

**COUNCIL MINUTES - 26 MARCH 2024**  
**APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 27 JUNE 2024**

**MEETING OF COUNCIL**

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday 26 March 2024, 14:00 to 16:00

**Place of meeting:** Hybrid via LSHTM Room G40 and ZOOM Video Conference

**Present:** Don Robert (Chair), Mohamed Osman, Angela Darlington, Liam Smeeth, Clare Chandler, Matt Lee, Hitesh Patel, Mike Turner, Mark Poulton, Naomi Stewart, James Hargreaves, Jocelyn Prudence, Hamza van der Ross, Nambusi Kyegombe (*Virtual attendance*), Lindsay Northover and Diana Layfield.

**Partial Attendance:** Alana Luckraft (*up to item 5.2*), Roshni Mooneeram (*for item 5.2*), and Kessar Kalim (*for item 5.2*).

**Apologies:** Nazira Amra.

**Minutes:** Ayisha Govindasamy.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1. Welcome & Introduction**

*Noted:*

1.1.1. The Chair welcomed the newly elected staff members of Council, Naomi Stewart and James Hargreaves, to their first meeting of Council.

**1.2. Declarations of Interests:** None declared.

**1.3. Minutes from the previous meeting**

*Resolved:*

1.3.1. Council approved the minutes from the previous meeting held on 30 November 2023.

**1.4. Actions taken by the Chair:** None taken.

**2. SPOTLIGHT SESSION**

*Received:* Council received a presentation from Ellen Nolte, Mustafa Al-Haboubi & Josephine Exley on the work of the Policy Innovation & Evaluation Unit

**3. REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR**

**3.1. Director's Report**

*Noted:*

3.1.1. Universities UK have highlighted that the UK is becoming less attractive for students due to cost-of-living pressures, inflation, and increased international competition and this has been reflected across the UK higher education sector, particularly for postgraduate programmes.

3.1.2. The introduction of an increased minimum salary of £38,700 for a skilled worker visa by the UK Government should not have a significant impact on existing staff, assuming it is not retrospectively applied.

3.1.3. Recruitment for senior appointments were underway; interviews for the Pro-Director of Education will take place in April 2024, and LSHTM is working with a search firm for the appointment of the Director of Development and Alumni Relations.

3.1.4. LSHTM has published some research from the Health in Humanitarian Crisis Centre and John Hopkins University regarding excess deaths in Gaza.

3.1.5. The Director recently visited The Gambia Unit, and highlighted an impactful piece of research led by a mid-career African scientist which has influenced WHO policy.

3.1.6. There was a discussion on the role of research commercialisation in the higher education sector and at LSHTM.

3.1.7. LSHTM has a number of spin outs which are successful, but they are not-for-profit.

3.1.8. It was noted that American academic institutions were strong in innovation and good practice could be sought from them.

3.1.9. Council noted that the majority of staff mentioned in the Director's report who have recently received accolades were male, and queried whether more could be done to ensure there are diverse pools of candidate put forward for awards/accolades in the future.

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**4. REPORT FROM STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

*Noted:*

- 4.1. Concerns from students about the lack of student social and study space available in the London building were being dealt with by management. This included re-arranging space on campus so there were defined areas of student social space and group/individual study space.
- 4.2. Council queried whether students felt their academic experience was meeting their expectations. It was confirmed that the quality of education delivered was high and well received by students but there was some dissatisfaction with the slow return of marking and variable quality of feedback from assessments.
- 4.3. Management confirmed that building works to improve the staff and student social space was on track and would be ready in September 2024 for the 2024/25 student cohort.

**5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**5.1. Strategy Implementation**

*Noted:*

- 5.1.1. Internal stakeholder consultation is underway for the 'Education Strategy 2.0' and most were receptive to the need to change the current approach to meet the needs of current and future students.
- 5.1.2. LSHTM's application for the Race Equality Charter has been postponed to November 2025 but it did successfully renew its Bronze Athena SWAN award.
- 5.1.3. Data was presented to Council showing the changes to the ethnicity of Associate Professors where representation has improved. There remain challenges in retaining Associate Professors, and little change has materialised when looking at the ethnicity of Professors. It was confirmed that the data presented to Council on the diversity of academic staff was a snapshot from 31 July 2023, and not the average. Council recommended that sector benchmarking data be used wherever possible.
- 5.1.4. The Executive Team have noted that there are a lot of projects within the strategy boards which will require effective change management.
- 5.1.5. LSHTM is undertaking market research to understand what students expect now and will expect in the future e.g., more flexible programmes, better in person facilities, emerging areas of public health research.
- 5.1.6. Currently, LSHTM uses about 15% of fee income to support scholarships.
- 5.1.7. Council members were concerned about the affordability of tuition fees for postgraduate education, and this being compounded by the cost of living in London. Increasing LSHTM's education income by 50% is a key pillar of the LSHTM Strategy 2022-27 and if this is not met, there will be limited funds to reach LSHTM's ambitions.

**5.2. People & Culture Strategy**

*Received: A presentation on the progress to implement the People & Culture Strategy from Roshni Mooneeram (EDI Director), and Kessar Kalim (HR Director).*

*Noted:*

- 5.2.1. Most of the recommendations from the Independent Review to address discrimination and advance anti-racism and equality at LSHTM have now been implemented. Those that remain will be built into the upcoming EDI Strategy.
- 5.2.2. Council noted that a recent academic staff survey (CEDARS) showed that only 53% of line managers take the time to develop and coach their direct reports. Upskilling line managers is key when embarking on change management programmes, and ensuring EDI is embedded through LSHTM.

