

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Board
held at 4.00pm on Wednesday, 14 July 2021
Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

Present

Ruth Farwell (Chair)
Andrew Owen (Vice-Chair)
Steve Balmont
Nigel Duckers
Moriam Folawiyo
Shakira Martin
Mee Ling Ng
David Phoenix

Apologies

Sue Dare
Jacqui Dyer

In attendance

Michael Broadway
Richard Flatman
Paul Ivey
Rachel McCafferty
Fiona Morey
Jacqueline Mutibwa
Wayne Wright

1. Welcome and apologies

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

2. Declaration of Interests

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

3. Minutes of the previous meetings

(i) Meeting held on 4 May 2021

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2021 as an accurate record and their publication, as redacted.

(ii) Strategy Session held on 9 June 2021

The Board approved the notes of the strategy session held on 9 June 2021 as an accurate record.

(iii) Meeting held on 21 June 2021

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021 as an accurate record, subject to some minor amendments and their publication with a minor amendment to the proposed redactions.

4. Matters arising

The Board noted the update on matters arising from the previous meetings.

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

The Board discussed an update on EDI work being undertaken to embed EDI in all aspects of the college's work. The Board noted the intention to include at least one EDI objective for managers linked to their role.

The Board received assurance from the Executive Principal on the reference to 'bullying and harassment' in the report, the meaning in this context and how it was being addressed.

The Board welcomed the appointment of an EDI lead at the College and the support received from the EDI team at LSBU.

6. Executive Principal's Report

The report provided an update on the key areas of the College since the last meeting in May 2021.

The Board discussed:

- the impact of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns on the students' learning experience. Creative and intensive teaching had been provided to enable students to catch up on missed learning post lockdown.
- the challenges concerning the adapted exams policies for 2020/21 and the arrangements for the awarding of qualifications which would have an impact on achievement performance especially those that are not awarded by the teacher assessment grade (TAG). It was noted that not all of the assessments of practical skills have yet been completed. The College self-assessment report will address this and provide a contextual analysis.
- the 2020/21 predicted achievement which had dropped compared to the previous year and below the KPI target. Retention was positive, above last year's performance and the national average. Predicted achievement in apprenticeships had dropped compared to the previous year and national achievement which was mainly due to furlough and redundancies. The Board would be provided with a full analysis of the achievement data at the meeting in September 2021.
- the progress being made on creating a Teaching, Learning & Assessment culture and work being undertaken on CPD research on supporting teaching staff on quality of teaching.
- the preparation work for the next Ofsted visit which was anticipated in the autumn term 2021/22. It would be the College's first inspection under the new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) which was significantly different from the previous inspection framework and that staff were being provided with training on the new EIF approach. The Executive Principal thanked the following

trustees: Sue Dare, Mee Ling Ng and Shakira Martin for their input in improving the College's quality of learning and their engagement with students.

- an update on work being undertaken to increase student enrolment. A review of the student journey from application to enrolment process had been undertaken and the recommendations adapted including the appointment of a project lead role on the student journey. Focus was on converting applications to enrolments. The Quality and Improvement Committee would monitor the progress being made and consider improvements.
- that staff had worked tirelessly to support students through the many challenges of the pandemic. They responded well to the significant demands of the pandemic situation and their ability to adapt and deliver a flexible approach to course delivery.
- an update on the discussions with the trade unions on pay awards and the College's current financial position. The 2020/21 budget included a 1% staff pay award which staff would receive in July 2021.
- the strong integration of the College and LSBU shared services in health & safety, estates, IT, Human Resources, Finance and Governance. There was also shared learning in the teaching provision.
- an update on the developments at London South Bank Technical College (LSBTC). The curriculum planning was underway in partnership with LSBU on the development of a range of L4 qualification offers. The College had submitted an application to deliver T levels from September 2023 which had been granted. The curriculum offer would be launched in September 2021 for student recruitment for 2022/23.

7. Student Voice

Update from the Students' Union President

The Chair welcomed Moriam Folawiyo, the new student trustee to her first Board meeting.

The Student Union (SU) President gave a report on the recent activities undertaken by the SU, in particular the racial justice project which involved working with the Commission for Racial Equality in collaboration with 10 other colleges nationally. The project has been embedded into the SU work programme for the next academic year and hopefully would promote racial justice. The findings would inform policy makers at a national level and create change.

