

**Minutes of a Strategy & Board Development Meeting of
LSEAT Board held on
Tuesday 9 May 2023 from 5.30-7.30pm
in person at C1/C2 Orpington Campus**

Trustees

Christine Whatford, CBE (CW)	Chair
Denise James Mason (DJM)	Vice Chair
Dr Sam Parrett, CBE (SP)	Trustee & Group CEO
David Bailey (DB)	Trustee
Charles Yates (CY)	Trustee
Christopher Philpott (CP)	Trustee
Prof Lynne Revell (LR)	Trustee
Nick Linford (NL)	Trustee
Marek Michalski (MM)	Trustee
Sunil Chotai (SC)	Trustee
Sarah Servantes	Trustee
Beverley Eaglesfield	Trustee
Errol Ince (EI)	Co-opted Trustee (LSEC)
Daniel Kwalombota (DK)	Co-opted Trustee (LSEC)

In Attendance (via zoom)

David Eastgate (DE)	Chair LSEC Corporation (Item 1.1)
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Governance Professional & Clerk

Jennifer Pharo	Group Executive Director Governance
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Executive Officers in attendance

John Hunt (JH)	Group Deputy CEO & Group CFO
Neil Miller (NM)	Deputy CEO Academies

Officers in attendance for specific items

Janet Curtis Broni	Group Chief People Officer (item 3.6)
Louise Wolsey	Group CSO & DCEO LASER (item 3.4)
Ruth Dollner	Director School Improvement (item 3.7)

Minutes

Item	Responsible
1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest Apologies received from Beverley Eaglesfield and Nick Linford. Board Welcomed Sarah Servantes to her first meeting. No Declarations.	Chair-CW
1.1 Confidential Item – Chair LSEAT LSEC Chair presented the outcome of recent Trust Chair Recruitment and confirmed the Corporation’s decision to recommend to the Members, Rama Venchard, as the new Chair of the Trust.	Chair LSEC-DE
2. Minutes & Matters Arising	
2.1 Minutes 23 March 2023 & Action Log	For Approval JP
The Board APPROVED the minutes of the previous meeting.	
2.2 Matters Arising	For Discussion All

SCR Tracker:

Due to current issues with SCR it was keep on the Action Log. It was reported that there were four outstanding DBA checks across all schools – these are awaiting information from third parties, all risk assessments had been completed.

Trust Staff Recruitment Event

It was reported that very small numbers had attended. Mostly college students who were looking for TAs or Teaching Training posts. Review timing of the event. BBA and Horizons key risk areas for September. Other schools very fewer staff leaving although resignation window closes on 31 May. Contact with UoG and CCU has been established.

Update on **Bramley Oak** reported that children were back in classrooms in the new building and settling in. Huge amount of planning for the next phase of the building work, with building to be handed over in September. CEO had visited and children had said they were loving their new classrooms.

Update on **Heron Academy** reported that fire safety issues were being addressed. 1st Floor of the school not accessible for pupils with mobility issues. Trust had worked through the fire safety actions. Lambeth LA were yet to address the works agreed to be completed within the CTA.

Update on **MoU with Bromley LA** reported that this remained unsigned, four years into the contract. Lots of good will with the LA and contract would be binding.

BTA inspection outcome was Good and will continue to provide the LA with confidence in the Trust.

The Board **NOTED** the update.

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

3.1 Group Principal & CEO Report (Verbal) For Monitoring SP

Group CEO provided verbal update on the following

Industrial Action : National pay negotiations have come to a halt. Who will pay for the pay award. Staff retention in the Trust is slightly better than previous year. Majority of leavers are TAs with cost of living and high salaries available in retail sector.

Ofsted readiness: Four schools in the Ofsted window. Woodside, Belmont, BOA and BBA. Woodside and Belmont both in strong position.

Confidential Item

Group CEO-SP reported on significant movement in terms of a mainstream primary joining the Trust.

Subject to RD approval and due diligence. Incoming school is a SAT and their Board have resolved to join LSEAT. Lots of synergies and opportunities. Risk may be around parent consultation. Lots of work underway to support parent communications. Proposed transfer January 2024.

In addition to the SAT merger, another small MAT two primaries have approached the Trust with a view to transferring into the LSEAT. Early conversations but LSEAT preferred Trust.

