

**You are invited to attend a Meeting of London South East Colleges Board
to be held on Wednesday 24 March 2021 5.30-7.30pm
Online Meeting via Zoom**

MINUTES

Board

Stephen Howlett, CBE DL (SH)	Chair
Charles Yates (CY)	Vice Chair
Dr Sam Parrett, OBE (SP)	Group Principal & CEO
Max Bero (MB)	Governor
Jane Hobson, OBE (JHo)	Governor
Christopher Briggs (CB)	Governor
Mark Trinick (MT)	Governor
Louise Nadal (LN)	Governor
Olivia John (OJ)	Governor
David Eastgate (DE)	Governor
Allan Carey (AC)	Governor
Lucie Allen (LA)	Governor apologies
Chinyama Okunuga (CO)	Governor
Barry Spencer (BS)	Staff Governor
Keat Senior (KS)	Student Governor
Clerk to the Board	
Jennifer Pharo (JP)	Group Executive Director Governance

Executive Officers in attendance

John Hunt (JHu)	Group CFO & Deputy CEO Trust
David Lambert (DL)	Deputy CEO & Principal

Officers in attendance for specific items

Andrew Cox (ACx)	Chair Staff Forum (Observer)
Andy Simpson (AS)	Group Director Estates (Item 6)
Neil Coates (NC)	Vice Principals (Item 7.1)
Louise Wolsey (LW)	Group Chief Transformation Officer (Item 7.2 & 7.3)
Janet Curtis Broni (JCB)	Group Chief People Officer (Item 9)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies from Lucie Allen

2. Declarations of interest

No Declarations to note.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

Presenter: Jennifer Pharo	ACTION: TO APPROVE
<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>3.1 The Board was asked to APPROVE the Minutes and NOTE the Chair's Summary and Action Log of the LSEC Board Meeting on 9th December 2020.</p> <p>3.2 The Board was asked to NOTE the use of the SEAL on the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deed and Contract for Sale Plumstead Campus between the College and London & Quadrant. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deed and Contract for Demolition and Refurbishment of Plumstead Campus between the College and Theobalds Refurbishments Limited. <p>3.3 To NOTE the recommendation of the Search Committee to appoint new Group Governors.</p>
Board Comment and Challenge
<p>The Board APPROVED the Minutes and NOTED the change to the action log to include access to mental health services funding.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the use of Seal.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the Recommendation to appoint two new Group Governors</p>

4. **Chair’s Summaries**

Presenter: Committee Chairs/Jennifer Pharo	TO CONSIDER & NOTE
<p>Recommendations: The Board was asked to CONSIDER and NOTE the updates from the Group Committee Chairs</p> <p>4.1 Curriculum & Standards Committee: 24th February 2021 4.2 Audit Committee: 10 March 2021 4.3 Finance Committee: 17 March 2021</p>	
4.1 Curriculum & Standards Committee: 24th February 2021	
<p>It was reported that the C&S Committee had been updated on reopening plans and testing on site. There was still uncertainty on any return to onsite teaching. Testing centres were being set up on each site. Detailed information awaited on exams and assessments. Blended model of teaching discussed alongside direct delivery still on site.</p> <p>It was reported that the C&S Committee discussed the impact of covid on student and staff mental wellbeing and were pleased to see the commitment and resilience of staff in adapting to the changing environment and demands.</p> <p>Lesson observations have not commenced but virtual learning walks are in progress. English and maths attendance is challenging with New Century 21 platform is supporting better participation.</p> <p>It was reported that assessment criteria to be applied is still unknown, awaiting announcements on exam arrangements from DfE and Ofqual. Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) are likely to be an outcome of the DfE announcements on exam arrangements for 2020/21. Mock testing will still continue to ensure staff have collected sufficient evidence for each learner.</p> <p>Quality Improvement Action Plans (QUIP) for HE and FE were presented and reviewed by the Committee.</p> <p>NSS for HE students was reporting promising improvements in the HE student experience.</p> <p>The QUIP for FE outlined the focus on CPD and development of a broader Teaching School model. Details of Locked/Unlocked project provided to the Committee. English and maths and improvement area flagged within the QUIP.</p> <p>It was reported that the 16-9 Tuition Fund Policy statement was reviewed by the Committee and reported on how this was supporting improvements in English and maths and providing small group facilities for practical vocational provision.</p>	

Committee were provided with an overview on curriculum delivery during lockdown which assessed that remote learning was broadly good.

It was reported that there had been a Teacher Training and CPD update provided to the Committee, reporting on support for digital upskilling and learning, standardised training for safeguarding, and developing approach to quality assurance. Details of the development of Teaching Schools Academy also provided.

It was reported that Curriculum planning for 2021/22 was on track, linked to the new Estates Strategy. Review included looking at efficient delivery models.

EDI closing report and targets achieved were presented and reviewed by the Committee. Queries on Gender Pay Gap had been explored further in relation to female managers who had left the organisation.

It was reported that there had been a lengthy Committee discussion on new three-year EDI policy document and targets. Committee endorsed the policy as presented and recommended to the LSEC Board for approval.

Safeguarding Steering Group update presented and highlighted training and activities ongoing. Good collaboration between College and Trust staff within the new DSL Networking Group.

It was reported that learner voice update provided reported good participation at “Meet the Principal” events. HE students were engaging in using UnitU platform for improved communications.

