

**Minutes of LSEC Corporation held on
Wednesday 9 July 2025 from 5.30-7.30pm
In person at Orpington Campus, Ozone Building**

Part 1: Above the Line 5.30-7.05pm

Part 2: Below the Line 7.05-7.30pm

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
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
Elizabeth Funge (EF)	Governor
Teresa Langford (TL)	Staff Governors
Nicole Mundondo	Student Governor

Governance Professional & Clerk to the Board

Jennifer Pharo (JP)	Group Chief of Staff and Group Chief Governance Officer
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Executive Officers in attendance

John Hunt (JHu)	Group Deputy CEO & Group CFO
Asfa Sohail (AS)	LSEC Deputy CEO & Principal

Presenters

Rachael Rhodes	Silverback (Branding Item)
Mal Gilbertson	Silverback (Branding Item)
Duncan Adams	
Vivienne Avery	Group Director Policy & Research

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 DE

Minutes & Action Log of previous meeting held on 7 May 2025 For Approval

Minutes of the previous meeting were APPROVED.

Apologies received from MB, PT, KS, SL, EF AH and PLF. GR attended online.

Meeting was quorate.

There were no declarations of interest.

CONFIDENTIAL SPECIAL ITEMS:

SI.1 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

SI.2 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

PART 1: ABOVE THE LINE AGENDA ITEMS:

Items **Above the Line** comprise five or six key strategic/operational matters for discussion (10/15 mins per item.)

A1	Group CEO Update and Appendices
	<p>The Board received a detailed update report from the Group CEO which was taken as read and covered all aspects of the College including external stakeholder engagement (e.g. MP visits, employer events), strategic fundraising through LASER Foundation, AI-readiness and digital transformation and staff wellbeing, CPD, and recruitment challenges.</p> <p>The Board discussed HR data and information and in particular staff turnover. Retention and recruitment of staff was good and LSEC was a good place to work. Pay remained an issue and the sector does not have national pay bargaining and FE lectures remain lagging behind pay of school teachers.</p> <p>It was reported that 5% pay award was proposed. It was reported that the latest pay awards for teachers were reported at 4%.</p>

