

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Academies Board
held at 4.00 pm on Tuesday, 15 December 2020
MS Teams - MS Teams**

Present

Hitesh Tailor (Chair)
Richard Flatman (Vice-Chair)
Tony Giddings
Hilary McCallion (minutes 1-16)
Chris Mallaband
Fiona Morey
Lesley Morrison (minutes 1-16)
David Phoenix (minutes 1-15)

Apologies

Nicole Louis

In attendance

Michael Broadway
Ciara Carroll
Dan Cundy
Helena Abrahams
Catherine Biscoe (Buzzacott, minutes 11-14)
Natalie Ferer (minutes 11-14)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed trustees to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Nicole Louis.

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 1 October 2020.

4. Matters arising

Action log

7 July 2020

Agenda item 5

Circulate three-year staff investment plan – an update on this item was noted.

27 July 2020

Agenda item 5

Report on November 2020 budget review following pupil number confirmation to be discussed at the next Board meeting – on agenda for discussion

Equality Impact Assessment on new Pay Policy – deferred to March 2021 meeting to allow for a comprehensive report.

1 October 2020

Agenda item 8

Report to highlight differences in UAE and UTC safeguarding policies – to be completed as part of Trust review of safeguarding governance requirements.

Agenda item 9

Financial reports to include clarification of depreciation issue and capital and revenue significant spending programme – deferred to March 2021 meeting to allow for a comprehensive report.

Financial reports to include revision of three-year budget plan – on agenda for discussion.

5. CEO's Report

The CEO's report focussed on the work being done to integrate the Group's strategy into SBA. A KPI dashboard has been developed which incorporates 27 KPI measures from across the group, made relevant to SBA. This work will help define the distinctiveness of SBA's vision.

The Board noted that the Remuneration Committee had met immediately prior to this Board meeting and had ratified the pay and appraisal process for 2019-20. They noted that positive comments had been received from the School Improvement Partner (SIP) in relation to the Trust's management. Cascading targets have been set from the CEO, down through to the Principals. The Board noted that December was late to receive next summer's educational targets and recommended that target setting be conducted over a longer period; the CEO confirmed that future target setting will take place within the 5-year Group Strategy.

The Board asked that their congratulations be passed on to the staff and teams within SBA who had won awards at the LSBU Group Staff Awards.

6. Education update

The Board noted that the engineering staffing challenge at both schools may accelerate the longer-term change in offerings at both schools, potentially affecting the offer of the Engineering BTEC at UAE. This could provide an opportunity to broaden the BTEC offering across the Trust as a whole.

The Board noted that the Trust is working to articulate its distinctiveness as part of the wider strategy project and has identified five elements of what adds value to SBA's offer and differentiates this trust from others. The unique element of the Trust is a focus on professional and technical pathways and their position at the heart of the curriculum.

Management are now working on articulating what "an SBA graduate is..." and defining clearly the philosophy and vision of each of the schools.

The Board noted the safeguarding update. Safeguarding monitoring and reporting across the Trust is being reviewed.

The Board requested a standing agenda item in relation to OFSTED preparedness and an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in relation to potential inspections. Both schools are due to have an inspection within the next year.

The Board discussed the recent positive OFSTED visit to the UTC and noted that the focus of the visit had been the preparedness and mitigation for the coronavirus pandemic, including a review of the recovery curriculum.

The Board noted that the Trust had been innovative in their solution to the engineering teaching problem, replacing two teachers with four graduates who are receiving a two-week intensive teacher training course and will start teaching in January 2021 with support and mentorship. The Board noted that the DfE had withdrawn bursary funding for the LSBU Engineering PGCE and so the programme would not be running.

7. Change of school names

The Board requested that the proposal to change both school names be considered within the framework of the SBA strategy project and be brought back to the next meeting.

8. Admissions policy consultation

South Bank UTC

The Board noted the proposal to reduce the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) in KS4 in the UTC to support the UTC in forecasting and budgeting, and to defend against casual admission requests. The notionally lower PAN will be offset by increasing the intake in the upper years. This will allow the UTC to have a total of 500 learners on site, including offering the new HNC and apprenticeships to 30 students each.

The Chair of the UTC SAB explained that it is significantly more difficult to recruit to Year 10 and the school would be better placed to increase its 6th Form/Year 12 numbers.

The Board approved the decision to move forward to consult on the change to the admissions policy for the South Bank UTC.

UAE South Bank

The Board discussed the proposal to change the admissions policy to UAE in detail, noting that this was a change to the oversubscription criteria which would not come into effect until the school was actually oversubscribed.