It was reported that the Committee RECOMMENDED the EDI Policy for approval Committee requested to review the Assessment policy and process at next meeting.

MT Committee Chair had congratulated the DCEO Academic Teams for maintaining standards over such a difficult period and in very challenging circumstances.

4.2 Audit Committee: 10 March 2021

It was reported that the Audit Committee Members would receive property related papers provided to Finance Committee as a general principle of governance going forward.

It was reported that there had been a verbal Deep Dive on Covid Controls with Stephen Horn and David Lambert. The Audit Committee questioned and challenged the Group Head Health & Safety and Deputy CEO & Principal on the controls in place. It was reported that onsite mass testing for large volumes of students and resourcing had been challenging both logistically and resourcing. There has been a staged return to learning on site from early March, ramping up to full return after Easter.

It was reported that the College has adopted a “Learn and Go” model for students returning to campus where open and social spaces remain closed and restricted.

It was reported that issue relating to High Needs funding reconciliation will be resolved shortly following conclusion of an internal review.

The Committee received reports on internal audits conducted by Scrutton Bland on English and Maths, Cyber Security, Performance Management had received significant assurance.

Financial Systems Implementation and Financial Planning & Management Information internal audits had received strong assurances. Internal Auditors Scrutton Bland raised no concerns.

The Committee reviewed the LSEC Risk Register It was reported that there were 43 risks currently identified on the LSEC risk register, 8 are High, 27 as Medium and 8 as Low.

High risks relate to Covid/Pandemic, Achieving ESFA and HE Enrolment Targets, Major Capital Projects impact on the Solvency of the College, Failure to Grow Apprenticeships, Changes to End Point Assessments and Failure to Secure High,

It was reported that the Committee had reviewed the Board Assurance Framework which reviewed key assurance areas of Governance, Strategic Operations, Risk Management, Audit and Performance Value for Money:

It was reported that the Committee had discussed at length the comprehensive Value for Money Report on the College, the conclusion of the report is that the College is considered to be providing value for money with strong governance and processes in place to monitor.

4.3 Finance Committee: 17 March 2021

It was reported that the Committee had received presentation from Kingswood Group on Treasury Management Services. The Group Treasury Management Policy was presented this sets out the parameters for investing surplus cash balances and the types of financial instruments which can be used for each group entity. It also sets out the approved sources of finance each entity within the group can access and the authorities required.

It was reported that after questioning and challenge by the Committee, it was agreed to recommend to Corporation. F

It was reported that the Committee reviewed the current enrolment and recruitment update which highlighted under recruitment in Adults across AEB, HE and Self-financing courses, also Apprenticeship. The Committee were advised that although under recruited across these income lines, shortfall income has largely been replaced by additional subcontracting, ESFA Youth Catch up Funding, College Collaboration Funding plus receipt of the TPS in year grant.

The Committee reviewed the latest management accounts for period 6 which reported a full year forecast position of marginally above budget although High Needs income and AEB reconciliation values are still unknown and pose a risk to the current full year forecast. Full year pay costs are expected to be higher than budgeted but will be supported with additional income received e.g. Youth Catch up Funding. Student debtor costs have increased and remain double the value as at the same period last year.

The Committee advised that discussion on pay awards would be covered at the Corporation meeting.

The Committee were advised that Bank Covenants are currently forecast to be compliant with the debt service cover covenant looking more comfortable with the positive impact on cash by some of our capital projects.

<p>The Committee also received an update on the finance system upgrade which is slightly delayed in implementation due to issues with the supplier and incomplete user testing.</p> <p>It was confirmed to the Committee that the three-year Revolving Credit Facility with Barclays had been effective from 14th January 2021. The Committee reported that they had been advised that due to LIBOR being phased out the Committee was required to recommend to the Corporation, the move to either SONIA (the LIBOR replacement) or Bank of England Base Rate for our Term Loan Facilities, a decision to be implemented by 31 December 2021.</p> <p>It was reported that the Committee agreed to recommend Bank of England Base Rates to Corporation.</p> <p>It was reported that the new FE Commissioner Benchmarks had been published in early March which would be applied to our year end outturn.</p> <p>The Committee also received information on financial performance of LSFG and received period 5 and period 6 management accounts for LSFG which had ceased trading with effect 31st December 2020. Merger into the College had been successful with some final work ongoing with the ESFA to determine the final contract values. It was reported that recruitment continued to be challenging for LSFG through to the end of December and current forecasts for the full year, is that the charity will have net cash of £363k at year end to place in a reserve fund for the further benefit of its charitable objectives. Negotiations on the dilapidations for Stratford continue with provision set aside to the value of £180k with £175k already provided for in the 2019/20 accounts. It was reported that due to the challenging recruitment of apprenticeships and traineeships a decision had been taken not to enter into a lease for the site at Manor Park.</p> <p>The Committee had reviewed the Estates Strategy and the financial commitments over the next four years approved by the Corporation on 10th March.</p> <p>The Tuition Fees and Charges Policy for 2021/22: Policy had been endorsed for recommending to the LSEC Corporation for approval.</p>
<p>The Chair's Summaries were NOTED by the Corporation. Some items appeared on the meeting agenda for approval.</p>

Strategic & Policy Updates

5. Group Principal & CEO Update

<p>Presenters: Dr Sam Parrett, OBE and David Lambert</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER & NOTE</p>
<p>Recommendations: The Board is asked to CONSIDER and NOTE Group Principal & CEO Strategic & Policy Update.</p>	
<p>The Board were advised that report presented had been compiled by senior leaders to bring together the key issues that sit outside of the statutory and committee reports presented to the Corporation.</p> <p>It was reported that the term has been exceptional in terms of the challenges that leaders have had to cope with and it is only through the excellent leadership and management capability has the organisation coped exceptionally well and had considerable success in the autumn and spring terms followed by a strong recovery</p>	

once schools and the college reopened on 8th March with attendance levels exceeding our expectations.