The Board also noted the work being undertaken by SU to promote its services to students and the activities due to be delivered in the next academic year.

The Board acknowledged the strong vision and leadership of the new SU and that joint working with LSBU SU was needed to support student transition to LSBU.

Annual Students Conference - Feedback from Mee Ling Ng, Trustee

The Board received feedback from Mee Ling Ng on the College's annual student conference that was held on 20 May 2021. She noted that the attendance and engagement was high, the programme was well structured and it was an inspiring event. It was noted that trustees would be invited to attend the annual event.

Report from Sue Dare, Lead Trustee for Safeguarding

In the absence of Sue Dare, the Chair noted that two safeguarding meetings had been held with SU and a group of students and that there were no concerns that needed to be brought to the Board's attention at this time.

8. Update on Estates Programme

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

It was noted that the demolition works on the Vauxhall site was progressing well.

The Board received a progress report on the NESC project. The Board noted:

- that despite the initial project delays, work was progressing well on the construction of Block 'A' and the expected completion date was at the start of 2022/23 academic year.
- that DfE had accepted the SBC bid for a match funded grant from the FE Transformation Fund towards the cost of building Block B at Vauxhall (1st stage). A bid for 2nd Stage is being prepared for submission to the DfE in October 2021.
- that GLA approval was awaited on the new Deed of Variation to recover the 2020/21 underspend and that its carried forward to 2021/22 and 2022/23.

There was discussion about the IT strategy for the new provision which needed to be aligned with the curriculum strategy. Graham Construction would provide a report on the IT strategy and that the project working group would discuss the matter in detail.

9. Update on the London Realty Proposal

The Board discussed the report.

10. Chief Financial Officer Report and 2021/22 Student Fee Policy

The report provided an update on the financial performance of Lambeth College and presented the 2021/22 Student Fee Policy for approval.

The Board discussed:

- the year to date at the end of May 2021. YTD income showed a £2,238k positive variance compared to budget which was due to the additional grant funding streams awarded to the College. Staff costs showed an overspend

of £612k, the full year forecast showed an overspend of £1m (excluding the annual pay increment). The significant variance on staffing costs was due to the inability to achieve the £800k agreed savings on staff costs and the additional costs to support High Needs students. Non staff costs were in line with budget expectations.

- the full year operational forecast which did not take into account the Transition Unit grant funding or the anticipated £1.4m pension costs that may arise at the financial year end.
- the key risk of GLA claw back of AEB funding for 2020/21 delivery levels. It was noted that the deadline for submission of the business case to retain the funding was 31 July 2021.
- the balance sheet position which had been updated to include KPIs to reflect the revised FE Commissioner financial benchmarks published in February 2021 and the cash flow position to end of 2020/21.
- the Student Fee Policy 2021/22 (appendix 2). 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 Board approved the Student Fee Policy for 2021/22.

The Board noted the College's financial position which remained challenging.

11. 2021/22 Budget and 3-year Financial Planning Model

The Board was presented with the 2021/22 budget for approval. The Board noted its alignment with the curriculum plan 2021/22.

The Board discussed:

- the proposed 2021/22 budget which had been discussed at previous meetings. The budget was modelled on a £1.4m operating deficit (before pension costs) and was developed through a comprehensive business planning process.
- that the proposed budget was based on delivering the confirmed funding income and addressing the underlying financial inefficiencies. The budget assumed a 1% staff pay award and that a 1% pay award would also be made in 2020/21.
- the proposed contingencies which included the pay award; only delegating part of the staff budgets to faculties, thus retaining some centrally; monitoring recruitment of students against performance targets.
- the key risks to delivering the 2021/22 budget. The key drivers of the budget assumptions were linked to curriculum delivery plans and student enrolment targets but remain a significant risk to the financial model. In case the targets were not achieved, prompt action would be taken on reorganisation of the staff structure. There were other risks associated with the pandemic and teachers' pension scheme due to the uncertainty of the continuation of the government grant funding support.

