

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Academies Board
held at 4.00 pm on Thursday, 8 July 2021
MS Teams - MS Teams**

Present

Hitesh Tailor (Chair)
Richard Flatman (Vice-Chair)
Nicole Louis
Chris Mallaband
Fiona Morey
Lesley Morrison
David Phoenix
James Blastland

Apologies

Tony Giddings
Hilary McCallion
Jacqui Collins

In attendance

Michael Broadway
Ciara Carroll
Dan Cundy
Helena Abrahams

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed trustees to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Hilary McCallion and Tony Giddings.

Apologies were also received from Jacqui Collins.

2. Declarations of interest

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

3. Minutes of last meeting

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 March 2021. Confidential items will be redacted from the minutes on publication.

4. Matters arising

Equality Impact Assessment

This item is on the meeting's agenda – item closed.

KPI dashboard

The dashboard is still in development.

Name change consultation

This has been completed – item closed.

Capital programme

A verbal update will be provided in the meeting.

Reserves policy

Issue to be clarified and worked through after this meeting.

Safeguarding meeting

This meeting was held – item closed.

5. **CEO's Report**

The Board noted that Chair had funded the Hitesh Tailor awards which will provide prizes to students in both academies. These awards were welcomed by the trust which is keen to reward successful students.

The Board noted that an attempted cyber attack at the UTC had been foiled by changes made following the recent IT internal audit review and the cyber attack at the university.

The Board discussed how best to demonstrate the advantages of being part of the LSBU Group. It was agreed that clearly defined pathways were key to articulating the offer; work has already been done on this with the UTC and will be further developed with UAE. The Group should also look at how a typical university-sponsored trust would operate and highlight the gaps that the Group structure fills. Further work will be done outside the meeting; this is an important focus as numbers on roll are challenging.

6. **Education update, including OFSTED preparedness**

The Board noted the results projections and were made aware that a detailed analysis will be done between cohorts in the school; comparison to external results will not be possible this year as each schools' grading methodology is different.

The Board discussed the media reports about "lost" learning days and heard that both schools had been affected at the start of the pandemic but case numbers had improved throughout the remainder of the lockdown; positive cases appear to be rising again with the Delta variant. The number of days "lost" is dependant on the individual student and their exposure, but online learning compensates for time out of school for those who are merely self-isolating rather than ill.

The Board questioned how the trust could demonstrate its performance throughout this period in lieu of the usual performance figures. Proxy indicators can be used to sketch an outline, such as attendance figures which have improved in the trust during the pandemic; they are now above national figures when they have previously been in line. This demonstrates a

continued desire to engage by students and they should be congratulated for their efforts.

Reassurance should be given now to returnees and new joiners to demonstrate the plans that are in place for September to alleviate stress and worry and to show that the schools will be able to continue to deliver education through a rapid and practiced pivot to online learning, should this become necessary.

The Board noted that the trust's engineering offer has been rationalised across the trust and focussed in the UTC to prevent duplication; a new digital media course is being offered at UAE/SBUA which offers a pathway into a new course in LSBU. Capital expenditure will be required to facilitate this new course.

The Board also noted that employer engagement within the UTC is changing; projects will be directly integrated into the curriculum to support completion of modules.

The Board discussed the UTC development session held the evening before this meeting and the positive message that had been conveyed; the Chair of the SAB is confident that the school has made big strides and will be able to improve its OFSTED grade at the next inspection. She stressed the importance of data in demonstrating progress and attainment and in identifying the areas which need more support. The Chair was particularly keen to emphasise the work that the UTC has done with disenfranchised students and the provision of a high-quality alternative to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

The Board discussed what KPIs could be tracked to show progression of students through the schools and then onwards through the rest of the group if that is where students choose to move on to.

The Board discussed the significant issue of maths and English minimum targets and the attendant issues that develop in achievement as a result. It was noted that this is a borough-wide issue, not just in the two schools but it does require a creative solution, rather than making incremental changes. The UTC outperformed UAE/SBUA in these subjects this year, in part because significant resources were directed at the situation. Target setting for cohorts in addition to target setting for subjects will support achievement of school/trust goals. Achieving these targets requires funding and therefore strategies must take this into consideration.

The trust is working with another secondary school which is looking for a trust partner and a collaborative effort with Archbishop Tennison will commence shortly. The trust has overrecruited into the health specialism in the UTC and so this will have no cost impact for the trust, nor will it impact on the UTC's OFSTED inspection readiness.

