

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Date of meeting: Tuesday 08 September 2020, 14:00
Place of meeting: ZOOM Conference Call

Present: Don Robert (Chair), John O'Donnell, Anne Mills, Diana Layfield, Gemma Donaldson, Nicholas Mays, Peter Piot, Una O'Brien, Jenny Jenkin, Hitesh Patel, Pablo Ruiz Cuenca, Matt Lee, Mohamed Osman, Angela Darlington, Annalisa Jenkins, Effua Usuf and Mishal Khan.

Apologies: Mike Turner and Precious Lunga.

Minutes: Ayisha Govindasamy.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

1.2 Actions taken by the Chair since the previous meeting:

Noted:

1.2.1 The following actions have been taken by the Chair since the previous meeting:

- Appointment of Niamh Grogan as co-opted member of Audit and Risk Committee; and
- Due diligence ratification for the £5.9M gift from Reckitt Benckiser.

1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting

Resolved:

1.3.1 The minutes from the previous meeting of Council on 02 July 2020 were approved.

2 Director's Presentation

Received: A presentation from the Director on recent research achievements, media highlights, impact of COVID-19, fundraising targets, LSHTM Week and current SLT priorities.

Resolved:

2.1 The Director and Holly Butcher would present LSHTM's fundraising campaign for capital funding & pandemic preparedness, climate change and health equity to Council.

3 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

3.1 Finance and Development Committee

Received: An update on the financial impacts of COVID-19, proposed budget for 2020/21, and Salix finance loan application.

Noted:

3.1.1 The financial output for 2019/20 was good; and this was in part due to the advancement of funds from the next financial year by the UK government as part of their COVID-19 contingency efforts.

3.1.2 Students numbers were difficult to predict until they arrive for registration and while applications numbers were encouraging, a reduction in tuition fees income was likely as there would be a lower international student intake.

3.1.3 Most research funders provided costed extensions with the exception of EU funded research.

3.1.4 Research income was being carefully monitored as research funders were likely to experience financial difficulties now and in the future.

3.1.5 Unrestricted donations would bolster the budget significantly but was not an income stream upon which the budget was underpinned by.

- 3.1.6 COVID-19 presented an opportunity to accelerate plans that meet the ambitions of LSHTM; these include transforming our education provision, increased fundraising efforts, investing in systems that support the academic endeavour and incorporating flexible working into BAU.
- 3.1.7 The Universities and Colleges Employers Association had confirmed that there would be no pay uplift for staff for 2020/21 due to the financial pressures facing the higher education sector.
- 3.1.8 Potential increase to USS Pensions employer contributions was a significant financial risk to LSHTM.
- 3.1.9 While student numbers may be better than expected, there were a number of uncertainties for the upcoming financial year therefore it would be prudent to closely monitor the budget and reforecast if necessary.
- 3.1.10 It was clarified that should student recruitment be better than budgeted, it was the expectation that the deficit would be improved and the budget amended.
- 3.1.11 It was confirmed that the fee structure for this academic was set a year in advance, therefore no amendments had been made in light of COVID-19 and/or international currency devaluation.
- 3.1.12 Face to Face (F2F) short courses had been cancelled and concerted effort was going into converting these online. LSHTM continues to develop its relationship with FutureLearn and would be working with them to deliver credit bearing content in areas such as climate change in health, and pandemic preparedness.

Resolved:

- 3.1.13 Council approved the budget for 2020/21 and the application to Salix finance for £1m towards qualifying works under Phase 2 of the masterplan.

3.2 Director Selection Committee

Received: Progress update against the timeline and process for the Director recruitment.

Noted:

- 3.2.1 The Director Selection Committee had initially met to review the role description and sample candidates to help steer Egon Zehnder's (Executive Search Partners) search parameters. The role is due to be advertised in September 2020, following which a long list of candidates would be presented to the committee in October 2020.
- 3.2.2 The role brochure and proposed recruitment process was out for consultation within the LSHTM community, and feedback would be provided to Egon Zehnder and the Director Selection Committee prior to open advertisement.
- 3.2.3 It was reported that the staff engagement on the role and process had been well received by the LSHTM community.

3.3 People Committee

Noted:

- 3.3.1 Concerns were raised to the committee about the re-introduction of the Carer's leave formal allowance. It was confirmed that while the policy had been re-introduced since Schools/Nurseries re-opened in September, line managers were encouraged to be flexible and consider reasonable individual circumstances.
- 3.3.2 There was strong support for the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee; it was acknowledged that the role of People Committee needed to be considered in conjunction with this committee, have external expertise and the wider LSHTM community be actively involved in the process.

Resolved:

3.3.3 Revised terms of reference for People Committee and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee would be presented to Council in November. (*Chair of Council and Secretary & Registrar*)

4 BLACK LIVES MATTER AND TACKLING RACIAL INEQUALITIES

Noted:

4.1 Following the Council listening session in July, SLT were working through the following areas from the list of committed actions:

- Establishing a framework for recognising staff groups within LSHTM and setting up regular forums for dialogue;
- Identifying ways to recognise additional work involved with anti-racism activities;
- Establishing a clear EDI governance structure that encapsulates internal and external accountabilities; and
- Collaboratively establishing the scope, terms of reference, reporting structure, areas of external input for the EDI review.

4.2 The importance of ensuring the creation of a racial equality action plan was a consultative process was emphasised as this would ensure staff confidence in the proposed actions.

5 EDUCATION – Craig Higgins, Pro-Director of Education, joined for this item.

Noted:

5.1 LSHTM achieved an overall student satisfaction rate of 91% within the annual Postgraduate Taught Education Survey.

5.2 Latest student figures indicate that there will be a similar amount of F2F students and a significant increase to distance learning (DL) students. These figures would be confirmed once registration had been completed at the beginning of the academic year.

5.3 All teaching content for 2020/21 would be digitised; only laboratory-based teaching would take place in term 1, and a hybrid model of F2F/Online would be considered in terms 2 and 3.

5.4 It was important that LSHTM created a sense of belonging and community for new students. An online student portal had been trialled which allows small groups of students to meet with a facilitator from LSHTM community (current research degree students, alumni, academic staff).

5.5 SLT had committed to £500k investment in education, and digital learning champions had been established to support teaching staff to digitalise and decolonise their education content.

5.6 All education activities were closely aligned to LSHTM's strategic vision for education.

5.7 Council thanked all those involved in Education Contingency efforts for their previous and continued hard work to ensure student receive high quality education.

6 ORDINANCES

Noted:

6.1 The Ordinances had been revised to be in a more coherent order, include references to the new regulator (Office for Students) and remove gender specific pronouns. As part of the update to the Ordinances, a revised version of the Schedule of Delegation has been drafted as well as a conflicts of interest policy specifically for Council members.

Resolved:

6.2 The updated Ordinances were approved subject to feedback from Council members offline.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted:

7.1 Pablo Ruiz Cuenca was thanked for his invaluable student insight as Student Representative Council President and Council wished him well for the future.

8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 11 November 2020