The Board noted that the proposed method of allocating places would result in an increased administrative burden and could possibly result in unintended consequences for the intake due to the perception of testing in admissions' processes. The Board agreed that the change to the admissions policy needs to be interrogated further before it goes forward for consultation.

The Board approved the decision to consult on the original admissions policy for UAE South Bank.

9. **Annual register of interests**

The Board noted the declared interests which had previously been authorised by the Board.

10. **Financial reports**

The Board noted that the financial situation has improved since the budget was agreed in July 2020, with a current projected surplus of £216K for the year. This represents an improvement of £100K over the course of 2020-21, which has been driven by receipt of additional grants not included in the original budget.

The Board noted the proposed introduction of integrated curriculum and financial planning into the next budget round. The Board noted the proposed capital spending programme which will be brought to the Board meeting in March 2021, and the identification of a £300K funding pot at the UTC for replacing equipment.

11. **External audit findings**

Catherine Biscoe and Natalie Ferer joined the meeting.

The Board noted Buzzacott's audit findings report which had been discussed in detail by the Audit Committee. Buzzacott's opinions were unqualified.

The Board noted that this was Buzzacott's first audit and that the audit had gone well for the first year, and within the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

There remain several outstanding items; however, Buzzacott did not believe that this would significantly hold up the signing of the accounts.

The Board noted that the improvement in the internal control systems and elimination of any significant issues in the audit had resulted in a much-improved audit year.

The external audit partner confirmed that the identified misstatements were not material.

The external audit partner confirmed the independence of Buzzacott from SBA.

12. External audit letter of representation

The Board discussed the letter of representation to the external auditors, which had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee.

The letter contained standard representations only. No representations specific to SBA had been included.

The Executive confirmed that all material matters had been disclosed to the auditors and that the representations were accurate and reasonable.

The Board approved the letter and authorised the Chair to sign the letter on behalf of the Board.

13. System of Internal Control report

The Board noted that SBA was reviewed in common with the rest of LSBU group by the internal auditors, BDO. The rating provided across the group was generally satisfactory, with some improvements required.

The Board noted that that the KPIs provided to the Board would become more sophisticated under the group strategy. Further reporting is also provided to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

14. Annual report and accounts 2019-20

The Audit Committee confirmed that it recommended the annual report and accounts for approval by the board. The Board noted that there were one or two final minor changes to make and the final version of the accounts and report will be circulated to the board once it had been signed.

The Board noted assurances from the Executive that the form and content of the report and accounts were accurate and could be approved by the Board.

After careful consideration, the Board approved the annual report and accounts for 2019-20 and authorised the Chair and the Accounting Officer to sign them on its behalf, subject to the completion of the minor outstanding points.

Catherine Biscoe and Natalie Ferer left the meeting.

{Secretary's note: following completion of the minor outstanding audit points the Chair and the Accounting Officer signed the accounts on 29 January 2021}

15. Covid-related funding proposal

The Board noted the request by management to use reserves to fund the exceptional Covid-related expenditure for 2020-21 as this was not accounted for in the budget approved back in July 2020.

As the Board had reviewed the October 2020 management accounts which reported a projected £200K in-year surplus, it was decided that it was not necessary to authorise the use of reserves to cover these exceptional costs for 2020-21, provided the Trust continued along the same positive trajectory.

The Board noted that it was very important for management to take a longer-term view on these costs and to correctly provide for them in future years' budgets. The Board also noted that the Department of Education would not provide further funding until the Trust had exhausted its reserves.

Management confirmed that these related costs would be clearly delineated in the management accounts for review by the trustees on an on-going basis, which would also provide a clear picture for future budgeting.

David Phoenix left the meeting.

16. Policies

The Board noted the update on policies and that more information will be provided in the March 2021 meeting.

Hilary McCallion and Diana Lesley Morrison left the meeting.

17. Academies Financial Handbook compliance report

The Board noted the AFH compliance report and that an update will be provided in the March 2021 meeting.

18. MAT Risk Management

The Board noted the Group Risk policy, and the consequent change to the format of the risk register. The Board noted that it will be asked to decide a risk appetite to inform the view of risk across the Trust at the March 2021 Board meeting.

19. Reports from committees and School Advisory Boards

The Board noted the reports from the committees and the School Advisory Boards.

20. **Update on recruitment for SBA Board and School Advisory Board**

The Board noted the update on recruitment.

**Date of next meeting
4.00 pm, on Thursday, 18 March 2021**

Confirmed as a true record

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized first name and a surname, followed by a horizontal line.

..... (Chair)