	<p>It was reported that that gap between teachers’ pay, and FE lecturers gap remained circa £10k.</p> <p>The Board received an update on the group strategy and Group PMO projects, namely Project Aspen: People, culture, and wellbeing, Project Galaxy: SEND and transition strategy, Project LASER: Fundraising and stakeholder engagement, Project Mayflower: Digital and emerging technologies and Project Vector: Research and evidence-based practice.</p>
	<p>Questions and Comments</p>
	<p>The Board NOTED the report</p>
<p>A1.1</p>	<p>LASER Survey Report & Presentation</p>
	<p>The Board received an update on the LSER Wellbeing Survey and findings presented by VA-Group Director Policy & Research</p> <p>It was reported that that the findings of the recent LASER Wellbeing Survey will be used to pitch for grants, sponsorship and philanthropic investment on the areas and topics identified as key to supporting our children and young people.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the Foundation will transform lives and provide opportunities to our children, young people, and wider communities. Initial products in development include a Scholarship Scheme, Bursaries and Grants through a Brighter Futures Fund, Leap into Action Campaign and Payroll Giving Scheme.</p> <p>The Board were advised and received a presentation on the findings of the research which had been completed with learners at the Trust and College to better understand their well-being and inform the development of support provided through our LASER Foundation.</p> <p>It was reported that over 3,000 responses had been received from to the online survey (1,500 each from the Trust and College) and conducted 14 in-depth interviews with Trust pupils and workshops with 45 college learners across 4 campuses. This was an excellent response and has provided very rich and detailed findings, which have been written up into a report for publication.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the findings were being shared widely with staff at CPD and other events.</p> <p>It was reported that as part of the analysis, w a typology of well-being among our learners had been created. This showed that half of them have very high well-being measured across a range of well-being pillars. But some groups reported having low well-being, which results from a range of experiences such as the impact of being excluded from schools, families who aren't able to provide either sufficient love and care and/or physical support, and isolation felt by those growing up with a minority identity such as being non-binary or LGBTQ+ (these last two groups had the lowest well-being of our learners).</p> <p>The Board were advised that the research recommends that LASER should consider supporting learners in the following ways</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial support for education for those whose families cannot provide this (such as Looked After Children and ESOL learners) • wider support with health such as counselling, therapy, more opportunities for physical activity at college sites, and support with nutrition • supporting the transition from primary to secondary school • mentoring • wider enrichment activities for those who cannot do this with their families • targeted support for non-binary and LGBTQ+ learners in the school and college. <p>The findings will be launched at an external event likely to be held in the Autumn which Governors will be invited.</p>
	<p>Questions and Comments</p>
	<p>In response to questions around LGBTQ+ learners it was reported that some learners had opened up in the workshops rather than reporting issues through the survey. A group of students had also attended SLT to discuss issues and feelings of being isolated and/or bullied</p> <p>The Board extended thanks and appreciation to the enormous amount of work that had been undertaken and look forward to receiving and seeing the published research in the Autumn.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update.</p>
<p>A2.</p>	<p>DCEO & Executive Principal Operational Update</p>
	<p>The Board received a detailed DCEO operational update which was taken as read.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the College is progressing well with its three-year Post Inspection Action Plan, “Journey to Outstanding (J2O)”, which targets curriculum planning, apprenticeship outcomes, attendance, and learner behaviour. It was reported that of the 58 actions, 32 show significant progress and 16 substantial advancements, remaining “red” actions were scheduled for remainder of 2025. It was reported that key achievements include strengthened quality assurance (dual lesson observations with former HMIs), enhanced behaviour management training, and improved leadership capacity through coaching and peer learning. The Board were advised that that Ofsted Initial Teacher Education inspection for Level 5 trainees had been deferred until at least Spring 2026.</p> <p>It was reported that attendance rates remain below target at 76.8% (young learners 74.8%, adults 81.8%), with a slight year-on-year decline. While retention is high, persistent low attendance, especially in English and math and this poses a risk to achievement and overall learner outcomes. It was reported that this was compounded by mental health and other external factors affecting student engagement.</p>

	<p>It was reported that English and maths provision was identified as ongoing risk areas, particularly for adult learners at Greenwich. Despite interventions, these subjects continue to see lower retention and achievement, which could impact overall performance metrics</p> <p>It was reported that a forecasted apprenticeship achievement is 58%, below the national rate of 60.5%. There are ongoing risks related to shifting achievement and End Point Assessment (EPA) dates, especially in Demolition, Property Maintenance, and Quantity Surveying Technician programmes. The Board were advised that delays and staff changes have compressed timelines and increased the risk of non-completion for some cohorts.</p> <p>The Board received an update on applications for September 2025 with offers increased on current year. It was reported that Greenwich campus, in particular, requires additional marketing to address under-recruitment.</p> <p>The board is advised to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies to improve attendance and engagement, particularly in English and maths. • Mitigating risks in apprenticeship achievement and EPA scheduling. • Addressing recruitment challenges, especially at the Greenwich campus and in STEM subjects. • Ongoing monitoring of behaviour, safeguarding, and staff capacity to ensure a safe and high-quality learning environment.
	<p>Questions and Comments</p>
	<p>In response to questions on apprenticeship achievements it was reported that 29 of the 31 students in scope for completion were required to achieve.</p> <p>In response to questions on TLA observations and appeals it was reported that a development approach was being taken, and 382 formal lesson visits had been completed (98% of target); 81% of teaching staff meet the expected standard. Targeted support had led to significant improvement for 30 teachers, also comprehensive CPD continues, with a focus on learner-centred pedagogy and English/maths outcomes.</p> <p>In response to questions on applications it was reported that increases in STEM were reported.</p> <p>In response to questions on the attendance it was reported that continued focus was required to improve attendance particularly in English and maths.</p> <p>In response to questions on the quality sanctions in plumbing it was reported that there were issues with two courses which were being supported to ensure learners could achieve.</p>

