

Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Board

held at 4.00pm on Wednesday, 17 February 2021

Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present

Ruth Farwell (Chair)
Andrew Owen (Vice-Chair)
Steve Balmont
Sue Dare
Nigel Duckers
Mee Ling Ng
Theresa Quinton

Apologies

Jacqui Dyer
Shakira Martin
David Phoenix
Richard Flatman

In attendance

Michael Broadway
Paul Ivey
Rachel McCafferty
Fiona Morey
Jacqueline Mutibwa

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the trustees to the meeting. The above apologies were received.

The Board had just received an informative presentation from the Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment on the college's approach to online learning during the current government lockdown.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Board noted the following continuing declarations of interest: Sue Dare is senior lead at National College Creative Industries Ltd and interim CEO at National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure.

The Board noted that the LSBU Group pensions committee had been disbanded and the subsequent update in the interests of Steve Balmont, Chair of the committee, Ruth Farwell and Mee Ling Ng, members of the committee.

3. Minutes of the previous meetings

Meeting held on 12 January 2021

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 as an accurate record and their publication, as redacted.

4. Matters arising

Review 2020/21 Budget Position

An update on delivering the budget management strategies would be presented at the next meeting in May 2021. A 3-year finance strategy would be presented at the meeting in July 2021.

5. Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Matters

The Board was provided with a report on the EDI work being undertaken by the College. An update on EDI would continue be a standing item on the agenda as agreed by the Board at the EDI session held in September 2020.

The Board noted the EDI initiatives being undertaken which included: Investors In Diversity (IID), Leadership development, developing a Group EDI framework, setting up a research group to consider the attainment gap of 16 – 18 year old Black Caribbean students and at 19+ Asian and mixed group white and Black African students.

There was discussion about how the progress and impact of the EDI initiatives would be measured. It was noted that an EDI framework with KPIs and targets would be developed to enable the Board to monitor the progress and outcomes.

6. Update from the Students' Union President

The Student Union (SU) President gave a report on the recent activities undertaken by the SU during the 3rd lockdown many of which relate to student support during the pandemic when students are missing the sense of being together. The SU acknowledged the work being undertaken by the teaching staff on adapting different delivery models of learning across the College in the difficult circumstances and the support on health & safety and well-being issues.

The Board acknowledged the challenges faced by the students during the lockdown and would be provided with regular reports on the work of the SU.

7. Executive Principal's Report

The report provided an update on the key areas of the college since the last meeting in November 2020.

The Board discussed:

- the Government FE White Paper Skills for Jobs published in January 2021 which was in close alignment with the College and Group Strategy.
- the predicted decline in 2020/21 achievement due to some instances of low student engagement in remote learning during the 3rd lockdown and that it was an area of high risk. English and Maths remains a key focus for the College. There was uncertainty at a national level about the assessment of students'

achievement for 2020/21 and advice from the exam boards was awaited. Intervention measures and initiatives were in place to address the challenges and improve outcomes. New strategies for re-engaging and supporting students to catch up on missed learning post lockdown was in development. Retention was positive and in line with last year's performance.

- apprenticeship outcome and the predicted drop in achievement compared to the previous year due to the impact of Covid19 on employment and the historic poorly performing programmes.
- the outcome of the Student Perception of the College (SPOC), Autumn Survey Report 2020/21. The overall response rate was 82% which was better than 2019/20, overall perception (strongly agree/agree) of the College was 89% which was better than 2019/20. The findings showed an improvement from last year regarding the perceptions on the different aspects of the provision.
- student recruitment 2020/21. There was concern about the drop in recruitment figures especially adult students due to lockdown arrangements and that there was a risk of AEB claw back. It was a sector wide issue and the ESFA and GLA were analysing the situation. The Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding support for adult further education would be explored. The College's bid proposal would be circulated to trustees.
- update on Covid19 and the actions that had been undertaken during the 3rd lockdown and the plans for re-opening including opportunities for students to catch up. There was also an update on the Health & Safety audit carried out by Internal Auditors BDO, progress made against the actions identified.
- the new appointments at the College; Wayne Wright as the new Deputy Principal Quality and Excellence (start date 1 March 2021); Romy Jones, Project Director for Vauxhall Technical College to support the development of the technical college until its launch (18 months).

The Board noted the challenges facing the College during the 3rd lockdown and the potential impact on students' achievement outcomes for 2020/21.

8. Update on Estates Programme

The Board was provided with an update on the Nine Elms STEAM Centre (NESC) Vauxhall site.

There was an update on the demolition of buildings on the Vauxhall site. The Board noted that the ongoing party wall dispute with the adjacent housing development had been resolved and agreement reached. The signing of the final legal settlement and licence agreement was awaited.

A progress report on the NESC project was provided. The Board noted:

- that the DfE Amendment and Consent Deed for SBC estates strategy and the S106 agreement had been signed. The contract with Graham Construction for the construction of Block 'A' had been signed to enable construction work to commence.

