

**Meeting of LSEC Corporation
Strategy & Board Development
held on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 5.30-7.30pm
in person at Orpington Campus Room C1/C2**

Corporation Governors

David Eastgate (DE)	Chair
Louise Nadal (LN)	Vice Chair
Dr Sam Parrett, CBE (SP)	Group CEO
Mark Trinick (MT)	Governor
Ayorinde John (AJ)	Governor
Lucie Allen (LA)	Governor
Chinyama Okunuga (CO)	Governor
David Bailey (DB)	Governor
Lucy Butler (LB)	Governor
Joanne Bell (JB)	Governor
Angela Hands (AH)	Governor
Mark Burnett (MB)	Governor
Vince Fihosy (VF)	Governor
Tony Gilbey (TG)	Governor
Kate Shiner (KS)	Governor
Sarah Lewis (SL)	Governor
Maz Potts/Teresa Langford	Staff Governors
Monesse Lambert	Student Governors (FE and HE)

Governance Professional & Clerk to the Board

Jennifer Pharo (JP)	Group Executive Director Governance
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Executive Officers in attendance

John Hunt (JHu)	Group Deputy CEO & Group CFO
Asfa Sohail (AS)	Deputy CEO & Principal
Louise Wolsey (LW)	Group Chief Strategy Officer & Deputy CEO LASER

Officers in attendance for specific items

Janet Curtis Broni (JCB)	Group Chief People Officer
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MINUTES

Responsible

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

Chair-DE

Apologies received from Ayorinde John, Lucy Butler, Vince Fihosy, Mark Trinick and Chinyama Okunuga

Lucie Allen and Moneese Lambert (Student) attended virtually

2. Minutes & Action Log

JP

2.1 Minutes of 23 March 2023 & Action Log

For Approval

Minutes of the Meeting were APPROVED subject to small amendment to minute relating to Finance Committee feedback, amended with Governor-AH input.

Section 3 : Strategic Direction, Leadership and Partnership Engagement **GCEO**

3.1 Group CEO Report (Verbal)

For Monitoring SP

Group CEO provided verbal update on

- Ofsted Monitoring visit to Nido Volans Lambeth. No information as yet on when this will take place.
- Accountability Agreement to be updated when LSIP received from BusinessLnd,
- Current year budget forecast outturn reported to be on track.
- Next year budget more challenging with increased risks around estates and capital projects, rising costs and inflation and pay awards.
- Pay issues and requirement to increase pay awards in line with rising costs. Union national claim is for 15% increase. Unrealistic demand with colleges facing industrial action in early 2023/24.
- Staff recruitment and retention remain significant issues in some areas. Retention issues not just pay related but emerging trend is relocation outside of London. Currently 64 vacancies.
- Two fellowships conferred, Denise Hyland RGB and Steve Besley, author and education policy specialist
- Organisation culture review underway picking up on feedback through IIP reaccreditation and Big Conversation.
- SCR administration is being addressed following some issues raised. Internal audit commissioned to review gaps and deep dive into process and procedures.

Questions and Challenge

In response to questions on SCR – it was confirmed that SCR Tracker software had been purchased and this was being reviewed with compatibility with iTrent as delays in implementation had been identified as system incompatibility. Both AS and BM had been auditing the SCR.

Additional scrutiny of Internal Auditors will provide assurance to the Board

In response to questions on staff recruitment, it was reported that slightly higher volumes of staff leaving in year reported with some moving into schools.

In response to questions around non-compliance and whether language and messaging to staff was adequately explained around the impact of non-compliance, it was reported that the executive were confident staff understood the impact of non-compliance on the organisation. It was suggested that the tone and language should be reviewed, in particular email messages to individuals.

The Board NOTED the update.

3.2 Accountability Agreement

For Approval AS/LW

The paper was presented by the Executive Principal & CLO.

It was reported that the Government set out their vision to transform Further Education in the January 2021 Skills for Jobs White Paper. This set in motion for reforms to transform the skills system so that it better supports young people and adults to develop the skills they need to get a good job and provide a clearer focus on delivery of outcomes.

The Board were reminded that the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, introduced last year aimed to strengthen links between employers and further education providers saw the introduction of Local Skills Improvement Plans, known as an LSIP.

It was reported that a key feature of the reforms is ensuring that employers have a central role in designing and developing qualifications and training. This has been further enforced through the accountability system, that provides new powers to the Secretary of State to ensure FE providers comply with their 'duty' to co-operate with employer representative bodies in the development of the plans, and new statutory duty to keep provision under review to ensure that it best meets local needs.

In this context the Board were advised that the College is required to complete an annual accountability statement by 31 May 2023.

The accountability agreement has two parts that providers are expected to comply with and implement. These are: the accountability framework and annual accountability statement. The annual accountability statement should be a succinct document that focuses on the College's priorities for the funding year ahead. It will need to be published on the college website and shared with ESFA and other external agencies. The annual accountability statement will need to link to the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

BusinessLDN is the employer representative body (ERB) leading the LSIP for London. The Board were advised that LSEC is represented on the London LSIP Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Emerging priorities and draft recommendations were shared by BusinessLDN for open consultation in March. These mostly align with LSEC's current direction of travel and a response to the consultation was submitted.