The Corporation were advised that the Group CEO & Principal had compiled this as a Group report to inform Trustees and Governors on all Boards on how we are addressing issues across the Group following the wide scale re-opening of educational buildings this month.

The Board were provided with information regarding national economic recovery and the impact on employment rates and jobs.

The Board were advised that issues of lost learning continue to dominate internal discussions as well as the anticipated rise in NEETs and the retraining and upskilling programmes for adults. There is also focus on how transition within and across the group for our students in our schools is to be managed. A project to improve management and support for internal transition within the group alongside internal progression within the college is underway.

It was reported that many sector bodies are campaigning for students to have an extra year in education to make up for a year of lost learning. The 'Big Ask' survey has been commissioned sponsored by the Children's Commissioner.

It was reported that amid the challenges of the pandemic, our new Group book - Leading Change, Inspiring Learners had been published. This project began in 2014, with author Chris Noden given a brief to get to know the College, its students and staff over an extended period of time. The College has gone through much change, particularly as the result of a three-way college merger to create London South East Colleges in 2016.

The book documents this journey, reflects on the changes and marks and celebrates our successes. Importantly, the book identifies some of the factors of this success - which will support other leaders and institutions who are managing similar periods of change.

The Group Principal & CEO report provided an update on the current policy landscape and briefings that been provided to Local Authority Stakeholders. The report also contained an updated on the EDI Grants Programme

The Board were advised on the recent Virtual Landmark Lecture with Sir Richard Atkins CBE Sir Richard Atkins CBE which had taken place on Tuesday 23rd February to provide his perspective of how the sector has progressed since he became Commissioner in 2016 and his predictions for the future following the recent government FE White Paper - Skills for Jobs. The Board were also advised of the Virtual Landmark Lecture with Stuart Lawrence ahead of the publication of his book next month "Silence is not an option: You can impact the world for change". The book explores what he has learned from life and the tools that have helped him live positively and kept him moving forwards when times have been tough.

The Board were advised that the Group had received recognition for its pioneering work to embed social value across all its functions, culture, processes and systems. Pre, during, and post pandemic, LSEEG has continued to challenge itself, staff and students to embed social value wherever possible, resulting in a combined social value of over £30 million in 2019/20. The Awards aim to highlight best practice across sectors, while showcasing how businesses are embedding social value to address the needs of their local communities.

It was reported that the continued collaboration and support to our communities through initiatives such as the FE Foodbank, and the ongoing partnerships with the NHS, are recognised to generate social impact beyond qualifications and the education sector. The award was a huge achievement for the Group, as the only education provider of the 12 winners at this year's national Awards.

The Board were advised of the Recovery Series with local councillors serving in the three boroughs. Our Spring series saw us hold three virtual sessions which engaged with over 20 local councillors across Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich. The sessions were successful, and they enabled the College and the Councillors to understand how LSEC supported their residents during the C-19 pandemic, discuss wider concerns and issues that are affecting South East London and what future opportunities are available to our communities. The 'Summer Recovery Series', will see focus on a more community engagement approach.

The report covered a number of operation issues including the ongoing impact of Covid on attendance and participation.

The Board were advised that the Learner Voice remains strong though the Meet the Principal's event, internal survey work where significant changes to learners' attitudes to blending learning have been noted. The external learner survey work for this year through the FE Choices Learners and Employer survey have again been cancelled this year.

The Board were advised of the difficulties in predicting achievement rates with the impact of Covid on examinations and Teacher Assessed Grades.

Apprenticeships remained an area hugely impacted by the pandemic in terms of starts and learning being able to complete their work place assessments.

The Board were advised that work is underway to progress and move learners up to the next level for 2021/22. Enrolment is being planned to start earlier to provide existing learners with more security on their next year plans.

It was reported that Curriculum Planning and modelling is almost finalised with changes to English and maths delivery planned through the Century 21 platform. Whilst a focus remains on 2021/22 strategic curriculum planning alongside estate planning is underway looking at the 3–5-year model.

The board were advised that digital poverty remains a key issue to address, and significant volume of devices had been distributed throughout the academic year supported by funding and devices provided by the DfE, with c630 devices (laptops) for use by young people in receipt of bursaries or deemed vulnerable. This represents c17% of the College youth population. In addition, repurposed devices for students have been issued to c350 students.

The Board were advised that the recent Employment Tribunal had been concluded, with the College successful in defending all of the claims. The claims were dismissed by the Tribunal. The tribunal accepted our reasons for summarily dismissing Mr Wood, based on the evidence presented. The tribunal also noted concerns about some of his behaviours as a teacher.

Board Comments and Challenges

Chair-SH commented that it was great news to hear that the ET had been concluded in our favour.

