

Minutes of LSEC Corporation Meeting held on Tuesday 8th October 2024 from 5.30-7.30pm in person at Orpington Campus Room C1/C2

Corporation Governors

David Eastgate (DE) Chair Louise Nadal (LN) Vice Chair Mark Burnett (MB) Vice Chair Dr Sam Parrett, CBE (SP) Group CEO Mark Trinick (MT) Governor Lucie Allen (LA) Governor Angela Hands (AH) Governor Vince Fihosy (VF) Governor Kate Shiner (KS) Governor Sarah Lewis (SL) Governor Darren Kirwin (DK) Governor George Ryan (GR) Governor Philip LeFeuvre (PL) Governor Julie Asher Smith (JAS) Governor Paul Thorogood (PG) Governor

Teresa Langford (TL) Staff Governors
Nicole Mundondo Student Governor

Governance Professional & Clerk to the Board

Jennifer Pharo (JP) Group Chief of Staff and Governance Director

Executive Officers in attendance Executive Officers in attendance

John Hunt (JHu) Group Deputy CEO & Group CFO

Asfa Sohail (AS) Executive Principal & CLO

Louise Wolsey (LW) Group Chief Strategy Officer (Item 1.1)

Janet Curtis Broni (JCB) Group Chief People Officer (Item 2.3 & 2.4)



THE NOLAN COMMITTEE

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



MINUTES

Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

- Chair welcomed Paul Thorogood and Nicole Mundondo to their first Board Meetings.
- Apologies received from Governors George Ryan, Lucie Allen and Vince Fihosy.
- Governors Mark Burnett and Louise Nadal joined the meeting remotely.

Minutes of previous meeting held on 10 July 2024 were APPROVED.

Capital Committee Resolution dated 2 August 2024 relating to Nido Volans Lambeth was NOTED.

A 1	Group CEO Update and Appendices
	Group CEO report was presented and taken as read.
	It was noted that the AoC was continuing to pursue VAT issues for Colleges with a letter endorsed by the majority of FE Colleges submitted to the Chancellor.
	In response to questions on the AOC VAT Letter, Group CGO requested to circulate the AOC Budget submission which covered more details on the impact on learners.
	It was reported that a letter outlining the case for judicial review letter had been submitted to Pearsons by Luminate Education, which had endorsed by LSEC and 30 Colleges in support of actions to redress the grade inflation issues for GSEC English 2.0 that had been widely reported in August 2024 and which had disadvantaged a number of young people nationally.
	In response to questions on why Ofqual were not getting involved in the dispute it was reported that this would be a huge issue for the Ofqual as the regulatory to rule against the awarding organisation. Following discussions with the Board it was stated that it was unlikely that Pearsons would move on their position on this matter.
	In response to questions on HE, it was reported that recruitment had been poor both internally and nationally, international market has dissipated which means a draw on our traditional learner market. It was reported that work was underway to review and re-evaluate HE Partners, thinking more about strategic alliances than accreditation franchise model and a partner who can invest in capital and resources. A strategic review of HE would be presented to the Board in December.
	In response to questions on the early years programme lead by Bromley Collegiate, it was reported that a quarter of the learners come through LSEC early years and that those who trained locally were more likely to be retained as teacher.
	It was reported that engagement with newly elected MPs had resulted in key visits including the opening of the new Ribbon Building in the STEM block. This engagement had facilitated good supportive discussions on VAT and pay award issues.
	The Board NOTED the update.
A1.1	Group Strategy LSEC Operational Plan and KPIs
	The Board received from Group CSO the updated report on the Operational Plan and KPIs to support and drive achievement of our strategic goals and building a learning organisation and research led culture.



The Board discussed what needed to be in place to lead a research culture and how to manage and share knowledge and information. It was reported that on the other side of Ofsted, more work on EEF and other grants that may be available to be explored.

It was reported that introduction to CEO at EEF would be facilitated by Governor-SL, who understood that EEF were looking to work with FE Colleges.

The Board **APPROVED** the Operational Plan and KPIs.

A2. DCEO & Executive Principal Operational Update

A2.1 Executive Principal & CLO Report

Appendix 1: KPI Scorecard/Dashboard

Appendix 2: Ofsted Presentation

Executive Principal & CLO presented the report as read.

It was reported that Ofsted would be inspecting the college from 14-18 October 2024.

It was reported that the College is prepared, with Managers and the Board receiving updates and development on the EIF and changes including deep dives.

It was reported that a Toolkit had been developed for managers to support and prepare them for both inspection and how to lead and manage.