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- 5.2.3. It was emphasised that employment insecurity can hinder high quality leadership and management, as many academic line managers are actively engaged in trying to secure further research funding so their teams can remain employed at LSHTM.
- 5.2.4. LSHTM is reviewing its employment model but because of financial constraints there is limited action LSHTM can proactively take.
- 5.2.5. The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine introduced 'contracts subject to funding' which was well received by academic staff but did not resolve the issue of staff being on multiple fixed term contracts and the lack of without duration contracts.

**5.3. Governance Effectiveness Review Steering Group (GERSG)**

**5.3.1. Action Plan & Progress Update**

*Noted:*

- 5.3.1.1. Council noted the progress made to date on implementation of the recommendations from the External Governance Effectiveness Review.

**5.3.2. Charter Changes**

*Noted:*

- 5.3.2.1. Council was provided with the proposed changes to the LSHTM Charter and were invited to provide feedback.
- 5.3.2.2. The LSHTM Charter would be presented to Council again in June ahead of formal resolutions and submission to the Privy Council.
- 5.3.2.3. LSHTM was continuing its negotiations to replace the Statute Concerning Academic Staff with a new employment ordinance and harmonised HR policies. Negotiations with the Trade Unions were due to conclude by the end of April 2024.

*Resolved:*

- 5.3.2.4. Council was content for LSHTM to approach the Privy Council for informal feedback on the proposed changes to the Charter.

**5.4. Updated Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech**

*Noted:*

- 5.4.1. The existing LSHTM Code of Practice on Free Speech has been updated to address changes resulting from the UK Government's Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.
- 5.4.2. Further work is needed to consider how to ensure the Freedom of Speech is appropriately promoted and ensure that LSHTM adheres to the new guidance.

*Resolved:*

- 5.4.3. Council approved the updated Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.

**5.5. Fundraising Update & Interim Strategy**

*Noted:*

- 5.5.1. Council noted the fundraising update and that a new Director of Development and Alumni Relations was being recruited.

*Resolved:*

- 5.5.2. Council approved the interim fundraising strategy, recognising that the incoming Director of Development and Alumni Relations would shape the full strategy when in post.

**6. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

**6.1. Finance & Development Committee**

*Noted:*

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6.1.1. Council noted the summary of Finance & Development Committee meeting held on 25 January 2024 and the signing off of the annual TRAC report.

*Resolved:*

6.1.2. Council approved the proposed amendments to LSHTM's liquidity levels.

**6.2. Audit & Risk Committee**

*Noted:*

- 6.2.1. LSHTM's newly appointed internal auditors, KPMG, were performing well and were aligned with management on the importance of soft controls.
- 6.2.2. Additional risks on Artificial Intelligence and the renewal of two key IT/Business systems have been added to the Strategic Risk Register.
- 6.2.3. Good progress is being made on cyber security with the development of a cyber disaster recovery plan and approval being sought for a 24/7 cyber security detection system. The committee identified the need for LSHTM to refresh its business continuity plans and develop a ransomware policy.
- 6.2.4. The committee is current tendering for LSHTM's external audit services. Three firms have responded so far, and it is expected that there will be a 30% fee increase due to changes in the external market. Council will be invited to approve the external audit provider once selected and endorsed by the Audit & Risk Committee.

**6.3. Senate**

*Noted:*

- 6.3.1. Council noted the summary of Senate from 21 March 2024, and that an internal Academic Governance Task and Finish Group had been set up to address the priority recommendations from the External Governance Effectiveness Review.

**6.4. People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee**

*Noted:*

- 6.4.1. Council noted the summary of the People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee meeting held on 29 February 2024.

**6.5. Nominations Committee**

*Noted:*

- 6.5.1. Council noted the summary of the Nominations Committee held on 07 March 2024.
- 6.5.2. The committee discussed the current Independent Member of Council vacancy arising from Precious Lunga's resignation and it was agreed that LSHTM should proceed to advertise the vacancy.

*Resolved:*

- 6.5.3. Council approved the following appointments:
  - James Hargreaves as elected Academic Staff member of the Finance & Development Committee.
  - Mike Turner as independent member of Council to Senate as an observer.
  - Clare Chandler as elected Academic Staff member of Council to Senate as a member.
  - Giles Membrey as co-opted independent member of the Capital Projects Steering Group for a third term on Finance & Development Committee.
  - Farzana Aslam as co-opted independent member of the People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee for a second term.
  - Naomi Stewart as elected Professional Services Staff Member of Council to People, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

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6.5.4. Council approved the updated terms of references for Council and its Committees, which reflect recommendations proposed by the External Governance Effectiveness Report.

**7. OTHER REPORTS FOR INFORMATION AND/OR APPROVAL WITHOUT DISCUSSION**

**7.1. LSHTM Seal**

*Noted:*

7.1.1. Council noted the use of the LSHTM Seal for the purposes of selling the 9 Bedford Square property, and granting the Finance Director Power of Attorney in order to liaise with the Spanish Tax Authorities for the purposes of ensuring that LSHTM complies with tax and national insurance regulations.

**7.2. Council & Committee Dates 2024/25**

*Noted:*

7.2.1. Council noted the upcoming Council and Committee dates for the academic year 2024/25 and that Council meetings have been extended by half an hour.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 27 June 2024**