The Board thanked Group Principal & CEO for the Book and agreed the timing was perfect to demonstrate the value of strong leadership and management in the FE Sector which was clearly evident during the last year of the pandemic.

The Board expressed thanks for the Recovery Series for local authorities which supported good stakeholder engagement and allowed the College to demonstrate first-hand the social value it adds to the local communities within the three boroughs.

In response to Governor-JH on the monitoring of mental health and wellbeing, the Board were advised that this remains a very challenging area and the safeguarding team are working closely with external services and using all resources available. Next year's budgets are being reviewed to ascertain if more resources can be made available for this this area with expectation that mental health issues will increase.

In response to questions on cyber security, GCFO-JH advised that IT are working at pace on safeguarding the colleges systems from such attached. Remains a high risk for most education providers with a number of cyberattacks reported.

6. Sustainability and Climate Change Roadmap

Presenters: John Hunt/Andy Simpson	TO APPROVE
<p>Recommendations: The Board was asked to REVIEW and COMMENT on the Sustainability Policy, Statement of Intent and Climate Change Roadmap for Colleges and APPROVE the recommendations proposed.</p>	
<p>The Board were presented with a report which outlined the political will behind the sustainability agenda in the UK is growing stronger than ever and the Green revolution will be a big part of the Government's post Covid recovery plan as old ways of working and employment sectors are replaced with major national investments, new demands and requirements for skills.</p> <p>The Board were advised of the Government's ten-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution is evidence of the significant focus and a £12bn investment plan. The Climate Commission has published the FE Climate Action Roadmap which is designed to be practical, easy to follow, and outcome driven.</p> <p>The Roadmap shows a possible path and actions to be taken in order for a college to reach net zero emissions, and each College will need to tailor this for their own particular circumstances.</p> <p>The Board were advised that there is an increasing pace behind this agenda. and in this regard a Group Sustainability Statement and a Sustainability Policy for the College has been developed.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the implementation of the property strategy will be the biggest single contribution the College will make to reduce its carbon emissions and resourcing this strategy will leave little financial resource for other sustainability projects or investments. However, one of the real positives of this agenda is that significant progress can be made in many areas with little or no associated cost. These include embedding related content within our curriculum offer, the continuation of flexible working from home, and changing attitudes of both our learners and staff.</p>	

The Board also considered and discussed the targets proposed and the impact LSEC could demonstrate as an organisation through our curriculum offer, linked specifically to the green economy and future jobs. The significant capital projects and BREAM excellent standard buildings proposed within this strategy, would demonstrate significant impact and also support social value measures, recognised through the ongoing work with CLES and the application of the TOMS framework.

Board Comments and Challenge

In response to questions from the Board, Group Principal & CEO-SP advised that the Climate Change Agenda remains enormous one for young people and our surveys have demonstrated that these are issues important to young people. The AoC have completed a huge amount of work on a Roadmap and support to colleges wishing to develop this area. The Board were advised that there are a number of Governors and Trustees who are passionate about this agenda and will be working with the GCFO as part of the Climate and Sustainability Committee.

Student Governor-KS commented that it was very pleasing to see this work being undertaken.

Governor CY commented that the document presented was very impressive and he was looking forward to being more involved in this agenda.

Clerk-JP advised that the new revised Governance Code for English Colleges will have significant requirements in relation to the Climate and Sustainability.

In response to questions from the Governor-JH, it was reported that curriculum development and strategy would consider the opportunities around employment in the green economy.

In response to questions from Governor-DE and Governor-OJ on relation to how we showcase and promote this agenda, it was reported that a plan for 2021/22 and beyond would be developed to support the policies presented.

The Board **APPROVED** the Policies.

7. Curriculum Strategies

Presenter: David Lambert	TO APPROVE
<p>Recommendations: The Board was asked to RECEIVE and APPROVE following strategies</p> <p>7.1 HE Strategic Review and Plan for 2021-26 (Neil Coates)</p> <p>7.2 Digital Strategy (Louise Wolsey)</p> <p>7.3 Marketing Strategy (Louise Wolsey)</p>	
<p>7.1 HE Strategic Review and Plan for 2021-26</p>	
<p>The Board were presented with the HE Strategy Review and Plan for 2021-26.</p> <p>This had previously been shared and scrutinised by the Lead HE Governor-HE. The offer is a flexible, career-focused portfolio of higher education programmes that are excellent value for money, and ideal for those wishing to progress their careers or change direction.</p> <p>It was reported that the strategy sets out how LSEC University Centre aims to improve equality of opportunity for the communities it operates in, providing</p>	

students with access to a high quality, industry led offer that will enable progression and establish itself as a community anchor.

The strategy has been informed by a comprehensive strategic review, which covered the policy context, LMI, competitor analysis, partnership arrangements, EDI, employer engagement, student engagement, curriculum development, quality of delivery, staffing and Learnership and management.

The strategy has a strong vision statement for the University centre and a set of 5 strategic goals that are clearly linked into the Group's Social Enterprise Strategy and will drive the University centre's impact and growth over the next 5 years.

Governor LN advised that she liked the level of ambition, the focus on growth and progression, the post covid activities and change to curriculum to support this, the real focus on widening participation with a focus on moving into employment.

Governor-LN reported that the strategy was values based and focussed on staff development. She was impressed by the EDI profile provided and that this was a key strength in addition to the work with new HEIs.