It was reported that case studies were being prepared to illustrate key positive features of the College's work aligned with the strengths identified in the College self-assessment report.

It was reported that Position Statements to support consistent messaging covering each key question and provision type were being updated to keep teams focused on driving improvements.

The Board were advised that that College continues to work with external consultants and other providers to validate strengths and areas for development identified. The quality team continues to lead on an Ofsted Readiness Plan which is being supported by other teams across the College.

The Board were advised that the College was also in scope for an Ofsted Initial Teacher Inspection, level 5 teacher trainees, and plans were being put in place if this occurs this academic year.

It was reported that the College's overall classroom-based achievement rate had improved on last year's performance, from 80.5% to 83.5%, an increase of 3%, due to young learners' achievements improved from 78.9% to 83.9%, an increase of 5%, and adult learners' achievement improved from 82.2% to 83.1%, an increase of 0.9%.

It was reported that despite the improvement in level 2 achievement rates, there continues to be a need to further improve level 2 outcomes for adults, such as AAT, Distance learning, Functional Skills in English, Access courses, and L2 Electrical Installations evening classes.

For young learners, improvements were required in qualifications such as Functional Skills in Maths, Health and Social Care, and a few other courses heavily reliant on external exams such as Plumbing.

It was reported that the College's overall apprenticeship provision achievement rates improved on last year's performance, from 46.3% to 52.5%, representing an increase of 6%.

The Board received an update on the IQER activity which had taken place in Spring and Summer 2024. It was reported that 97% (310) staff received formal lesson visits took place



last year. It was reported that over 72% of lessons were positive overall.. Deep dives had also been completed in several curriculum areas.

Key strengths were reported in areas such as SEND and ESOL.

For those areas identified as needing improvement, an IQR action plan was produced. Many of the actions in the IQR action plan, would be transferred to the College QIP 2024/25 to ensure continued sustained improvement.

It was reported that IQRs were being undertaken in September and later in the year to provide the College with more quality assurance.

In relation to Behaviour & Attitudes and Personal Development: Overall student attendance for 2023/24 was at 80%. This is an increase to previous year but remains below the College's expectation. .

In relation to Leadership and Management it was reported that there was positive action and impact against all aspects of the Quality Improvement Plan.

In relation to Apprenticeships it was reported that the strategic actions for improvement as detailed below had bene monitored via the monthly meetings.

- Improve confidence in the apprenticeship MI to inform more robust forecasts and targeted intervention to drive up all accountability measures.
- Improve the capacity within the apprenticeship management team to focus on accountability and support targeted performance improvements.
- To provide external assurance to MI, employer and apprentice feedback and staff development.
- To provide assurances of significant improvements in apprenticeship achievement rates, retention and reduction in learners past planned end date and the volume of withdrawals.

These measures were all monitored via a monthly Apprenticeship Strategic Improvement Plan (ASIP) meeting, which was chaired by an external consultant, Dr Barbara Van Der Eecken.

It was reported that these actions had impacted positively on the outturn achievement which was reported at 52.5%. It was reported that the most recent Apprenticeship Internal Quality. It was reported that the areas for further focus moving into 2024-25 were

- Some consistency improvements in progress reviews in a small number of apprenticeship standards
- Move the discussion of off the job hours from a review of how many have been completed to a discussion linked to the skills, knowledge and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard
- Ensure SMART targets are consistently SMART.

It was reported that all curriculum/business planning dates are in diaries with the GEX guidance meeting took place on 30 September to kick start the business planning process for year 2025/26.

It was reported that as a result of the launch of a revised Group Strategy for 2024-2030, and significant changes in the originally proposed curriculum reforms brought about from the appointment of a new government, it is proposed to review the college 2023 – 2028 curriculum strategy and develop a revised curriculum strategy for 2025/26 – 2029/30. The Board were advised that from this a revised Accountability Agreement will be concluded for the same academic period.



The outline of actions and timeline for the revised 2026 – 2029 Curriculum Strategy is detailed in this report under section 1.5.

It was reported that the in-principle agreement was sought from the board back in July to offer A level provision from September 2025. However, due to the change in Government and proposed curriculum reforms, this decision was now on hold.

It was reported that two local authorities had approached the College to support with the increased demand in elected home education (EHE). Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time.

This is 14-16 part- time offer as directed by parents. It was proposed that the College should explore to offer this provision to meet the local needs. The proposal is to pilot this with the Greenwich local authority at our Plumstead campus as we currently run ESOL young offer at that campus.

The Board received a brief update on current in year enrolment and recruitment. It was reported that young people were expected to be above target at 4250 and adult recruitment a little lower than target but overall expected to meet annual funding targets. HE recruitment is significantly below the target and curriculum leaders are working on a plan to try to recover this. Apprenticeship recruitment also remains slightly below target.