- the 3-year financial model (appendix A). The key strategies and assumptions made within the framework did not include the anticipated positive impact of the new provision at Vauxhall which had not yet been modelled. The college was expected to open for the academic year 2022/23 and hence its contributions could not be factored in the 3-year financial planning. Further work would be undertaken to prepare a 5-year financial model that was needed to analyse the impact of the provision at Vauxhall.

The Board noted the sensitivity analysis with alternative scenarios for Budget 2021/22 and associated impact on Transaction Unit Funding.

The Board acknowledged that delivering the 2021/22 would be a challenge due to the uncertainty of achieving the enrolment target. The Board would be provided with regular updates on the budget position especially in October 2021.

The Board:

- approved the Lambeth College budget for 2021/22, subject to consent of LSBU under the Governance Agreement.
- noted the contents of the College Financial Return commentary required for ESFA Cash Flow Forecast Return (CFFR) report which would be in line with the 3-year financial planning model (appendix B) and the 2021/22 proposed budget position. The CFFR would be submitted to ESFA by 31 July 2021.

12. Curriculum Plan 2021/22

The Board was presented with the 2021/22 curriculum plan which was developed through the annual business planning and growth cycle and in line with SBC strategic plan and estates strategy.

The Board discussed:

- an overview of the College's approach to building a sustainable curriculum model. The plan was aligned to local and regional skills strategies such as; the Skills for Londoners strategy, Lambeth Council Adult and Skills strategy, local labour market intelligence and market share analysis to ensure strong alignment between skills needs and the education and training offer.
- the plan which focused on growth targets for 16-18 yr olds, L3-4 provision, apprenticeships and reduction in sub-contracting and partnership delivery.
- the curriculum planning priorities and targeted areas for growth. The new provisions included: Adult gateway (London recovery), Lambeth Youth Hub, Gateway college offer (i.e. English, Math, digital skills, ESOL), a new L3 computing course, Health Skills Centre at Tabard Street and Apprenticeships (with the introduction of the skills coach role). The Fashion offer would be withdrawn due to low recruitment.
- employer engagement that would support the curriculum development, shape the training and provide work experience. The creation of a new Skills Partnership for Business scheme and developing links with employers.

- work being undertaken on building a sustainable curriculum model which was key to the financial turnaround of the College. The challenges relate to; reducing reliance on partnership delivery of the GLA devolved budget, an increase in the level of in-house curriculum delivery, efficiencies in the curriculum delivery, changed approach to the curriculum delivery, staff utilisation and growth in 16-18 year old provision.
- the key risks for the 2021/22 plan. These were linked to a failure to achieve the planned recruitment targets. There were also challenges related to IT equipment and infrastructure and the significant impact on student learning experience which would be addressed as part of the estates development.

The Board approved the Curriculum Strategy 2020/21.

13. Updated Financial Regulations

The Board was presented with the updated financial regulations, which had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit Committee on 8 July 2021.

The Board discussed:

- the updated financial regulations which were in line with LSBU Group Financial Regulations, the main changes to the regulations were outlined in the appendix and a version with track changes was attached as a supplement.
- the outstanding matters that needed to be updated which included; the Group Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy, Governance Agreement between LSBU and SBC, Letters of Delegation and other operational areas. There were other matters raised at the meeting which included the removal of the section on Students' Union and an issue on petty cash.

The Board approved the updated Financial Regulations and that the Audit Committee would review the outstanding matters.

14. SBC Regulatory Framework

The Board noted an update on the FE regulatory framework within which SBC operates.

15. Speak Up Report

The Board was presented with the Group speak up policy, approved by the Group Audit and Risk Committee and supported by the SBC Audit Committee.

The Board noted the group speak up policy.

16. Board Skills Audit

The Board noted the revised approach to the skills audit and the form attached to the report.

17. Report from Committees

The Board noted the report from Committee meetings held since the last meeting on 4 May 2021.

18. Any other business

Resume face-to-face meetings

The Chair noted that trustees would be consulted on the return to face-to-face meetings at Lambeth College.

The Chair thanked staff and trustees for their work and support to improve the quality of the College and their contribution to the Board during a challenging year. She wished staff and trustees a nice summer break.

**Date of next meeting
4.00 pm on Wednesday, 29 September 2021**

Confirmed as a true record

(Chair)

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