Governor LN advised that to improve the document the Executive should consider using Graduate terminology throughout the document, identify any barriers e.g. costs to implementing, consider the decline in student numbers and value for money.

Board Comment and Challenge

The Board expressed thanks to the Executive for the report and Governor-LN for taking time to review outside of the Board meeting and bring her comments and considerations to the Board.

The Board **APPROVED** the Strategy.

7.2 Digital Strategy (Louise Wolsey)

The Board were presented with the Digital Strategy. The purpose of the report was to outline the Digital Transformation Strategy for LSEC.

The report outlined the policy context, vision, guiding principles, key priorities, consultation plans and implementation approach for Digital Transformation within the College, and how this aligns with the London & South East Education Group Strategy.

It was reported that the Digital Strategy was timely and linked to a possible shift in working practices. Staff consultations had been conducted across both teaching and learning and business support, where training and development had been identified. A review on the current use of the digital tools available reported that these were not always used to their full capacity, and this required a shift in the level of confidence and capability of staff. The Board requested termly reporting on the Digital Strategy implementation.

Board Comment and Challenge

Chair-SH reported that the strategy was impressive and great to see a consultative approach to the development.

In response to question from the Board, it was reported that biggest challenge is changing mindsets and behaviour of staff and students and providing the confidence through training and development to switch to technology solutions.

In response to questions, the Boards were advised that priorities would continue to be balanced.

In response to questions from the Board DECO-DL advised that there was an appetite to change and development amongst the staffing population.

In response to questions from the Board, Executive-LW advised that a decision had been taken many years ago to be a Microsoft College. The Board were also advised that with the support of JISC the college were involved in Digital Leaders Programme.

The Board requested that termly reports be provided on the Digital Strategy which was **APPROVED**.

7.3 Marketing Strategy (Louise Wolsey)

The Board received the Strategy which supports the vision, mission and strategic objectives set out in the Group Strategy 2019-2024 outlining the key marketing and communications priorities for the next 12 months within the context of the challenges and the risks presented by the current environment and strong competition in all of our markets.

The Board were advised that the strategy and the associated budget c£400k solely focuses on the strand of work which encompasses the College. Over the last couple of years the scope of the work of the Marketing and Communications team has expanded to cover all aspects of the Group and the Trust.
The Board were advised that the role of the marketing team and its strategy is to

- establish a distinctive position in the market as a social enterprise, rather than a College and University Centre simply delivering education, ensuring that what we bring to our communities goes beyond qualifications.
- Focus on core strengths, quality of the learner experience, positive outcomes for learners and wider benefits to our local communities.
- cement London South East Colleges and the University Centre as a leading provider of high-quality vocational education provision, apprenticeships, adult learning and university-level qualifications in London and the south east increase applications and enrolments to meet set student recruitment targets across our portfolio by adopting ‘best-in class’ integrated approaches to marketing and communications.
- effectively communicate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and the outcomes and impact of associated projects
- continue developing our internal communications strategy.
- ensure marketing and student recruitment activity is underpinned and informed by marketing research and a clear understanding of our target audiences

Board Comments and Challenge

The Board concluded that the Marketing Strategy was endorsed and agreed that the brand and activities are strong.

8. Property Strategy Update

Presenter: John Hunt (Verbal Update)	TO CONSIDER & NOTE
<p>Recommendations: The Board is asked to CONSIDER and COMMENT on the verbal update on the LSEC Property Strategy and Capital Transformation Fund submission on 22nd March.</p>	
<p>The Board received a brief verbal update on the Estates Strategy with a more detailed and in-depth report provided to the Special Board Meeting on 10th March.</p> <p>The Board were advised that two Capital Transformation Fund Bids had been submitted for the rebuild and refurbishment of Bromley Campus and an extension of the Technology Block at Bromley.</p>	

Board Comments and Challenge

The Board **NOTED** the Update.

Regulatory

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Presenter: Janet Curtis Broni

TO APPROVE

Recommendations

- 9.1 The Board are asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on Equality Objectives Closing Report for the period 2017-2020.
- 9.2 The Board are asked to **APPROVE** to Single Equalities Scheme 2021-2024 and Targets.

The Board received the closing report on Equalities Objectives for the period 2017-2020.

The Board received and discussed the new Single Equalities Scheme for 2021-24 which outlined the next three-year Equality Targets for LSEC.

The Board were reminded that under the Equality Act 2010, London South East Colleges has a legal duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to foster good relationships between the key EDI strands.

The Board were advised that the Executive were determined to do more than just meet our statutory obligations and central to this, is our ethos and vision to maximise our impact on the people and places we reach as an education provider. We strive to change people's lives, creating social value and promoting social mobility in every community we work with.

It was reported that the Single Equality Scheme provides a clear plan of the work we have done and what we hope to achieve in the future years. The commitments set out in the previous Single Equality Scheme, have been used in the development of this Single Equality Scheme in order to ensure continuity of existing good practice.