It was reported that learners had participated in induction weeks. A range of drop-ins and format chats are taking place across sites with class representatives being selected with student conferences planned for end of October 2024.

The Board were appraised of an incident and altercation that had taken place at Bromley Campus. It had diffused very quickly by managers and staff and the College were working with the police. It was reported that a post incident review had been concluded and the college continues to work with externals agencies.

It was reported that following the incident additional security measures have been implemented.

- Close work with the police who are being incredibly supportive
- A regular police presence in and around the college and at key times of day
- Random student search and screening with additional campus support staff and senior managers on site.
- A debrief with staff at Bromley campus had been held..

Th Board were remined that a vast majority of our students consistently demonstrate respect, embody our values, and contribute positively to our community. Behaviour is good.

It was reported that Safeguarding practices continue to be strong, with a focus during induction on wellbeing and how to keep themselves safe. This narrative is repeated within the student newsletter, tutorials and other ways such as screens and posters.

It was reported that the online monitoring and filtering software was having a positive impact as there have been multiple cases where safeguarding themes/concerns have been highlighted through the new system based on a student's search themes.

The Board were advised that that monitoring of the single central record continues to be a high priority with regular audits taking place by the senior management team. A successful external audit was conducted by a consultant (Ofsted trained) of staff files and SCR to



provide assurances for the senior management team and the Board. As requested and recommended by the Goard, the College has commissioned an external agency (Leaders in Safeguarding) to do the audit work in this area. They also provide a quality mark subject to meeting the set criteria. We are in the process of scheduling a date.

Questions and Comments

In response to questions on the incident, Student Governor reported that students felt safe on campus and that he matter had been dealt with very quickly with good communication to students.

In response to questions on the IQER for Apprenticeships, it was reported that this had been positively received by the new management team, and there had been a positive start to the year.

In response to questions on the good achievement outcomes and any areas of improvement, it was reported that attendance was a current area of concern with attendance rates not where we would want them to be around 80%.

It was reported that attendance surgeries had been put in place every Friday, to review attendance at course and teacher level.

In response to questions it was reported that vocational attendance rates were c85% on par with sector averages, tutorial and English and maths attendance rates were challenging and areas for improvement.

In response to questions on the methodology for calculating attendance it was reported that not all providers count and measure attendance in the same way. We do not disaggregate attendance from tutorial and English and maths..

In response to questions on curriculum intent, it was reported that that the Board had been involved and approved the Curriculum Strategy, this would need to be adjusted to accommodate any government changes on BTECs and T Levels.

In response to questions on 14-16 Elective Home Education provision it was reported that further information would be provided to include safeguarding arrangements investment required.

In response to questions on percentage of EHCP learners it was reported that c20% of young leaners have EHCP of which 50% will be in discrete provision. The volumes were being finalised and were forecast to be increased on previous year.

The Board **NOTED** the update.

A2.2 Quality Update

The Board received an update quality and performance.

It was reported that in the academic year 2023/24, 310 staff (97%) had been formally observed. The residue 3% were on long term sick.

It was reported that the internal quality reviews conducted by external ex-HMI inspectors in the spring and summer terms highlighted key strengths across various curriculum areas, as well as areas for improvement. These included teaching, learning and assessment, attendance and the development of middle managers. To respond to these findings, a comprehensive Internal Quality Review Action plan had been developed and carried forward into the Quality Improvement Plan.

It was reported that training for middle managers on the EIF framework and coaching had been provided to develop skills together with targeted departmental CPD, sharing of best practices, and strategies to improve attendance. Moreover, staff identified as requiring



additional support in their teaching benefited from coaching to enhance their instructional practices and drive improvements.

It was reported that the "SPARK" TLA philosophy was introduced to staff, and all had received a reflective diary. A **teachers' toolkit** had also been produced, to help with ensuring effective teaching and that staff are supported in doing this.

The Board were advised that the September CPD day was focused on TLA, "SPARK," high standards and expectations and OFSTED readiness.

It was reported that overall, positive progress had been made in implementing the Quality Improvement Plan. At the most recent review, all the identified areas for improvement were judged to be making positive progress. In four cases, whilst there is clear evidence of positive impact, this is not fully completed, so will be carried over to the 2024/25 Quality Improvement Plan.