The Board noted the draft People Strategy and the difficult nature of staff recruitment and retention in today's environment. The Board requested that attainment targets be set to demonstrate how the strategy would be met and that reporting comes to the board on a regular basis to demonstrate ongoing fulfilment.

The Board agreed that the trust leadership can move forward with implementing the people strategy in September.

The Board noted the new Health and Safety report and heard that the trust is bidding for funding to further improve the security at both school sites. The Board was pleased to hear that the redevelopment of the Aylesbury Estate will not result in the termination of the heating supply to UAE/SBUA.

7. Financial reports

The trust is still on track to have a surplus of £300K by the end of the financial year for 2020-21.

Capital spending is required at both schools to supply new IT equipment at UTC and machines to facilitate the new digital media course at UAE/SBUA. Applications have been made to the CIF funding round and receipt or otherwise of this funding will impact the spending priorities in the capital programme for 2021-22.

The Board requested that a replacement programme be devised urgently so that the trust is aware of, and planning for, the maximum amount of capital spend required, regardless of whether funding is received from the government. The Board emphasised the importance of having a similar level of information on capital spending as was available for revenue spending in determining the trust's long term cash flow.

The Board requested assurance about the projected increase in pupil numbers, particularly in Year 3 of the 3 Year Budget Forecast Return. A significant increase in pupil numbers has been forecast in this year which the trustees felt was not vindicated in the evidence presented by the trust. The uncertainty caused by the absence of verified exam results and the delays to OFSTED inspection times is too great to rely on the effect of word-of-mouth recommendations and marketing resources from the university which are stretched at the moment.

Concern was raised around the decreasing cost of staff at a time when the schools are striving to drive improvements, which requires more staff spending. The Board was keen to ensure that spending on staff and inputs is at the optimum level to provide the best experience for the students. In relation to staff costs, it was suggested that a breakdown be provided in relation to qualified, unqualified and managerial staff.

The Board requested that it be presented with three pupil number scenarios by email by 16 July in order to determine whether it was comfortable with agreeing the 3 Year Budget Forecast return.

The Board agreed the planned budget for 2021-22 and that it could be submitted to the ESFA by the deadline of 27 July 2021. The submission cannot be made until the 3 Year Budget Forecast return is completed.

8. Annual safeguarding report

The report was reviewed in advance by the safeguarding link trustee who was unable to attend the meeting.

The annual report has been shaped by changes introduced in safeguarding reporting to governors/trustees.

Formal reporting will be made on an annual basis and by exception when the safeguarding trustee wants to bring a particular issue to the trustees' attention.

The report was noted.

9. Equality Impact Assessment on new Pay Policy

An equality impact assessment has been completed to evaluate the effects of the new pay policy introduced by the trust a year ago. A disproportionate impact on race and gender has been discerned and an action plan has been devised to address these concerns.

The trust will be conducting equality impact assessments for any major policy change in advance of the change being made in order to ensure that the impact of any change is proportionate.

A reporting process for any new EIAs will be devised and information will be submitted to the Board at the appropriate time.

10. Proposed governance effectiveness review

The timeline for the effectiveness review was noted and trustees acknowledged they would receive questionnaires in the first half of the autumn term. The outcomes of the review would be discussed with all relevant parties and a final report submitted to the Board at the December 2021 meeting.

11. SBA Risk register update

Risks have been reallocated to the most appropriate level; operational risks sit now at SAB level and follow the scheme of delegation. It was noted that the UTC development session had discussed how important recruitment and

retention of students and staff is to the local success of the school. Consideration will be given to whether these two items should sit on the school risk register as well as on the trust risk register.

12. Policies

The Board noted that the trust was required to make a statutory update to the previously agreed admissions policies for entry in 2021-22 and 2022-23 due to a change in the School Admissions Code.

The Visits policy is a new policy introduced to support governors and trustees when they visit the schools in the trust.

The Board approved both admissions policies for both schools and the visits policy.

13. Reports from committees

The reports from the committees, including the SABs, were noted.

14. Update on recruitment for School Advisory Boards

It was recommended that a senior academic be recruited from LSBU to sit on the UTC SAB and fill the university-sponsored governor vacancy.

Recruitment for both SABs will be picked up in September when there is a new cohort of students and parents and teachers are refreshed after the summer break.

The recruitment update was noted.

**Date of next meeting
4.00 pm, on Friday, 23 July 2021**

Confirmed as a true record



..... (Chair)