A review of consultation responses was being considered by BusinessLDN to be included in the final LSIP to be published by 31st May.

The Board were advised that the LSEC accountability statement will include.

- Statement of purpose
- Background to context/place
- Approach to developing the statement
- Contribution to National, regional and local priorities
- Corporation statement/sign-off
- Links to supporting documentation

A draft accountability agreement for LSEC was presented for feedback, informed by the Curriculum Strategy.

Questions and Challenges

In response to questions on consequences of not hitting targets. It was reported the Accountability Agreements are very new and will be used to drive funding and could put pressure on providers to deliver a certain type of curriculum.

This is a more prescriptive approach, but it is anticipated there would be some flexibility, at least in the beginning.

In response to questions on government policy changes, it was reported that T-Level roll out continues with significant teething issues and lack of demand for these qualifications. Defunding of other level 3 provision continues.

Chair reported that little comfort or assurance provided at ESFA provider meeting around impact on qualification reforms.

The Board **APPROVED** the submission of the Accountability Agreement.

3.3 Future Group Ambition

For Discussion SP/LW

SP Presented the Strategy and Group Ambitions.

It was reported that LSEC has become known as a College that has innovative approaches e.g. GoodforMe. Ambition is to become learning organisation and developing a research culture.

Board were reminded that the brand values and manifesto has been developed. Intention to continue to develop and build social value through our procurement processes, be recognised as pioneering and ambitious.

Developing our capability as a learning research organisation would support our improving journey and education outcomes.

Financial stewardship would remain strong.

Board were asked to consider if the themes of the presentation felt right in the current context and or if there was anything missing.

The Board received an update on the aspiration and purpose of the LASER Education Foundation with proposed workstreams in

1. Fundraising and Income Generation
2. Research and Innovation
3. Programme Design and Development
4. Communications and PR

The Board were asked to consider the USP of the Foundation, what would be the first target group and focus and what should we be known for.

Questions and Challenges

In response to questions, it was confirmed that there were a number of projects, e.g. EDI grant that could be administered through the Foundation.

In response to questions around using the research to consider the students journey pre and post College, it was reported that there was a project in mind Flight Path which would track distance travelled and progression destinations based on studnets starting point.

In response to comments from the Board, it was agreed that the objectives of the College was always to support those furthest from the employment market and also to progress studnets to HE and or further learning. It was in our DNA to support students from a differnet starting points, whether through the Trust or through the College supporting both social and economic mobility.

The Board confirmed the link between the Trust and College in progressing students was a particular strength. Brave to be pioneering and innovative and in setting high standards.

Board acknowledged and endorsed the approach of Foundation and look forward to continued discussion and review of the Foundation as it become operational.

The Board NOTED the update.

3.4 LASER Collaboration & Loan Agreement

For Approval

SP/JP

The Board were presented with the Collaboration Agreement, prepared with our lawyers Stone King, which provided the legal and operating principles under which the Foundation will work and collaborate with its founding members, London South East Colleges and London South East Academies Trust, the Foundation, College and Trust known collective as the LASER Group Organisations.

The Board were reminded that the College and Trust are currently operating within a group governance structure that is underpinned by mutual charitable principles and co-incidence of interest, that benefits the strategic positioning of the Group as an anchor institution and place maker within London and the South East.

It was reported that the development and implementation of London and South East Region (LASER) Education Foundation Limited, as a Company Limited by Guarantee and soon to be registered charity, is as a charitable foundation created to support and exist alongside the College and Trust.

The Board were advised that the Foundation had been registered at Companies House under company number 11717470 and will, following approval of the Collaboration Agreement by the Group Organisations, proceed with Charities Commission registration.

It was reported that registration process for charitable status can take up to 4-6 months, but the Foundation can commence operating, pending Charities Commission registration approval.

The Articles of Association provided previously to the Board, outline and provide the charitable objectives of the Foundation which align to the charitable objectives of the College and Trust, connecting the sum of all parts of the Group Organisations, to ensure the co-incidence of interest and combined and collective voice and strength of our organisations still resonates with our core values and group strategic purpose.

It was reported that the Foundation will supplement and enhance the charitable objectives of the College and Trust, driving the new Group Strategy and through fundraising, research, philanthropy, partnerships, sponsorships and collaborations with other charitable entities.

The Board were advised that the Collaboration Agreement provides the legal constitution of our group governance structure and Group Committees which will be supported by the Group Scheme of Delegation,

Group Standing Orders, Group Committees' Terms of Reference and Governance and Group Operational Policies.

This will ensure the continuity and efficiency of our current unique and effective group governance arrangements.

The Board were advised that the Collaboration Agreement also underpins the Group Organisations' business operations. This is an effective, proven and efficient operational model, which provides value for money and strategic operational oversight of the College and Trust. Led by a Group Executive and Senior Leadership Teams, our shared professional services and support functions provide significant high quality operational support to the Group Organisations.

The LSEC Corporation were asked to APPROVE a small start-up loan to the Foundation will be made by the College and Trust, as outlined in the Collaboration Agreement at paragraph 7.3.