Other growth opportunities including Surrey Free School, possible Lambeth special school and SEMH school in Brighton.

In response to questions around capacity and decisions on which opportunities to move forward, it was reported that SAT will bring leadership capacity. Small MAT would need to consider more capacity as current head is due to retire. Surrey Free School important development for BOA.

In response to questions it was agreed that **operational restructure** would need to be considered to ensure leadership capacity was in place.

In response to questions on **Bexley Music** it was reported that DCEO is now managing the Head of Service. ACE criteria has not yet been published.

ACTION: Information on the Hub composition and next steps to be provided at next meeting.

The Board **NOTED** the update.

3.2 MAT Summary Evaluations (MATSE) For Discussion NM

Board received report from DCEO on MATSE.

It was reported that the Trust could be considered for MATSE at any time. The appended report outlined the process and information to be prepared in readiness.

It was reported that the aim of a MATSE is to recognise a Trust's positive impact on the quality of education in its academies, and to give the Trust helpful recommendations on aspects of its work that could be improved.

During a MATSE, inspectors explore the extent to which the Trust is delivering high-quality education and improving pupils' achievement across the academies in the Trust. A range of information about the Trust, including academy inspection outcomes and information gathered through discussions with Trust leaders and visits to some of the Trust's academies is considered as part of the evaluation.

Board were advised that the focus of the MATSE is the quality of education provided and how well pupils as a whole are achieving across the Trust, rather than how individual academies, or pupils within them, are performing.

Issues discussed included preparedness for a MATSE and the number of schools within the Ofsted Window.

Board were advised that Executives were aware of the information required and preparations to be put in place. .

In response to questions it was confirmed that there have been circa 12 MATSE's completed in the sector. There is no single outcome the Trust received a report which is published

The Board **NOTED** the report.

3.3 Academies Regulatory & Commissioning Review For Discussion NM

The Board received an update on the Academies Regulatory & Commissioning Review, released in March 2023.

DCEO presented the Board with information that the overarching aim of the Academies Regulatory and Commissioning Review has been to maximise the difference that academy trusts make to children's lives, so more children can fulfil their potential.

It was reported that the review was designed to focus on the regulatory oversight that the DfE sets for MATs, the support it offers to executive and non-executive trust leaders, and how it can best work with other stakeholders in the system. The commission was also tasked with considering the standards to which academy Trusts are held, as well as the government's powers to intervene in cases of underperformance.

Board were advised that the DfE is aiming to create a choice of high-quality MATs operating in each local area and effective capacity for support and improvement nationwide as well as a MAT landscape that serves coherent geographical clusters and has the capacity to take on and turn around underperforming schools. The DfE is also aiming to ensure that all pupils and schools benefit from being in a high-quality MAT. To achieve this the report identifies three things that must be achieved:

1. a simple, proportionate regulatory strategy.
2. better and more transparent commissioning decisions, informed by a clearer articulation of what it means to be a high-quality trust; and
3. support that spreads sector expertise and increases overall capacity to keep improving schools.

The Board **NOTED** the report and requested further updates when available.

3.4 Future Group Ambition Presentation For Discussion SP/LW

The Board received an update on the Future Group Ambition including the constitution of LASER Education Foundation.

The Board discussed the concept of the Foundation and core purpose of fund raising and requirements to support our pupils and students from the schools and college and wider communities.

It was reported that ideas for some initial projects or products would be undertaken to start to focus on programmes and value of support required and available.

It was reported that charities would be sourced that mirrored our values and link to either the College or Trust to canvas and lobby for programme support.

Board were also advised that the new Group Strategy would be focussing on research and development and building an evidence base of outstanding pedagogical practice.

It was reported that next steps was some blue sky thinking on research types and avenues for funding or commissions.

The Board **NOTED** the Report.

3.5 LASER Collaboration & Loan Agreements For Approval JP

The Board RECEIVED the Collaboration Agreement, prepared with Trust lawyers Stone King, which provides 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.

The Board were advised 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 Foundation has 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. Registration process for charitable status can take up to 4-6 months but the Foundation can commence operating, pending Charities Commission registration approval.

It was reported that the Articles of Association had been 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 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. It was reported that this will ensure the continuity and efficiency of our current unique and effective group governance arrangements.

