

**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors
held on Wednesday 24 July 2024, 3:00 PM — 6:00 PM BST
1B27, Technopark**

Present

Andreas Raffel (*Chair*)
Duncan Brown (*Independent Governor*)
Shona Brown (*Independent Governor*)
Danny Clegg (*Academic Staff Governor*)
John Cole (*Independent Governor*)
Helen Coleman (*Independent Governor*)
Ruth Farwell (*Independent Governor*)
Paul Hayes (*Independent Governor*)
Mark Lemmon (*Independent Governor*)
Areej Mansuri (*Student Governor*)
Ola Obadara (*Independent Governor*)
David Phoenix (*Vice Chancellor*)
Hitesh Tailor (*Independent Governor*)
Vinay Tanna (*Independent Governor*)
Jennifer Thomson (*Independent Governor*)

Apologies

Charlotte Adams (*Student Governor*)
Tim Fransen (*Staff Governor*)
Jeremy Parr (*Independent Governor*)

In attendance

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

**Pre-board presentation: Update on the 3 year financial forecasts
(2024/25 – 2026/27)**

The Group CFO gave a presentation outlining the proposed budget and a three year financial forecast for 2024/25 – 2026/27. The presentation included an overview of the Group's finance in the local, sector-wide, national and global contexts covering a range of issues from recent low intake, to fixed home undergraduate fees, to the cost of living and government visa policy. The presentation referred to a number of interventions the group is applying to mitigate against these issues including a review of the University's size and shape.

The presentation also included three different scenarios which had been considered and previously scrutinised by Executive and shared with the

Finance and Investment Committee for the budget. The recommended scenario which the budget has been based on assumed a 75% recovery in overseas student enrolment in 2026/27. The Board discussed the factors considered in assuming a 75% recovery and **agreed** that a future session/pre-Board meeting would consider the Group's overseas recruitment strategy.

1. **Chair's business**

The Chair noted the following new appointments to the Board:

- Charlotte Adams (South Bank Student Union President, student governor)
- Areej Manuri (Union Council Chair, student governor)
- Paul Hayes (independent governor)

and welcomed Mr Hayes and Ms Manuri to their first meeting.

The Chair also noted the following resolutions had been approved by the Board since its last meeting:

- [REDACTED]
- Appointment of Paul Hayes to the Board of Governors
- Appointment of KPMG as the Group's internal auditors
- Approval for the Vice Chancellor and Group CFO to sign [REDACTED] on behalf of the Board.

2. **Declarations of interest**

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

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting of 21 March 2024 and the proposed redactions for publication.

The Board noted the Board strategy day notes of 25 April 2024.

4. **Matters arising**

The Board **noted** the matters arising from the previous meeting.

5. **Vice Chancellor's report**

The Board discussed the Vice Chancellor's report and noted the following:

- the SBC Board had met and discussed options to progress the estates development project [REDACTED]

Papers detailing the recommended options and next steps would be circulated to the Board within the next few days and a meeting the week commencing 29 July 2024 to consider possible ratification of SBC's recommendation.

- The academic resizing exercise was currently in its compulsory redundancies stage further to the completion of voluntary redundancy stage. The academic re-shaping exercise of moving the model to three colleges was underway. A group chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic Transformation) was overseeing the business continuity to ensure minimal impact on the student experience when the model change takes effect from January 2025, after the academic year had commenced
- The implementation of the pay award had been included in the budget
- LSBU is one of five universities which have been shortlisted for the UK Social Mobility Awards; the outcome will be announced in October 2024
- Clearing is expected to be more competitive this year, and more resources have been allocated to messaging for both physical and social media awareness. More messaging on the website would also be considered.
- Risk-based assessments and other support measures are undertaken to ensure home students are able to pay their fees for the entirety of their course. A prompt payment discount of 5% on deposits is offered as well as other hard line measures for overseas students.
- The Complete University Guide (CUG) rankings considers data and reflects the position from approximately 18 months previously. As such, LSBU has never targeted this league table as it has the Guardian and Times.

The Board commended the range of initiatives being undertaken and **noted** the report.

6. **CFO report with MA summary**

The Board considered the CFO report which included updates on the current forecast financial position for LSBU and SBC, the 2024/25 budget and related savings initiative progress, treasury update, and updates from both the external and internal auditors.

The Board noted the May 2024 management accounts which had previously been scrutinised by the Finance and Investment Committee in June 2024.

The Board noted the various savings initiatives in response to the significant income challenges expected next year.

The Board noted recent figures suggested debt collection for 2022/23 had surpassed the forecast in the paper, and therefore improve the likely year end debt position. The Group CFO suggested that there remained risks around student debtors but these were reducing due to the actions taken this year.

The Board **noted** the report.

