

COUNCIL MINUTES 03 OCTOBER 2023
APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 30 NOVEMBER 2023

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Date of meeting: Tuesday 03 October 2023, 14:00 to 16:00
Place of meeting: Hybrid via LSHTM Board Room and ZOOM Video Conference

Present: Don Robert (Chair), Lindsay Northover, Liam Smeeth, Mike Turner, Hitesh Patel, Sunil Sharma, Nambusi Kyegombe, Clare Chandler, Mohamed Osman, Jocelyn Prudence.

Partial Attendance: Kevin Tetteh (Items 1-2); Alana Luckraft (Items 1-5); Andrew Dyer (Item 3); Serge Mostowy (Item 1-2); John Starmer (Item 5); Valerie Boulet (Item 6).

Apologies: Mark Poulton, Angela Darlington, Diana Layfield, Nazira Amra and Precious Lunga.

Minutes: Ayisha Govindasamy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed Nambusi Kyegombe and Clare Chandler to their first meeting of Council in their roles as newly elected Staff members of Council.

1.1. Actions taken by the Chair: None.

1.2. Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

1.3. Minutes of the previous meeting:

Resolved:

1.3.1. Council approved the minutes of its previous meeting held on 27 June 2023.

2. SPOTLIGHT SESSION:

Received: Council received a presentation from Professor Serge Mostowy on the work of the Mostowy Laboratory.

3. REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

3.1. Barclays Revolving Credit facility (RCF) Adjustment

Noted:

3.1.1. LSHTM put in place a Revolving Credit Facility (RCF) in 2020 to provide contingency liquidity. As part of the annual compliance process, Barclays identified a technical breach of the agreement related to a reduction of advance research grant cash held by LSHTM. Barclays are agreeable to waiving these historic breaches and amending the Covenant for future periods, so that any change in the research cash is excluded.

3.1.2. It was confirmed that LSHTM has not had to draw on the RCF since it was put in place and, while there was an annual cost associated with having the RCF, this was not as significant as actually using the facility.

Resolved:

3.1.3. Council approved the proposed amendment to the Barclays RCF terms to ensure the agreed covenants are not breached, and that LSHTM's Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director execute the amended agreement.

4. REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR AND ELECTED MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

4.1. Director's Report

Received: Council received a report on LSHTM's latest events, achievements, and key updates over the past few months.

Noted:

4.1.1. LSHTM were pleased to receive the recent news that UK had re-joined Horizon Europe.

4.1.2. LSHTM's local UCU branch had agreed to not strike during Welcome Week which was welcomed by the Executive Team.

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- 4.1.3. Roshni Mooneeram had recently joined the Executive Team in her role as Director of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. Recruitment was underway for the Uganda Unit Director and there was a high quality list of applicants.
- 4.1.4. LSHTM recently hosted its annual 'LSHTM Week' where there were a range of staff and student activities such as research seminars, TP2 opening ceremony and staff/student party.
- 4.1.5. Education income is expected to be significantly lower than forecasted.
- 4.1.6. The Executive Team were seeking intelligence as to why student number were lower than expected.
- 4.1.7. Lower student recruitment across postgraduate programmes has been reflected across the UK Higher Education sector, with exceptions for executive programmes.
- 4.1.8. Council noted that this was second year in a row that student recruitment was below target, leaving an estimated shortfall of £3.2million which will need addressing.
- 4.1.9. Mitigations included disposing of 8 & 9 Bedford Square, savings on student related operational costs and rephasing of capital expenditure.
- 4.1.10. Changes to employer contributions in the USS Pension Scheme may have a material positive impact. The formal consultation concludes at the end of November 2023, and there are hopes to work to an accelerated timetable to implement changes in April 2024.
- 4.1.11. Increased overseas student numbers would be important in the upcoming recruitment cycle.
- 4.1.12. Executive Team were exploring more marketing and the use of local recruitment agents in China, India and Nigeria. Council also recommended engaging with Saudi Arabia who were putting a lot of funding towards biomedical science.
- 4.1.13. It was queried whether LSHTM's name may not accurately reflect the breadth of activities and research it does, which in turn may be less attractive to potential students.

5. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Strategy Implementation

Noted:

- 5.1.1. Initial Research Excellence Framework (REF) guidance had been released for consultation, LSHTM was currently reviewing the guidance and would be responding as appropriate.
- 5.1.2. Work is ongoing to strengthen Clinical Trials as this was previously an area that required more coordination and there were opportunities to work more closely with the Units.
- 5.1.3. Within the Education Strategy there was a focus on actions that would result in an increase in student numbers and income in the short- and medium-term.
- 5.1.4. There were some internal student recruitment process changes that LSHTM's could immediately make without needing further information or market research.
- 5.1.5. There were also lessons to be learnt around the recent launch of two new MSc programmes which struggled to recruit their student target numbers.
- 5.1.6. There was a need to provide more flexible ways of learning. Distance Learning programmes and short courses have been quite successful in the past and it was felt there was scope to increase student numbers via these education activities.
- 5.1.7. LSHTM would be submitting its application for the Athena SWAN Bronze award which recognises good practice in promoting gender equality in higher education.
- 5.1.8. Workstreams were being developed to implement the Employment Model Review recommendations.
- 5.1.9. The TP2 building had recently opened and was being utilised by a number of Professional Services and the faculty of PHP. The existing TP1 building would be transformed into an education focused centre. LSHTM is currently applying for planning permission from Camden Council.

5.2. Environmental Sustainability

Noted:

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- 5.2.1. LSHTM has committed to net zero by 2030 and since 2012/13 LSHTM's carbon use has reduced by 72%.
- 5.2.2. Travel accounts for 70% of LSHTM's current carbon use. It would be unrealistic for LSHTM's travel to reduce to zero so pragmatic solutions are required. LSHTM's Travel Policy discourages travel unless absolutely necessary e.g., building working relationships for early career researchers and/or field work.
- 5.2.3. Carbon targets have been built into faculty and professional services budgets, whereby there will be financial implications if carbon budgets are exceeded unnecessarily.
- 5.2.4. Carbon use is high in LSHTM's laboratories and areas with high powered computers. As LSHTM continues to upgrade its building infrastructure, more energy efficient materials and methods are being utilised.
- 5.2.5. The catering service is moving away from single source packaging, and water fountains are more widely available across LSHTM's London buildings.
- 5.2.6. To support the aims of the Energy & Carbon Management Plan, behaviour change of both staff and students will be required.
- 5.2.7. LSHTM has set up a Sustainable Climate Investment Fund which works to support initiatives that generate carbon credits. It is hoped that, should enough carbon credits be accumulated, this could be sold to other partners to help with their environmental sustainability goals.

6. FUNDRAISING REPORT

Noted:

- 6.1. The fundraising report has been reformatted and any feedback from Council members on the new format would be welcomed. It was noted that fundraising targets were about to be set and, once confirmed, RAG ratings would be incorporated into the report.
- 6.2. The team were provisionally working towards a £9.5m cash target. So far, £868k has been received (cash) and there were £1.57m in new funds. There were around £7.3m in firm commitments which were expected during the remainder of this financial year.
- 6.3. There will be a significant shift toward donations/fundraising that help create surplus for LSHTM to invest strategically.
- 6.4. There were a number of international alumni chapters across the world and though these chapters do not have associated funds or targets, they do have access to wealth and influence within country.

7. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

Noted:

- 7.1. Council noted the following reports:
 - Governance Effectiveness Review Working Group Update (*item 7.1 on Council agenda*)
Mike Turner gave a short update on work to modernise the Instruments of Governance and the Halpin Review of Governance Effectiveness which is due to report to Council at its next meeting.
 - Use of the LSHTM Seal (*item 8.1 on Council agenda*)
 - Council and Committee Membership 2023/24 (*item 8.2 on Council agenda*)
 - Terms of Reference for Council and Council Committees (*item 8.3 on Council agenda*).

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 30 November 2023