- that the £1.4m (plus VAT) budget increase was awarded for GLA additional funding for costs associated with Covid19. Due to project delays, the GLA had approved the Deed of Variation to enable the 2019/20 underspend on the grant to be carried forward to 2020/21.

9. Chief Financial Officer Report and Update on 2020/21 Budget Position

It was noted that an update on 2020/21 budget position and the management accounts for the period were not available at the meeting due to LSBU IT cyber incident and the inability to access the Finance system.

The Board noted an update on the financial matters at Lambeth College and the updated CFADs Turnaround financial KPIs.

10. Progress Report on CFAD's Turnaround Plan

The Board was presented with a progress report on the CFADs Turnaround KPIs agreed as part of the transition funding arrangements put in place on the transfer of the College to LSBU. It was noted that the 3-year turnaround KPIs were linked to education quality, growth and financial sustainability.

The Board noted the challenges in achieving the targets and timescales agreed with DfE on the College's turnaround. It was noted that the delays on the NES project Vauxhall campus and Covid19 had an impact on growth targets. It was also noted that the College was working on the curriculum plan which includes growth and in particular with LSBU on the growth targets for Apprenticeships and Level 4 provision.

The Board noted the progress being made to achieve the CFADs turnaround KPIs.

11. SBC Strategy (Final Version)

The Board was presented with the final version of SBC strategy for approval and the proposed KPIs for discussion. It was noted that the strategy document had been updated following the discussion at the last Board meeting and that a student friendly version was being developed.

The Board reviewed the proposed KPI and milestone framework linked to the new SBC strategy and fit in with the Group framework and enable the delivery of the overarching goals. The Board noted that the framework needed to be reduced to headline KPIs and streamlined so that it was strategic and more helpful in monitoring performance.

The Board approved the SBC strategy and that the KPI and milestone framework would be reviewed and presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting in May 2021.

12. Estates Development - Developer Option

The Board at its last meeting discussed the Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL) report on SBC estates development appraisal and had agreed three recommendations for estate disposal.

The Board discussed the report and noted:

- the challenges due to the delay on the DfE approval of SBC estate plan which had resulted in project time and cost constraints. The educational need required short development periods and Covid19 had made future valuation of property more uncertain.
- the challenges inherent in the sequential approach to asset disposal which would be the case if the JLL approach were adopted. A piecemeal market approach to asset disposal and building development would increase project delivery time, increase- uncertainty on numbers and cash flow challenges and impact on SBC's educational delivery and institutional turnaround.

The Board discussed the legal implications and noted:

- Its duties to act in the best interests of SBC under Companies Act and Charities Act and the additional requirements that the trustees needed to consider when disposing of land by sale. Trustees requested further advice on their duties. This advice will be addressed as part of the detailed work on the proposed transaction and reported to the Board ahead of any request for a decision to contract with the developer.
- SBC's obligations to the DfE under the Asset Deed, Legal Charge and Amendment and Consent Deed. The obligations would be addressed as part of the detailed work on the proposed transaction.
- that LSBU's consent is required under the Governance agreement.

13. Risk Management Policy, Appetite Statement and Revised Risk Register

The Board was presented with the Group Risk Policy which was approved by the LSBU Group Audit Committee in June 2020. The Board noted that the Risk Policy and Risk Appetite Statement had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2021. The Chair of Audit Committee gave a report on the discussion.

The SBC Audit Committee recommended that the Group Risk Policy was formally adopted by SBC. The SBC Board approved that SBC adopts the Group Risk Policy.

The Risk Policy set out the Group's approach to risk management which requires each individual entity of the Group to adopt its own risk appetite statement. The Board noted the recommendation made by the Audit Committee and approved that SBC adopts the risk appetite statements for each risk type:

- Financial – cautious;
- Legal and compliance – minimal;

- Academic delivery – open;
- Reputational – cautious.

The Board noted that an overall risk appetite statement was not set but the statements for each risk types would be used as a framework for decision making.

Updated Risk Register

The Board noted that the risk register had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2021. The Board reviewed the updated risk register which was aligned with the LSBU risk register.

It was noted that the risk register would be further reviewed so that it was streamlined and more strategic.

14. Trustees Development Programme 2021

The Board discussed the proposed development programme to be delivered in 2021. It was noted that a session on Performance Management in terms of regulatory and Board responsibilities would be included in the programme.

15. SBC Subsidiary - South Bank Skills, a private limited company

The Board was informed about the proposal to set up South Bank Skills, a private limited company as a SBC subsidiary to support a flexible and employer responsive delivery model for skills training. The Board was supportive of the proposal and that it would be provided with a more detailed report during the year.

16. Report from Committees

The Board noted the report from Committee meetings held since the last meeting on 12 January 2021.

**Date of next meeting
4.00 pm on Tuesday, 4 May 2021**

Confirmed as a true record

(Chair)

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