

Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Board

held at 4.00pm on Tuesday, 14 July 2020

Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present

Ruth Farwell (Chair)
Andrew Owen (Vice-Chair)
Steve Balmont
Sue Dare
Nigel Duckers
Jacqui Dyer
Shakira Martin
Mee Ling Ng
Adesewa Ogunyomi
David Phoenix

In attendance

Michael Broadway
Richard Duke (item 9)
Paul Ivey
Fiona Morey
Jacqueline Mutibwa
Michael Webb

Apologies

Richard Flatman

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the trustees to the meeting; The Chair welcomed Cllr Jacqui Dyer, the new Independent Trustee to her first Board meeting.

The above apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Interests

The Board noted the following continuing declarations of interest: Steve Balmont is Chair, LSBU Pensions sub-committee; Mee Ling Ng is a director of LSBU; Sue Dare is senior lead at National College Creative Industries Ltd and interim CEO at National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure; David Phoenix is a director of LSBU and SBA.

3. Minutes of the previous meetings

(i) Meeting held on 6 May 2020

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020 as an accurate record, subject to a minor amendment and their publication, as redacted.

(ii) Strategy Session held on 9 June 2020

The Board approved the notes of the strategy session held on 9 June 2020 as an accurate record.

The Board approved the minutes of the Pension Update discussion held on 9 June 2020 as an accurate record, and their publication.

4. Matters arising

The Board would be informed of the outcome of the pension consultation as soon as it is known.

5. Corporate Risk Register Review

The Board discussed the updated risk register which the Audit Committee had discussed at its meeting in June 2020. It was noted that the risk register had been updated to include risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic, and recommendations made by the Board at its meeting in February 2020.

The Board reviewed the register and noted:

- that there were a number of operational high risks especially those related to inadequate IT infrastructure. The Board requested the inclusion of strategic risks on the register.
- that the presentation of the risk register would be updated to include extra columns for: mitigation measures in place; actions to manage the risk; progress on actions with dates and lead officer. The register would be aligned with the LSBU risk register format.

6. Executive Principal's Report

This report provided an update on the predicted achievement 2019/20, response to the coronavirus pandemic, and planning and preparations for 2020/21.

The Board discussed:

- the 2019/20 student predicted achievement data and the significant work that had been undertaken on assessing classroom-based learning following DfE guidelines. It was noted that if the results submitted to the awarding body for moderation were unchanged the overall predicted achievement 2019/20 was 90% (16-18 was 84.2% and 19+ was 92%) which was positive and an improvement from the previous year's performance. There was an improvement in the Apprenticeship performance which was better than the national average and the previous year's achievement. The overall achievement outcome was positive. However there was a risk the results could be moderated downwards if an average of performance in the last three years was used.
- the college turnaround, it was noted that good progress had been made to date by reducing the operating deficit from £6.7m (2017/18) to a £2.7m

overspend (2019/20) through a number of financial savings and interventions set out in the report. The college was on track to a sustainable position by 2022/23.

- the college's response to the coronavirus pandemic and the work that had been undertaken in preparation for return to college which included: risk assessments and control measures, health & safety arrangements, improvement to the IT infrastructure to support remote learning, staff questionnaire to capture health and welfare matters. It was noted that the college had opened for a small number of students in mid-June 2020 in line with DfE guidance. Further work would be undertaken in preparation for wider re-opening in mid-August for the new academic year.
- that due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, there had been a decline in 2020/21 application numbers from the previous year. There was uncertainty about the future recruitment patterns following the pandemic. There was discussion about whether the curriculum offer was appropriate for skills required in the post pandemic economy. The Board noted that the online recruitment processes were working well.
- a number of positive achievements set out in the report including the Jack Petchy Award 2020 for excellence to 30 students, high levels of student engagement in Black Lives Matter activities and Festival of Learning programme for staff.