	<p>The Board were asked to NOTE the Accountability Agreement in Part 2 of the pack which had been approved by the Curriculum & Standards Committee and submitted to the DfE Portal.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update.</p>
A2.2	Safeguarding Report
	<p>The Board received the updated report on safeguarding which was taken as read.</p> <p>It was reported that behaviour and belonging remain areas of focus, with ongoing interventions to address issues such as sexual harassment and support for transgender and non-binary students.</p> <p>It was reported that safeguarding referrals and well-being service usage have increased, indicating both heightened need and improved reporting, but also a risk profile that requires continued vigilance.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the Student Engagement team had delivered a wide range of activities, trips, and events, with increased engagement in the Career Advantage platform. It was reported that safeguarding training was complete for all staff; key issues addressed include sexual harassment, support for transgender and non-binary students, and increased well-being referrals.</p>
	Questions and Comments
	There were no questions or comments the Board NOTED the update.
A3	GCFO Update & Presentation
A3.1	Property & Capital Update
	<p>The Board received and update from the Group CFO.</p> <p>It was reported that FECTF project to refurbish the second and third floors of part of the Bromley campus and the addition of an energy centre were progressing well. The contractor APC was reported to be on programme for a December 2025 completion date.</p> <p>It was reported that following comments following the Ofsted Inspection and FE Commissioners Team visit the Bromley Student Common Room was receiving investment to recreate a new Social Space for Students in September 2025.</p> <p>It was reported that in relation to the Future Plumstead project the latest current like-for-like forecast for the total scheme cost was £45.6m, which is a circa £0.3m increase on the previous forecast. Power to the site still remained a significant risk.</p> <p>The Board were advised that this increase mainly relates to the provision for project delays in connection with some public realm works (Section 278). However, with the project</p>

	<p>contingencies, we currently remain confident that the overall budget of £44.97m is achievable on a like-for-like basis.</p> <p>The Board were advised that once the impact of the partial Zero Rating for VAT had been taken into account, total project costs were forecast to be in the region of £42.5m.</p> <p>The Board were advised that new power sub-station was being installed on Bromley site over the summer recess.</p> <p>The Board received an update on the Orpington Boiler issue and legacy costs, and it was reported that Heads of Terms had now been agreed which included the return of the Orpington Car Park.</p>
	Questions and Comments
	<p>In response to questions on power to FG Governor-VF advised that he would make contact with his connections to try to support moving forward issues with TFL and UKPN.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update.</p>
A3.2	2025/26 Budget
	<p>The Board received update and presentation on the 25/26 Budget which had been reviewed by the Group Finance Committee and was presented for APPROVAL.</p> <p>It was reported that financial performance this year had been strong, with the period 9 Management Accounts for 2024/25 showing an improved education EBITDA for the year of £3.76m (which is circa £0.46m higher than budgeted).</p> <p>It was reported that as a result of this and with the benefit of a one-off circa £0.35m post-16 budget Grant, the Corporation have approved a further 1% consolidated pay award for staff, with effect from 1 June 2025.</p> <p>It was reported that the preparation of the 2025/26 budget had been particularly challenging due to high inflation, rising interest and energy costs, and union demands for pay increases that exceed what is affordable. The Board were advised that funding rates remain below inflation and are generally low for the sector.</p> <p>It was reported that that Budgeted Education EBITDA was £3.7m (up £0.4m from 2024/25 budget, but £47k lower than the latest forecast). The Operating Position was £1.16m surplus (up £126k from 2024/25 budget, but £1.09m lower than the latest forecast), mainly due to lower cash reserves and higher depreciation as major projects complete.</p> <p>The Board were advised that staff Costs Ratio a 65.3% were in line with benchmarks and previous years and pay award: 4% increase budgeted for 11 months, which was below the 10% demanded by unions, raising the risk of industrial action.</p> <p>It was reported that capital expenditure was £0.75m planned, up from £0.5m in 2024/25, but still below the usual £1.25m due to cash constraints.</p>