The draft loan agreement prepared by Stone King and reviewed by the Executives and our external auditors is presented to the Board.

It was reported that the purpose of this small loan to the Foundation is to support start-up costs and to meet the requirements of the Charities Commission registration criteria, which requires charities applying for registration to have a minimum cash deposit of £5,000.

The loan is requested at a total value of £40,000, £20,000 provided equally from the College and Trust, on an interest free term, and be used to support website, marketing and other business startup costs.

The Board were asked to APPROVE the Collaboration Agreement which will then be presented to the LASER and Trust Boards for approval on 4 and 9 May 2023 respectively, and to APPROVE the Loan Agreement to LASER Foundation.

Questions and Challenge

In response to questions from the Board it was confirmed that once funding raising had commenced gift aid would be a consideration.

The Board **APPROVED** the Collaboration Agreement and Loan Agreement.

3.5 People & Culture Strategy & Plan

For Approval

JCB

The strategy and plan was presented to the Board by GCPO-JCB

The Board were asked to CONSIDER and APPROVE the People and Culture Strategy for the College, which has been consulted on with Senior Leaders.

The 7 pillars underpinning the strategy were reported as

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Reward
- Recognition
- **(People) Regulations**
- **Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Reporting**

Priorities to be implemented this current year were reported to the Board as the 3 Rs under: Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition.

It was reported that a full recruitment plan exists and is worked through.

It was reported that Recognition initiatives were also in the process of implementation, and this includes employee of the month scheme, acknowledging and appreciating staff work anniversaries, staff awards, and recognising long service to the College etc.

In addition, a talent management programme is in place for the College – utilising our levy, with several staff on apprenticeship programmes ranging from levels 2 to 6. It was reported that succession planning has just been finalized, with profiles for staff, using the 9-point grid to identify talent within the Organisation, with the aim of encouraging staff growth and development, improving retention overall.

It was also reported that an enhanced wellbeing package for College leaders was being considered. This would include further bespoke training on well-being and resilience,

Wellbeing strategy to be prepared and may be presented to next Meeting.

The Board **APPROVED** the strategy.

Section 4: College Operations & Performance

DCEO

4.1 DCEO & Principal Report

For Monitoring AS

Appendix 1: KPI Scorecard/Dashboard

The reported was presented by the Executive Principal & CLO.

Two key areas of discussion were reported as attendance rates which were reporting lower than target, but green shoots were visible

Retention was reported as improved and forecast outgun achievement was also anticipated to be reporting slight improvements. Recent deep dives in ALS, English and Maths, STEM and tutorials had provided board members with some assurance on the ongoing improvement work

It was reported that apprenticeships rates were forecast to reduce

The Board **NOTED** the update.

4.2 Ofsted Readiness: Preparations

For Discussion AS

Key Messages and Context: Our Journey

The Board received an updated presentation on the Ofsted and the College Journey which reminded the Board of the key messages and improvements.

It was reported that areas for improvement remain English and Maths with improved high grades reported. Board were advised that investment in face-to-face delivery had provided positive impact.

As previously reported staff retention and recruitment was impacting on the pace in improvement in some areas.

It was reported that a key positive improvement was the rise in progression and destinations rates, plus evidence to support curriculum sequencing. TLA was also reported as good.

It was reported that the Big Conversation initiative was driving positive changes in culture and focus on the College priorities.

Quality assurance processes had also improved with robust scrutiny and challenge of staff and managers on improvements.

Questions and Challenge

It was reported that the Deep Dive meeting in April had provided additional assurance to the Board members who had attended.

In response to questions around impact of covid, it was reported that as a matter of course, monitoring learners starting point would determine the improvement journey measure and it was anticipated that covid had impacted with learners starting points at a lower point than pre pandemic starting points.

The Board **NOTED** the report.

Section 5: Governance & Accountability

GDirGov

5.1 Governance Matters

For Approval

The Board were presented with the Board Register and asked to **NOTE** the changes.

The Board **APPROVED** changes to the Committee Membership.

The Board **APPROVED** the schedule of Meetings proposed for 2023/24.

The Board were reminded that as part of good governance practice they are required to complete a board self-evaluation and assessment on the effectiveness of the Board.

The Group Executive Director of Governance presented the completed assessment of the Board's performance as part of the self-evaluation process and in line with previously approved criteria.

The results of the Board self-evaluation were provided alongside the Board Improvement Action Plan.

It was reported that as this was a transition year with a new Group and College Strategy yet to be fully defined and approved, a new Board Action Plan to reflect the new strategy through to 2030 will be completed with the Board in October 2023.

The Board **APPROVED** the Self Evaluation and Action Plan.

6. AOB:

Resolution to appoint new Trust Chair to be circulated.

7. Next meeting dates

- Curriculum & Standards Committee: 15 June
- Group Audit Committee: 22 June 23
- Group Finance Committee: 26 June 23
- Corporation Board: 13 July 23

8. Items Deferred to 2023/24

GDPR Policy

Minutes APPROVED :



David Eastgate, Chair
13 July 2023