Governors Update on Covid19 Return to College Strategy

The Board reviewed the steps being taken to re-open the College. The Board noted:

- that small numbers (avg. 60 a day) of 16-18 year olds had been invited to attend college from 23 June 2020, selected because they were 'at risk' students and/or have assessments to complete to achieve their qualifications.
- the extensive work that had been undertaken to ensure the health & safety and wellbeing of students and staff who had returned to college. A number of measures had been put in place which comply with the government and health authority guidance.
- that remote education would remain the predominant mode of learning though other delivery models would be considered. Management was mindful about access to technology and digital inequality of students and staff. IT equipment was being purchased for students. Students and staff were also being supported on health and well-being issues.
- the arrangements for re-opening the college were overseen by the Health and Safety committee that meets regularly to review the risk assessments and control measures in place.
- that in preparation for wider re-opening in September 2020, a staff questionnaire has been undertaken to review individual staff risks on returning.

- that the current pandemic situation and national guidance were ever-changing and that the Health & Safety Committee would continue to monitor closely the government and health authorities guidelines to ensure that all necessary precautions were being taken for the safety of students and staff.

The Board supported the work being undertaken on the risk assessment and control measures, which was in line with government guidelines, and approved the re-opening of the college.

7. Update on Estates Programme

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

There was an update on the demolition of buildings on the Vauxhall campus and the ongoing party wall dispute with the adjacent housing development. It was noted that the Board would be kept updated on the matter.

A progress report on the NESC project was provided. The Board noted that GLA had approved the 2nd Stage planning application on 23 June 2020. Lambeth Council had agreed the changes proposed by the stakeholders on the structural design as Non-Material Amendments (NMA).

The Board noted a progress report on the transition activities for the Vauxhall estates strategy. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

At its meeting on 6 May 2020, the Board, discussed DfE's decision on the SBC estates strategy and agreed to support the principle of a negative pledge. The terms of the agreement had been agreed in principle. The draft contract was awaited.

The Board agreed to delegate authority to a sub-committee of the Chair of the Board, an Independent Trustee and the Accounting Officer to authorise execution of a revised grant agreement and/or any related arrangements with the DfE. The delegation of authority was subject to the agreement not committing SBC to unfunded expenditure.

8. Chief Financial Officer Report, Budget 2020/21 and ESFA Financial Return

The report provided an update on the financial performance of Lambeth College, ESFA financial forecast and budget 2020/21.

The Board noted:

- that there were no significantly new financial matters to report since the last meeting in May 2020, arising from the coronavirus pandemic.
- that the year to date (YTD) at the end of May 2020 showed a deficit of £695k compared to a budget deficit of £2,321k; a positive variance of £1,626k. The variance was largely to do with timing due to a re-profiling of funding grants. Staff costs were overspent by £429k due to restructuring of a faculty and

agency staff costs. There was an under spend on operating expenses (£402k) and depreciation costs (£375k).

- that the budget deficit for the full year was £2,785k, and the forecast for the year, after allowing for the impact of the pandemic showed a deficit of £2,806k, an adverse variance of £21k. The main reasons for the variance were: the protection of the funding body grants by ESFA and GLA this year; short courses and commercial income had been affected by the lockdown resulting in a loss of income (£450k) and nursery income due to the enforced closure (£100k).
- that a cash flow for 2020/21 was shown in the ESFA return.
- the ESFA 3-year financial forecast for the Board's approval. The Board noted the commentary explaining the College's position, plan and risks. It was noted that the figures were in line with the CFADS model and that the forecasts would be submitted to ESFA by 31 July 2020.
- the Tuition Fee Policy 2020/21 for approval by the Board. It was noted that the policy was in line with the previous year's policy, there were no material changes and that fees would be set in line with ESFA guidance.
- the key risks relate to a sustainable financial model and in particular were linked to: student numbers, course contribution rates, staff costs and management of other costs.
- the 2020/21 draft budget. An initial version was discussed at the last meeting in May 2020. The draft budget was modelled on a budget deficit of c. £1.7m which would be £700k better than the CFADS model.
- the review of faculty contribution rates, the mix of adult/16-18 students was a challenge in delivering higher contribution rates. It was noted that a blended learning delivery model of teaching could be considered to address the matter.

