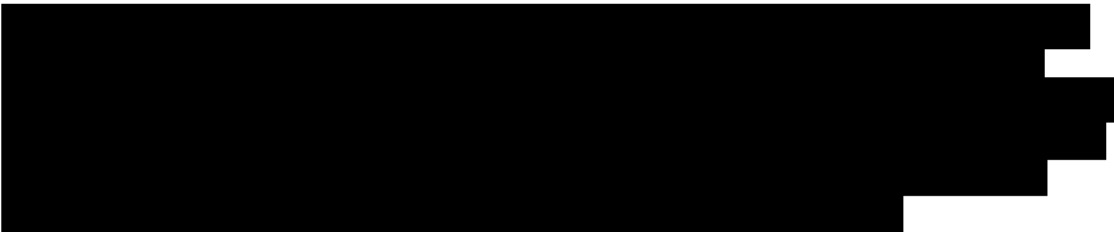
Cyber Security Incident at SBC

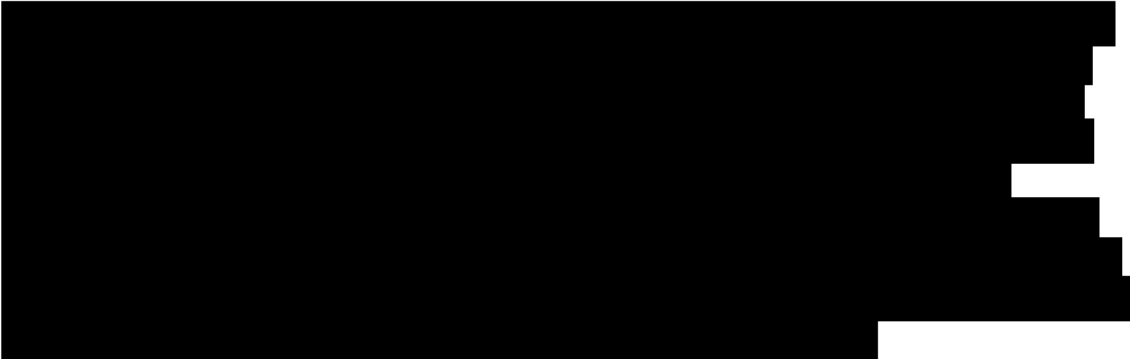
The Board received an update on the cyber incident in November 2024. The full report was being reviewed by the Audit Committee. The executive summary and agreed actions would be presented to the Board at its next meeting in May 2025.

**8. Vice Principal Finance & Performance’s Report**

The Board discussed the 2024/25 mid-year financial performance and 2025/26 budget setting.

- 2025/26 budget setting and the underlying principles used in the budget planning to help achieve the College’s strategy on growth and financial sustainability. The key assumptions and financial KPIs were noted. The Board supported the recommended budget principles. The draft budget would be presented to the Board at its meeting in May 2025 and approval sought at its meeting in July 2025.

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The Board noted the updated risk register as at February 2025.

**9. HR KPI Report**

The Board received a report on SBC’s performance against HR KPIs for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. The report provided an overview of the organisational health in terms of people/workforce and would support leadership discussions and strategic planning.

There was an update on the work undertaken since autumn 2024 to integrate the SBC HR team into the LSBU group HR team following their change of location. The benefits of the HR shared services model for SBC were noted which included better data analysis which would help improve decision making and planning on HR and finances. Future reports would include the gender pay gap, data on mandatory statistics, FE benchmarking data and an annual report. The Board's comments would be sought on the level of service agreed in the Service Level Agreement and the associated KPIs and targets. A six-monthly HR KPI report would be presented to the Board.

#### **10. Review of the IT systems in place to support the Learning Strategy**

The report had been discussed in detail at the last Quality & Improvement Committee meeting and recommended to the Board to provide assurance following the recent cyber incident.

The post cyber incident review had identified weaknesses in the system and the actions to address them were noted. The assessment of the current IT systems was that they were operating well and support the learning strategy. The inadequate network infrastructure and equipment at Clapham campus which was due to the age of the technology was noted.

#### **11. LSBU Group Sustainability Policy**

The Board received the group sustainability policy and the terms of reference for the sustainability steering group (SSG). SBC was represented on the SSG, the management body that oversaw the group's sustainability work and performance. Students and staff engagement on the sustainability agenda was noted. The Group Energy and Sustainability Manager would be invited to report on the sustainability work at a future board meeting.

#### **12. 2024/25 Board Effectiveness Review Action Plan**

The Board noted the progress being made against the 2024/25 Board effectiveness review action plan following the 2023/24 external governance review. The action plan included residual actions from the previous reviews.

The outstanding actions including the recruitment of trustees would be addressed and an update provided at the next Board meeting in May 2025.

The annual board effectiveness review (self-assessment) would be carried out during spring/summer 2025. The appraisal process for the Chair of the Board would be led by the Vice Chair.

#### **13. Board Development Plan 2025**

The Board noted the proposed development programme to be delivered in 2025.

#### **14. Report from Committees**

The Board noted the report from committee meetings held since the meeting in November 2024.

**15. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**Date of next meeting  
4.00 pm on Thursday, 22 May 2025**

**Confirmed as a true record**

*Ante Farrell.*

(Chair)

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