The updated single equality scheme outlines:

- Our purpose, our commitment, and our intent for our EDI agenda
- Progress against our EDI objectives for 2017 to 2021
- Our draft set of objectives from 2021 to 2024
- The distance travelled throughout our EDI history
- Our student achievement gaps and interpretations
- Our initiatives involving staff and students
- Our kite marks and accreditations achieved
- EDI data analysis, and data sets of our staff and students compared to the communities we serve

The Board we advised that the EDI Objectives for the next 3 years have been formulated, based on data analysis on student achievement gaps that we will need to address, our vision to engage staff and students in EDI matters using the bottom-up approach, and our intentions to address under representation of any staffing groups and to promote, celebrate and adopt a whole college approach to EDI matters. The objectives had been consulted with the Group Executive Team, EDI Steering Group Committee Members, the EDI champions, and the EDI grants Committee.

The Board were advised that an underpinning implementation plan is also in progress as well as the development of a KPI dashboard for our EDI agenda. These will be monitored, and progress tracked and reported.

It was reported that the KPIs and will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure that they are relevant, to ensure that we achieve our objectives.

The Board were also advised that the Group Chief People Officer had been nominated for a diversity award.

Board Comments and Challenge

In response to questions from Governor-JH, it was reported that staff disclosure rates required some improvement although there had been steady progress in this area.

The Board stated that it felt assured by the work being undertaken on EDI across the College. Good to see intersectional data being presented to identify gaps but this still needed further expansion.

It was reported that queries raised on the gender pay gap in relation to female management had been resolved with additional data and information provided to the C&S Committee Members.

The Board **APPROVED** the Single Equalities Scheme and three year t HE Complaints Policy & Commitment Statement on Compliance with Consumer Law argets.

Performance

10. KPI Scorecard: Progress against Targets for 2020/21

Presenter: David Lambert	TO CONSIDER & NOTE
<p>Recommendation: The Board was asked to CONSIDER and NOTE the update on the KPI Scorecards and progress against targets. Deputy CEO & Principal's update on</p>	
<p>The Board received the KPI Scorecard. The key risk was identified as forecast achievement rates due to a combination of Teacher Assessed Grades, lost learning and inconsistent approach to onsite exams. The Board were advised that currently Functional Skills English and maths on site examinations will continue, which was a different approach being taken to GCSE examinations in English and Maths. End point assessment for Apprentices also pose a risk to completion and achievement rates.</p> <p>It was reported that the teaching profile is slightly below profile. However, with the move to remote learning formal observations were suspended and moved to additional supportive learning walks.</p>	
Board Comments and Challenges	
<p>In response to questions, the Board were advised that TAGs had commenced with most of the information from Awarding Bodies received. Function skills remains a key risk with examinations still required. Student work experience had also been extremely challenged through the academic year.</p>	
<p>The Board NOTED the report.</p>	

11. **LSEC Financial Performance**

Presenter: John Hunt	TO CONSIDER & NOTE
<p>Recommendation: The Board was asked to: CONSIDER and NOTE the management accounts for Period 6.</p>	
<p>The Board received that Management Accounts for the period ended 31 January 2021 (Period 6) which reported an adjusted operating surplus for the year to date, prior to FRS102 pension adjustments of £2,093k.</p> <p>The Board were advised that this is £338k better than forecast for the year to date. College income has been significantly impacted by the pandemic with circa £2.8m of budgeted income not being delivered. This has been offset by numerous other new and unbudgeted income streams and total income is expected to be slightly higher than budgeted.</p> <p>It was reported that despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, it is anticipated that the budgeted operating position can at least be achieved. The College currently expects to achieve circa 84% of its ESFA and GLA AEB contracts and it is currently anticipated that both the GLA and ESFA will reconcile contracts to 80%. On this basis the College has still recognised the full contract values as income.</p> <p>It was reported that due to issues highlighted in the testing of the new finance system, we have delayed the implementation date until such time as the issues are resolved.</p> <p>GCFO-JH reported that with LIBOR being replaced as reference point for loan interest charges, it will be necessary for the College to determine which alternative benchmark is to be applied to its Term Loan Facility.</p> <p>It was also reported that the FE commissioner set out details of some amended benchmarks for the sector and further detail on this matter together with college performance against each ratio will be presented to the Corporation at a future meeting.</p> <p>The Board received information on the proposed 1% pay award for staff where in ordered to protect operating margins for 2021/22, it was recommended that the Corporation approves a pay award to all staff of 1% (or at least £250) in line with the AoC recommendation.</p> <p>The Board was also advised that it was recommended that once again the College considers a further non-consolidated 1% pay award for all staff based upon earnings for the 10 months to 31 May 2021. This matter and its affordability can be considered at the July 2021 Corporation meeting.</p>	
<p>Board Comments and Challenges</p>	
<p>In response to comments in relation to AEB tolerance levels, the Board were advised that this as 90%.</p> <p>The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE a 1% pay award to staff and APPROVED for the decision on the effective date of the award to be determined by the Group Principal & CEO.</p> <p>In response to comments re LIBOR, the Board were advised that Bank of England Base Rates were the recommendation of the Finance Committee and not SONIA.</p> <p>The Board also RESOLVED to APPROVE as RECOMMENDED by the Finance Committee the Board APPROVED to use the Bank of England Base Rates for loan financing.</p>	