The Board:

- noted the management accounts as at the end of May 2020 and a forecast for the final two months in the financial year.
- approved the Lambeth College budget for 2019/20, subject to consent of LSBU under the Governance Agreement.
- approved a capital budget of £400k to support investment in IT infrastructure and equipment to enable a more resilient base for operating remotely in the future.
- requested that further work be done on sensitivity analysis and possible scenarios including contingency planning as well as potential growth, taking the current budget as the baseline.
- approved the ESFA 3-year Financial Plan and authorised the Accounting Officer to sign the ESFA return on behalf of the Board, subject to consent of LSBU under the Governance Agreement.
- approved the Tuition Fee policy for 2020/21.

- authorised that Bridget Omakobia, Lambeth College Head of Finance, Payroll & Pensions is appointed as a signatory to Lambeth College bank accounts in the interim period between the departure of the current CFO and the start date of the appointed CFO.

Paul Ivey left the meeting

9. LSBU Group Strategy 2020-25

Richard Duke joined the meeting

The draft LSBU Group Strategy 2020-25 had been updated following a detailed discussion at the Board strategy session on 9 June 2020 and staff and stakeholder engagement across the Group which had been very positive.

The Board reviewed the document and requested more emphasis on equality & diversity issues and support on digital enabling skills in the delivery of the strategy.

It was noted that the next step was for each entity to develop its strategy and key performance indicators fitting in with the Group strategy framework and enabling the delivery of the overarching goals.

The Board thanked Richard Duke, LSBU Director of Strategy and Planning and the team for the considerable work undertaken on the strategy. The Board supported the final draft LSBU Group Strategy 2020-25 prior to approval by the LSBU Board at its meeting of 16 July 2020.

Richard Duke left the meeting

10. Curriculum Strategy 2020/21

The report set out the 2020/21 Curriculum Plan which was developed through the annual business planning and growth cycle and in line with the estates strategy.

The Executive Principal gave an update on the development of the college's curriculum strategy which was discussed at the Board Strategy session in June 2020.

The Board discussed the curriculum plan and noted:

- that the plan continued to focus on growth in 16-18 year old provision, level 3 provision for learners, a cost effective sustainable curriculum model and in-house delivery of the curriculum.
- that the offer had been adapted in light of the pandemic, responding to local needs by working with employers, Job Centre Plus, GLA and Lambeth Council to ensure strong alignment between skills needs and the education and training offer.
- the other factors that had shaped the plan which included: the introduction of new courses to support the career progression pathways such as adult

traineeship programme; a Digital Functional skills and HNCs in Business and Engineering; funding requirements such as the £500k GLA Innovation fund for programmes to support vulnerable students and health care workers; gateway provision (English, Math, digital skills, ESOL); growth and development of Tabard Street; COVID recovery bid for programmes supporting the delivery of digital skills, construction and entry to employment programmes.

- that a flexible approach to course delivery would be adapted which would include; online, classroom based or hybrid. The plan would support student groups hardest hit by the impact of the pandemic.
- that the plan ensured that the funding income streams were met. The challenge was growth of a sustainable curriculum model for 16-18 year-old offer.

The Board approved the Curriculum Strategy 2020/21.

11. Reports from Committees

The Chair of Quality and Improvement Committee gave a verbal report and noted that it was a positive meeting and good progress was being made. However, in the long-term, quality assurance on remote learning delivery needed to be reviewed. The Chair of the Committee noted that there were no concerns that needed to be brought to the attention of the Board at this time.

The Chair of Audit Committee gave a verbal report and noted that the meeting focused on the review of the risk registers especially the Covid19 and the audit planning work for 2020/21. The Chair of the Committee noted that there were no concerns that needed to be brought to the attention of the Board at this time.

12. Any other business

Student Trustee

The Chair noted that Adesewa Ogunyomi would be stepping down from the Board in September 2020. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Adesewa Ogunyomi for her contribution to the Board and College and wished her well in her future endeavours.

Departure of Lambeth College Chief Financial Officer

The Chair noted that Michael Webb would be leaving Lambeth College at the end of July 2020. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Michael Webb for his service and contribution to the Board and College and wished him well in his future endeavours.

Date of next meeting

4.00pm, on Wednesday 16 September 2020

Confirmed as a true record

(Chair)

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