The Board were advised that that Quality priorities and plans for 2024/25 were as follows

- Early drop ins and learning walks, supported by externals to ensure externally validated quality assurance.
- To foster professional growth and standardise teaching practices, each College
 Directorate will conduct at least 10 joint observations between Curriculum Managers and
 external experts, providing valuable opportunities for collaboration, skill-sharing, and the
 development of best practices among educators.
- To mitigate risks and improve the overall quality of teaching, IQRs are planned in September (subcontracting, T- levels and apprentices), November (tutorials and personal development and February/March (study programmes, maths and English and High Needs.)
- Staff CPD and the implementation of the "SPARK" philosophy to share good practice and improve teaching and learning.
- Completion of the College SAR 2023/24 and the production of the 2024/25 QIP which drives forward improvements.

Questions and Comments

In response to questions on subcontracting, it was reported that all providers are doing well. Distance Learning does have some issues which is being reviewed.

In response to questions on Curriculum Intent it was reported that staff are regularly reminded of the 3ls.

In response to questions on the Curriculum, the Board were reminded that our curriculum was destinated led providing entry and exit points for learners to be progress to their next steps.

In response to questions on increased sector areas, it was reported that the STEM area had seen a growth of c1000 learners over the last 3 years and significant increased employment engagement. The College's Capital Investment Programme had supported this increase.

In response to questions on areas of decline, it was reported that that the college had ceased Travel and Tourism based on low demand and low employment engagement.

The Board **NOTED** the update.

A2.3 EDI Single Equalities Scheme

The Board received the new and updated EDI Single Equalities Scheme for the next 6 years. These had been formulated and aligned with the Group Strategy.

It was reported that the scheme and targets also builds on the EDI trajectory over the past years, based on data analysis on student achievement gaps that will need to address our



vision to engage staff and students in EDI matters using the bottom-up approach, and our intentions to address under representation of any staffing groups and to promote, celebrate and adopt a whole college approach to EDI matters.

It was reported that the new EDI objectives had been consulted on, with the Group Executive Team, Senior Leadership Team, EDI Steering Group Committee and the EDI champions.

It was reported that the EDI Scorecard will be updated in line with the new objectives, together with an underpinning action plan. These will be monitored, and progress tracked and reported. The KPIs and will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure that they are relevant, to ensure that we achieve our objectives.

Questions and Comments

After some discussion the Board stated that they impressed with the objectives and goals recommended.

The Board APPROVED the new Single Equalities Scheme and Objectives as presented.

A2.4 | EDI Annual Report

The Board received an update on progress against the 2023/2024 EDI Objectives.

It was reported that good progress had been made, including an increase in staff and student disclosure rates on EDI information.

It was reported that there are good completion rates for EDI training and have introduced new programs, such as Menopause Awareness and Understanding Group Profiles, for staff.

It was reported that throughout the academic year, staff and students have participated in various EDI activities, initiatives, and events aligned with the EDI Calendar, including Black History Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, and LGBTQ+ Pride.

It was reported that further positive actions in recruitment and talent management strategies have been implemented, to address areas of underrepresentation. This had resulted in a 12.4% increase in Black, Asian, Mixed/Dual Heritage & Other Minority Ethnic Groups, as well as an 11% increase for women. It was also reported that middle management saw a 6.9% rise in Black, Asian, Mixed/Dual Heritage & Other Minority Ethnic Groups.

It was reported that achievement gaps remain a concern for white/black dual heritage Caribbean students (19+) and black Caribbean students, with gaps of 4.4% and 11%, compared to last year. This is largely due to retention issues.

It was reported that significant progress has been made in closing gaps for Looked After Children and Students with learning difficulties (EHCP), who now above the college average by 6.2% and 5.5% respectively.

Improvements in achievements, have also been seen in white boys (16-18), students with mental health conditions, and black African students (19+).

It was reported that the College will continue to focus on projects aimed at narrowing these achievement gaps.

The Board were advised that the college will continue to collaborate with external organisations such as the Black Leadership Group, Equality Partnership Board, and AOC, to exchange good practice.



It was reported that national recognitions have been received for our work in this area, including the Gold Award and Top 100 Employer ranking in the Stonewall Equality Index, as well as being named as an 'Exemplary Employer,' and, and we are also placed in the Top 25 Employers in the Investing in Ethnicity Maturity Matrix.

Questions and Comments

In response to questions it was reported that sharing good practice across the FE Sector was being implemented following connections made at the House of Commons EDI event. The Team had also been invited to particate at the AOC HR conference.

In response to questions on the student engagement, GCPO to connect with Student Governor to arrange briefing on EDI Grants with Student Union.

The Board **NOTED** the report.

A2.5 | Safeguarding Policy

The Board received the updated Safeguarding Policy which had been updated to reflect the recent changes to KCSIE 2024.