The Board were presented with the Collaboration Agreement between LASER Education Foundation and LSEC and discussed the alongside Item 3.4.

The Board **APPROVED** the Collaboration Agreement which underpinned our group governance operations, principles and charitable objectives of the three group organisations, LSEC, LSEAT and LASER.

The LSEAT Board 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 was 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 start-up costs.

The Board **APPROVED** the start loan at a value of £20k.

3.6 People & Culture Strategy and Plan **For Approval** **JCB**

The Board were presented with the People & Culture Strategy and Plan and asked to **APPROVE**.

The Board were advised that there were seven pillars underpinned the strategy

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

The Board were advised that the priorities to implement in current year were the 3 Rs: Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition.

The Board were advised that a full recruitment plan was in place which the Executive were working through. Recognition initiatives were 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 Trust etc.

It was reported that in addition, a talent management programme had been put in place for the Schools, utilising our levy, using Olevi coaching and other forms of CPD, to encourage staff growth and , which will help in improving retention overall.

ACTION: It was also reported that a wellbeing package for Trust leaders, which will include bespoke training on well-being and resilience, implementation of an App to provide online on demand support and other alternative options, which were being considered and costed.

The Board **APPROVED** the People & Culture Strategy.

3.7 Local Governance **For Discussion** **JP/NM/RD**

The Board received an update on Local Governance and School Improvement from DCEO, Group Executive Director Governance and Director School Improvement.

It was reported that the Trust Scheme of Delegation outlines the lines of delegated responsibility, the Board remains overall accountable for the Governance, Leadership & Management, Quality Standards of Education, Pupil Outcomes, Workforce Development, the Propriety of Funds and Management of Risk..

The Board discussed at length the school improvement process, its fit with Ofsted EIF and remit of the Provision Boards and EPS Committee.

ACTION: It was reported that provision board summaries would be provided to the Board. Terms of Reference of EPS committee to be reviewed.

ACTION: In response to questions on the independence of the Chair of Academy Council it was agreed that this would be further reviewed and discussed at next Board Meeting.

In response to questions on the where financial constraints of individual schools is impacting on quality of education, it was reported that financial matters are not discussed at Provision Boards or Academy councils unless addressed as high-risk items, e.g. resources constraints and high needs funding blocks. Recently recovery fund bids and projects had been highlighted.

ACTION: Decision on whether to include finance as a standing item to be considered and discussed at next Board Meeting.

Section 4: Governance & Accountability **GDirGov**

4.1 Governance Matters **For Approval** **JP**

The Board were presented with the Group Board Register and **APPROVED** the changes to the Committee Membership. These include.

- David Bailey to join Group Audit & Risk Committee
- Beverley Eaglesfield to join EPS Committee
- Sarah Servantes to join Group Finance Committee

The Board was also presented and **APPROVED** with the meeting dates for 2023/24

The Board was asked to **NOTE** that the LSEC Board will be moving from Thursdays to Wednesdays, and this would also require moving Group Committees from Thursdays to Wednesdays too. Trustees sitting on Group Finance and Group Audit & Risk were asked to **NOTE** this change.

The Board were reminded that the current Group Governance Meeting Protocols determine that all Group Committee Meetings are held via Zoom and all Board Meetings are face to face meetings held at LSEC Orpington Campus, unless otherwise notified.

4.2 Board Self Evaluation & Action Plan **For Approval** **JP**

The Board were presented and 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 has gathered and collated Trustees' 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 final Board Evaluation.

The Board Improvement Action Plan was presented as **Appendix 3** reporting completion status against actions as at March 2023 and impact on completed actions.

The Board **APPROVED** the Completed Action Plan.

The Board were advised that as this is a transition year with a new Group and Trust 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 and with the new Trust Chair.

5. **AOB:** none reported.

6. Next meeting dates

- Academy Councils: w/c 23 May 2023
- Provision Boards: w/c 5 June 2023
- EPS Committee: 13 June 2023
- Group Audit Committee: 22 June 2023
- Group Finance Committee: 26 June 2023
- Trust Board: 11 July 2023

7. Items Deferred to Future Meetings

- Group GDPR Policy
- Wellbeing Strategy for Senior Leaders

Minutes APPROVED :



Christine Whatford, Chair
13th July 2023