

**Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and People Committee
held on Tuesday 2 July 2024, 4:00 PM — 6:00 PM BST
1B16, Technopark**

Present

Shona Brown (*Independent Governor - Chair*)
Danny Clegg (*Academic Staff Governor*)
Helen Coleman (*Independent Governor*)
Peter Fidler (*Independent Governor*)
David Phoenix (*Vice Chancellor*)

Apologies

None

In attendance

Alex Bush (*Chief People Officer*)
Samuel Curtis (*Company Secretary*)
Tara Dean (*Provost*)
Ola Dejo-Ojomo (*Governance Officer*)
Deborah Johnston (*Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Framework*)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The governance officer advised that a new student governor would be appointed to the committee before its next meeting.

2. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared on any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the previous Strategy and People Committee meeting - minutes from the 27 February 2024 meeting

The committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2024 and their publication subject to a minor correction of the attendee list.

4. Matters arising from the previous meeting

The annual education report, student recruitment, progression and retention reports were amalgamated into the student outcome strategy report (minute 7).

. Strategy and performance items

5. Annual Education report

The committee considered the annual education report which aimed to provide assurance of academic governance in LSBU in terms of quality,

standards and student outcomes. The committee noted:

- that the annual education report was combined with the Ofsted education inspection framework to ensure that LSBU's apprenticeship standards are considered with its degree provision
- that recent updates to the OfS's requirements for apprenticeships standards for achievement points mean that integrated apprenticeship quality is now overseen by both the OfS and Ofsted. In some cases, the new requirements will increase the workload for staff involved in delivering the end-point assessment.
- the report highlighted the need for monitoring resources for courses post-implementation

The committee **agreed** that subsequent annual reports would clearly show progress against required actions such as those highlighted in the report.

6. **Significance and scale of LSBU apprenticeship offer**

The committee considered a paper outlining the information required to understand the scale and provision of LSBU's apprenticeship offer in support of its preparation for the Ofsted inspection.

The committee noted:

- the strategic importance of the group's apprenticeship provision in terms of reputation and annual turnover.
- the strategic importance of the apprenticeship provision as an alternative to degrees
- that the group is considering creating more progression pathways by raising awareness of apprenticeship opportunities in schools
- that although the demographics of the group's apprenticeship body in terms of gender (67.73% male) and ethnicity (64% White background) was more diverse than the national average, it was still not yet fully reflective of LSBU's catchment population demographics
- the group had been shortlisted for a multicultural apprenticeship award.

The committee **agreed** to receive the national breakdown of apprenticeship demographics and **noted** the report, the multiple achievements of the provision, and extended thanks to all those involved in delivering the success to date.

7. **Student outcomes strategy - incorporating awarding gap, retention and progression reports**

The committee considered the paper outlining the key trends in student outcomes. This included Year 1 to Year 2 progression, in-year withdrawal and interruption, and awarding and progression gaps.

The committee noted positive responses to strategic interventions including the attendance and engagement policy, personal development plans (PDPs) and support for students who needed to resit first attempted assessments.

The committee noted leading indicators demonstrated an improvement in first attempt pass rates for home students by 3% and 20% for overseas students, and an overall improvement in withdrawal and interruption figures.

The committee noted that the paper clearly demonstrated the impact of the implementation of the interventions, and that it would be important to continue tracking the data year on year.

The committee **noted** the report and extended thanks to all involved in delivering the improvement initiatives.

People items

8. Strategic POD report

The committee considered the strategic update report which comprised of the KPI report for People and the performance of the HR function.

The committee noted the high rates of turnover in professional service group (PSG) was partially attributed to the expiration of fixed term contracts associated with the 2023 re-organisation.

The committee noted that compulsory training and appraisal completion were being reported to committee for the first time, providing an overview across the schools and PSG. The committee noted that the introduction of a new system in 2023 had contributed to the increase in completion rates.

The committee noted a marked improvement in the completion rates of compulsory training, currently at 82% for LSBU and SBC. The committee also noted that improvement plans are in place for schools and departments under-performing in this area, and plans for automated email reminders to re-take the courses be sent after the two-year validity period expires.

The committee noted that responses to the staff engagement survey had declined from 65% to 63%, which is below the HEI benchmark of 70%. A staff impact group had been established and meets in person every 2-3 weeks to discuss how best the senior team can lead change and provide line managers with support. The group had provided helpful feedback and had witnessed a week on week improvement on staff responding to change.

The committee discussed career progression opportunities and noted:

- there is a long established process for promotions for academic staff; however, there is currently not a similar scheme for PSG and this is partially attributed to the different dynamics of the market where professional staff move to other sectors.
- whilst work is being done to retain as many staff as possible, there is a need to communicate that the HE sector could not compare to the benefits received in other sectors.
- the rate of turnover of academic staff is less than the national average, and most academic staff are at the top of their scale

there is a higher turnover of staff amongst PSG staff and there are lessons to

learn from this.
The committee **noted** the report.

9. **EDI annual report**

The committee considered the annual EDI report which outlined LSBU's EDI strategy and also included highlights such as being ranked third in the world for reducing inequalities by the Times Higher Impact Rankings 2024, and attaining the Race Equality Charter Bronze award.

The committee noted the new team structure in place to implement the initiatives within the strategy, including more collaborative work with the student body.

The committee **noted** and commended the report.

10. **EDI pay gap reports**

The committee considered the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap reports for 2024. Amongst the report's key findings were:

- LSBU's pay gap remains below the national pay gap average for gender, below the HE average for ethnicity, and below both the HE and ONS average for disability.
- an increase in the mean gender pay gap, but decreases in the median gender pay gap, the mean and median ethnicity pay gaps, and the mean and median pay gaps for disability.
- The results of the Pay Equity Audit, which was commissioned at the end of 2023, showed the adjusted gap between male and female pay was 0.6%.

The committee noted the progress made in reducing the pay gap, and the actions to be taken to understand and address any outstanding pay disparity. The committee also recognised LSBU's positive performance relative to national benchmarks and the continued need to focus efforts in this area.

The committee **noted** the report.

Note of thanks

The committee noted it was Peter Fidler's final meeting as a governor. The committee acknowledged the wealth of experience Peter had brought to the board and thanked him for the time spent and support given whilst serving on the board over the years.

Date of next meeting

4:00PM on Wednesday, 4th September 2024

Confirmed as a true record

Shona Brown

(Chair)

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