7. Budget

The Board considered the proposed budget for LSBU at [REDACTED] for 2024-25 and capital plan at [REDACTED] for 2024-25, noting the cashflow and debt covenant compliance checks as scrutinised and recommended by the Finance and Investment Committee in June 2024.

Whilst discussing the proposal, the Board noted:

- It was being asked to approve the quantum rather than the specific allocation of the capital plan
- [REDACTED] had been appraised of the outline budget
- A going concern analysis was contained within the paper, and a draft going concern approach was recently considered by the Group Audit and Risk Committee and Finance & Investment Committee with a final version for approval in October 2024

- [REDACTED]
- A proposal to defer some TSAAMs activity to 2026/27 may provide capacity for funds to be invested in updating IT equipment.

The Board **approved** the budget.

8. NSS report

The Board discussed the early analysis of the results of the 2024 National Student Survey (NSS) and noted the following:

- The board will have targeted interventions for the areas of low performance, and the new executive deans will have accountability to ensure these interventions are implemented in their colleges.
- Actions are being considered on how to manage lack of students' satisfaction with their placements, which is what is being partially attributed to the low performance of adult nursing
- The ratio of apprenticeships at LSBU is higher than that of its London Modern (LM) competitors and this skews the overall result.
- The business and management scores had improved since 2023, and further changes have been undertaken to the project delivery and supervision elements to improve the score further. The Strategy and People Committee would consider a summary of related action plans at its meeting in September 2024.
- The NSS is taken by students in their final year. As most of these apprentices are in their fourth or fifth year of study, the outcome of this NSS could reflect the views of apprentices who were affected by the IT outage and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Board **noted** the report.

9. **Update from Committee Chairs (verbal report)**

The Board considered the following updates from its sub-committee chairs:

Finance and Investment Committee: the committee had focused on the management position on group investments, financial forecasts and its ability to deliver various models. The Chair thanked the Group CFO for the quality of papers submitted to the Committee.

Strategy and People Committee: The committee had recently considered a paper outlining considerations for an anticipated Ofsted inspection of LSBU's apprenticeship portfolio. The committee found the incorporation of the awarding pay gap, retention and progression reports into a single paper for student outcomes helpful.

Group Audit and Risk Committee: the appointment of new internal audit providers has provided the opportunity to review the internal audit plan and consider how recommendations are responded to. LSBU is also currently reviewing its overseas students' compliance to ensure it continues to meet Home Office requirements.

10. **EDI annual report -Including ED&I Pay Gap**

The Board considered the annual EDI report which incorporated the ED&I pay gap and noted the following:

- In light of the increased completion rates of compulsory EDI training, the training provision will be reviewed over the next 12 months to consider how the information in the training is retained and be put into practice by staff to void it only being a completion exercise.
- The difference between the outcome of the pay equity audit (1%) and the mean pay gap demonstrated that whilst there is pay equity for similar roles, the median pay gap demonstrates a need for more distribution of females at senior grades. There is a more equal distribution of male/female roles at senior level amongst the academics compared to PSG.
- Staff are not asked to disclose any protected characteristics before joining any of the five existing staff networks, as everyone is invited to be an ally. A more inclusive and collaborative approach which acknowledges intersectionality is preferred to having several individual groups which has historically proved to be more diluted and difficult to get people to manage.
- With reference to responses to the LSBU Staff Pulse Survey, future consideration should be given to investigating why only 48% of staff feel LSBU is active in tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The Board **noted** the report.

11. **Annual education report**

The Board considered the annual education report which aimed to provide assurance of academic governance in LSBU in terms of quality, standards and student outcomes. The Board noted that the report had been considered by the Strategy and People Committee at its July 2024 meeting and had requested that future reports would clearly indicate progress against required actions.

The Board **noted** the report.

12. **Estates masterplan**

The Vice Chancellor gave a verbal summary on the estates masterplan and advised the Board on a number of points. Options 1 and 5 as presented at the Board's last meeting outlined a number of sites in the estate that could be disposed of. Officers have undertaken work to identify disposal opportunities, understand how much income such disposals would generate and how to build in flexibility that would allow for sites to be leased and generate income. Officers have undertaken benchmarking exercises and noted that LSBU currently performs poorly in utilisation. More data is required to address this, though officers have identified that current issues include low utilisation of rooms due to a number of courses having a small cohort size. Work is being undertaken to rationalise modules and courses and subsequently the operating module.

The Vice Chancellor also advised that an advisory group which would include two independent governors and external advisors has been established to assist the Executive in shaping the masterplan before proposals are considered by the Board.

The Board **noted** the summary.

Any other business

None.

Items to note

The following items were noted:

- Governance effectiveness review: link governors
- Consent to SBC and SBA budgets
- Corporate risk register
- External Governance review
- Organisational KPIs

Date of next meeting

4:00pm on Thursday, 17 October 2024 – Board meeting

Confirmed as a true record

..... (Chair)