The Board **NOTED** these changes and APPROVED the policy.

A3 GCFO Update

A3.1 Property and Capital Update

The Board received an update on Project and Capital matters presented by the Group CFO.

It was reported that following the submission of our business case to the DfE for support with our capital project-related solvency issues, the legal process to defer our DfE loan repayments for a period of 2 years has been completed. Although this provides a short-term boost to cash balances of circa £1.3m, the College is still faced with forecast low cash balances.

It was reported that latest cost report for the Plumstead forecasts a total scheme cost is in the region of £45.48M. This is a circa £0.5m increase, which is mainly due to some items of value engineering.

It was reported that this value still includes a circa £1M contingency, which was held against some of these risks, and could be reduced given the stage of construction. It was reported therefore that Approved budget of £44.97M remains achievable

It was reported that following the liquidation of the preferred contractor for the FECTF project and an agreed revised procurement strategy, we have tendered for part 1 (mainly replacing the windows) and are part way through the tender for the main refurbishment works.

It was reported that subject to DfE approval of cost and project scope, it was hoped to be able to appoint the contractor in November 2024, with a target of completing the works before the December 2025 deadline.

It was reported that the Post 16 Capacity Fund and T Level Capacity Fund projects were concluding, and the projects are anticipated to be completed within the £5.7m budget.

The Board wer advised that the relocation to the new Kingswood site for our provision at Nido Volans Lambeth had been delayed as a consequence of Lambeth blocking access to the site for our contractor whilst the legal work on the lease was completed. As a result, building works are set to complete on 4th October 2024. Staff and learners will move to the new campus following the October half-term. Staff, learners and parents have been informed.

Questions and Comments

In response to questions on the Lambeth LA it was reported that they had been incredibly difficult to work with. It was reported that some asbestos has been uncovered in the basement of the building which was being reviewed further.



In response to questions on the Future Plumstead it was reported that VAT status review of Colleges would be huge for the projects. It was reported that some VAT recovery per floor had also been reviewed. The Board **NOTED** the update. A3.2 2023/24 Financial & Risk Update The Board received the draft Management Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2024 (period 12) which reported an Education EBITDA of £2.36m, broadly in line with expectations, and just £53k lower than forecast. It was reported that the current operating position for the year is a surplus of £107k, which is £352k better than forecast. It was reported that cash balances at the end of the year in July 2024 were very strong at £30.3m. This was £2.9m higher than forecast mainly due to lower than anticipated outflows in respect of our major capital projects, which are timing differences, rather than an improvement in future cash positions. It was reported that forecast cash pinch points are now slightly more acute than previously forecast and we continue to work on solutions to mitigate this risk. It was reported that enrolment has generally gone well this year, and with a significant increase in Youth learners number which are likely to go unfunded this year, this provides a further challenge to meet our budgets and project the cash position. The Board were advised that In the absence of any national agreement or advice on a recommended pay award for 2024/25, and no government funding to support an award, there was not yet a position to bring a proposed pay award to the Corporation. It was reported that AoC have made representations to the Government to consider supporting a pay award for FE in the Autumn budget, along with extending VAT relief to Colleges. A further update will be provided to the Corporation at the next meeting. It was reported that the risk register had been given a provisional update ahead of a full review in time for the November Audit committee. The main changes are the new risks covering reforms introduced by the new government, together with a reduction in the risk score associated with enrolment. It was reported that communication relating to Orpington Boilers had been forthcoming from Bromley LA. Further discussions on the way forward would need to take place with the Executive and College lawyers. **Questions and Comments** In response to questions on the boilers it was reported that the Board would be provided with an update at the next meeting. The Board **NOTED** the update. A3.3 **Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire** The Board Received the 2023/24 Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire. The Board reviewed and discussed briefly. It was noted that the fraud reported previous year would also need to report in 2023/24 Financial Statement.

The Board **APPROVED** the Self-Assessment Questionnaire.



A3.4	Health & Safety Annual Report
	The Board received the Health & Safety Annual Report which was taken as red.
	It was reported that Holly Hill required a more consistent approach and improvement as the risks were still higher there.
	The Board NOTED the update.
A4.	GCGO Update
A4.1	Governors Visits and Links Programme
	The Board were advised to ensure they have booked in for a link visit during the Autumn
	Term.

AOB: The Board received a tabled paper on Rookery Estates and assignment of the land as previously discussed. The Board **APPROVED** endorsement of the Transfer document.

Date of Next Meeting: 11 December 2024 at 5.30pm

Minutes APPROVED:

David Eastgate, Chair

11th December 2024