12. **Audit & Risk – Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework**

Presenter: John Hunt & Jennifer Pharo	TO CONSIDER & NOTE
<p>Recommendations: The Board was asked to CONSIDER and NOTE</p> <p>12.1 LSEC Risk Register and Heat Map.</p> <p>12.2 Board Assurance Framework.</p>	
<p>The Board received the LSEC Register and Heat Map which had recently been considered by the Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>Changes to the Risk Register were detailed in the appended report. Of the 43 risks currently identified on the risk register, 8 are High, 27 as Medium and 8 as Low.</p> <p>The main changes to the content and scores on the risk register were identified in as the following risks.</p> <p>Risk C1 relating to failure to achieve main ESFA and HE enrolment targets has been updated with some new actions to ensure the college at least meets 80% of its GLA and ESFA Adult Education Budget contracts. This risk score remains unchanged at 27 and this is still considered to be a high risk.</p> <p>Risk C6 relating to the failure of staff to have up to date induction, H&S, safeguarding & Prevent training has decreased as both local and corporate staff inductions are back to more normal levels with monthly sessions now taking place. Mandatory training completion levels have now reached our highest ever compliance levels with all courses being circa 95% or above. As a result, this risk score has decreased by 12 to 12, and is now considered to be a Medium rather than a high risk.</p> <p>Risk C7 in relation to the failure to improve Maths and English across the College has some new areas for improvement added in response to the unknowns surrounding how qualifications will be awarded this year, and our learning in the first year from using the Century digital platform to deliver some English and Maths content. This risk score remains unchanged at 21 and this is still considered to be a high risk.</p> <p>Risk C26 relating to the failure to maintain timely and accurate data has been updated with some new actions including agreeing additional capacity to focus on HE data reporting and building HE data requirements into the Information Services calendar used by the MIS team This risk score remains unchanged at 12 and this is still considered to be a Medium Risk.</p> <p>Risk C28 relating to serious breaches of data protection legislation leading to a fine or challenge has been updated with some new actions including ensuring all staff complete or retake data protection training by July 2021. This risk score remains unchanged at 18 and this is still considered to be a medium risk.</p> <p>Risk C30 relating to the loss of key HEI partner has decreased as a result of a full strategic review being completed which supports the rollout of a 2021-26, HE Strategy. This will reduce the potential financial risk to below £500k and should also result in this risk being unlikely to crystallise. Consequently, this risk score has reduced by 7 to 5 and is now considered to be a Low rather than a medium risk.</p> <p>Risk C36 relating to the failure to secure sufficient high quality work experience placements for students has increased slightly due to the pandemic. This is due to the move to remote learning and closure of some workplaces which</p>	

<p>is limiting the volume of work experience placements available. As a consequence of this, the risk score has increased by 5 to 20 and is now considered to be a High rather than a medium risk.</p> <p>Risk C41 covering change to end point assessment and impact upon achievement has some new areas for improvement added in response to the current lack of clarity from awarding bodies surrounding exam and assessment arrangements this year. This risk score remains unchanged at 21 and is still considered to be a high risk.</p>
<p>Board Comments and Challenge</p>
<p>The Board NOTED the report.</p>
<p>Board Assurance Framework.</p>
<p>The Board received the Board Assurance Framework and were reminded of the report presented in July 2020 which provided details of the introduction of the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), as a recommendation of the Group Audit Committee.</p> <p>It was reported that the Group CFO and Group Executive Director Governance were commissioned by the Audit Committee to develop and implement a BAF Assurance Tool for 2020/</p> <p>The Board were advised that the purpose of the Board Assurance Framework is to reinforce strategic focus and provide improved management of risk. Highlighting both areas of strength and weakness or blind spots. It is a tool the Board can use to hold themselves to account and to provide themselves with assurance that controls are in place and reputational risk is being managed effectively.</p> <p>The Board were advised that as previously agreed the BAF would comprise and focus on five key assurance areas. 1. Governance 2. Strategic Operations 3, Risk Management 4. Audit 5. Performance (Financial, Academic, Estates, IT and People) Each assurance area has a number of components that receive a level of examination, scrutiny and focus either internally or externally and at different times within the business cycle or reporting year.</p>
<p>Board Comments and Challenge</p>
<p>The Board received and APPROVED the Board Assurance Framework which will be reported with the risk register going forward.</p>

Student and Staff Voice

13. Learner Voice (FE & HE)

<p>Presenter: David Lambert</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER & NOTE</p>
<p>Recommendations: The Board were asked to NOTE and COMMENT on the report which provides an update on the learner voice through surveys, Meet the Principal events and Student Experience Project.</p>	
<p>The Board received information on activities around the Learner Voice, which had been well represented at the recent round of Meet the Principal events held online for each campus.</p> <p>It was reported that there had been a good mix and representation of learners at the events who have taken the opportunity of feedback and comment on behalf of their class groups. This reflects the improved training which has gone into supporting the class reps.</p>	

<p>The Board were advised that feedback has been mostly positive about the online experience and any individual issues and concerns are being taken forward, with this coming from both the Meet the Principal events and from the online survey.</p> <p>It was reported that some additional Learner Voice focus groups have also been planned as part of the curriculum strategy to supplement the existing survey work and feed into this process.</p> <p>Communications generally were also discussed with learners at these events and as a result some changes were made to the weekly update letters and the way these are pushed out to learners. Higher Education has a renewed use of the UnitU platform which is being much more effectively utilised to gather and respond to student voice.</p> <p>It was reported that in addition, there are also now drop-in sessions with the Director of HE so that issues can be more quickly and informally raised, and more immediate action and feedback given.</p>
<p>Board Comments and Challenges</p>
<p>In response to comments from the Board ,DCEO-DL advised that there are much better levels of response and engagement with zoom and teams allowing them easy access.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the report.</p>

14. LSEC Student Governor Update

<p>Presenter: Keat Senior</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER & NOTE</p>
<p>Recommendations: The Board are asked to NOTE the verbal update from the Student Governor.</p>	
<p>Student Governor-KS reported that he agreed with previously discussions that mental health and wellbeing was key issue to consider and resource for next academic year.</p> <p>Student Governor-KS reported that the Student Union were developing a bid for an EDI Grant.</p> <p>In response to Governor-JH, Student Governor-KS advised that students remained concerned about their families and transmission. The testing regime has reduced this anxiety and stress.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the verbal update.</p>	

15. LSEC Staff Governor Update

<p>Presenter: Barry Spencer/Andrew Cox</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER & NOTE</p>
<p>Recommendations: The Board are asked to NOTE the verbal update from the Staff Governor and Chair of the Staff Forum.</p>	
<p>In response to questions from the Board, the Staff Governor-BS advised that staff were feeling supported. The journey had been a little bumpy with unlocking and locking, switching delivery to online had been challenging for some staff.</p> <p>Generally the College had been responsive and flexible. Supporting and accommodating staff to work from home when required.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the verbal update.</p>	

Policies

16. 2021/22 Tuition Fees and Charges

Presenter: John Hunt	TO APPROVE
<p>Recommendation: The Board is asked to APPROVE the Tuition Fees and Charges Policy for 2021/22 as recommended by the Group Finance Committee.</p>	
<p>The Board were presented with the 2021/22 Tuition Fees Charges. It was reported that there was very little change to the policies which needed to be updated routinely every year.</p>	
<p>Board Comments and Challenge</p>	
<p>The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE the Policy.</p>	

17. Group Treasury Management Policy

Presenter: John Hunt	TO APPROVE
<p>Recommendation: The Board is asked to APPROVE the Treasury Management Policy as recommended by the Group Finance Committee.</p>	
<p>informing delivery planning</p>	
<p>The Board were presented with the Group Treasury Management Policy which had been amended to align to the new Treasury Management Service.</p> <p>GCFO-JH reported that the Group Treasury Management Policy sets out the parameters for investing surplus cash balances and the types of financial instruments which can be used for each group entity.</p> <p>It also sets out the approved sources of finance each entity within the group can access and the authorities required.</p> <p>It was reported under the Financial Regulations that the Group CEO and Group CFO are permitted to undertake treasury arrangements provided that they comply with the Treasury Management Policy in force at the time when the transaction takes place.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the Executive have been considering the use of a treasury management service for some time and this was discussed at the last Finance Committee.</p> <p>The Group CFO advised that he had been in discussion with Kingswood Institutional, a company which offer a managed treasury service within the education sector and have a number of HE clients. The use of a treasury service to generate better returns will mean that the College utilises financial instruments such as Certificates of Deposits, Treasury Bills and Financial Corporate Bonds.</p> <p>The full range of instruments are explained in the report provided to the Board.</p> <p>The Board were advised that in order to better facilitate the use of a managed treasury service a number of changes have been made to the policy in order to be clear on what is and is not permitted, and to also include an initial approved counterparty list of approved banks which currently meet the minimum criteria of the policy.</p> <p>The Policy has been recommended by the Finance Committee.</p> <p>The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE the Policy</p>	

18. Higher Education: OfS Conditions of Registration – Consumer Law

Presenter: David Lambert/Jennifer Pharo	TO APPROVE
<p>Recommendation: The Board is asked to APPROVE the updated HE Complaints and HE Refunds Policies and associated Terms & Conditions to include statement and commitment to Consumer Law as requested by OfS.</p>	

The Board were advised that the OfS required the LSEC Corporation to make and publish a commitment statement on our compliance with Consumer Law, which was presented alongside a revised HE Complaints Policy, amended to align to this statement.

The Board were asked to CONSIDER and NOTE the following statement prepared in response the letter from the OfS dated 14 January 2021, which requested Providers to undertake a review of Consumer law and provide assurance to the Board of our ongoing compliance with Condition of Registration C1. The Board are advised that the Minister has asked providers to maintain the quality, quantity, and accessibility of their provision and to inform students about their options for refunds or other forms of redress where it has not been possible to provide what was promised.

The College is confident that we can ensure students are able to continue to study and complete their courses successfully in these exceptionally challenging times.

The Board were advised that it is able to adhere to CMA compliance through the actions detailed below.

The College has made the following adjustments captured within the policy and believe it has fulfilled this requirement.

- HE Consumer Rights information page on the website with links to college policies which apply to Consumer rights.
- The current HE Delivery Model Information link can be found on the College website.
- A link to Frequently asked questions is also on the website.
- Information for Current HE students can be found on the College website within the University Centre section.
- Emails directing students to pertinent information areas - text messages are sent to alert students to these emails.
- Induction advice and guidance which also covered the 'HE delivery model' for this academic year.
- Letters to students informing them of changes or Covid 19.
- Students are also kept up to date through course communications from Programme Leaders and Curriculum Pathway Managers.

Board Comment and Challenge

The Board NOTED the report presented and **APPROVED** the HE Complaints and Refunds Policy

18. Any other business

19. Date of next meeting: 14 July 2021

Signed by Chair: 

Date: 14 July 2021