	<p>The Board were advised that the budget assumes no net FRS102 pension adjustment charges.</p> <p>It was reported that higher EBITDA was needed to maintain financial health score and rebuild cash reserves after major investments (notably Plumstead and FECTF Bromley projects). It was reported that the lowest forecast cash balance is £9.8m in December 2025, helped by the £2.66m cost reduction from partial zero rating on the Plumstead project.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the College’s financial health score was expected to remain ‘Outstanding’ (240 points) but could drop to ‘Good’ if new government funding is fully spent, reducing the EBITDA ratio below 6%.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the budget includes contingencies to mitigate risks from uncertain enrolment, economic conditions, and labour market challenges. This including not meeting enrolment targets, and industrial action due to pay disputes.</p>
	<p>Questions and Comments</p>
	<p>The Board extended thanks to the Group CFO for a good financial outcome for 2024/25 and for predicted Outstanding Financial Health, together with the work undertaken to achieve the 2025/26 Budget</p> <p>In response to questions on the curriculum efficiencies it was reported that the metrics looked positive.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p> <p>The Board APPROVED the 2025/26 Budget as presented and recommended by the Group Finance Committee.</p>
<p>A3.3</p>	<p>Three Year Financial Plan</p>
	<p>The Board receive the three-year financial plan as recommended by the Group Finance Committee for approval.</p> <p>The Board were advised that that Corporation must submit a three-year financial forecast to the Department for Education (DfE) by 31 July each year, using the College Financial Forecast Report (CFFR) spreadsheet.</p> <p>It was reported that the plan covers the current year’s forecast, the 2025/26 budget, and a forecast for 2026/27.</p> <p>It was reported that if EBITDA improvement to £3.7m in 2025/26 is maintained and no major capital investment is funded from reserves, the College is projected to have around £12m cash by July 2027.</p>

	<p>It was reported that this cash position would allow the College to fund the £3.3m balloon repayment of the Barclays term loan in October 2027 from its own resources, which the DfE would deem affordable.</p> <p>The Board were advised that Financial health was expected to be 'Outstanding' for 2025/26 but will decline to 'Good' in 2026/27 due to the loan repayment.</p> <p>It was reported that the financial plan includes major capital project cash flows for Future Greenwich and FECTF, with capital grants of £14m and £13.7m factored in.</p> <p>It was reported that the lowest cash balance is expected to be £9.4m in December 2026, rising to £12m by July 2027.</p>
	<p>Questions and Comments</p>
	<p>The Board extended thanks to the Group CFO for a comprehensive three-year plan.</p> <p>There were no questions and the Board APPROVED the plan as recommended by the Group Finance Committee.</p>
<p>A3.4</p>	<p>Group Risk Register and Appendices</p>
	<p>The Board received the Group Risk Register which identified that since the risk register was considered by the Corporation in March it has been subject to a review by risk owners and had been considered by the Group Audit & Risk Committee in June.</p> <p>Of the 34 risks on the College risk register, 3 are High, 23 are Medium, and 8 are considered to be Low. It was reported that financial risks had diminished. The following risks were noted.</p> <p>Financial Health (Risk C2): The risk of financial failure had decreased with improved EBITDA and cash forecasts, slower capital spending, and successful VAT relief on the Plumstead project (potentially saving £2.6m) reducing the risk from High to Medium.</p> <p>Maths & English Outcomes (Risk C7) remains a high risk, due to persistent challenges include student progress in exams, teacher recruitment difficulties, over-reliance on unreliable agency staff, and instability in departmental management, all affecting teaching and assessment.</p> <p>Major Capital Projects (Risk C10) relating to capital projects' impact on solvency had reduced from Critical to Medium, thanks to improved cash flow and VAT relief on the Plumstead project.</p> <p>Digital Curriculum (Risk C18) relating to the risk of failing to deliver the digital curriculum strategy has lessened. The launch of Project Mayflower and new roles (Head of Emerging Technologies, Learning Technologist) had reduced this risk, though it remains Medium.</p>

	<p>Capital Lifecycle Liabilities (Risk C24) relating to the risk of unaffordable capital lifecycle liabilities leading to building closures remains High and unchanged</p> <p>Attendance (Risk C25) relating to low attendance continues to be a High risk. Although there's slight improvement, attendance is still below the 85% target, with notable gaps between vocational (80%), tutorials (70%), and English/Maths (65%).</p> <p>Local Skills Improvement Partnership (Risk C34) relating to the risk of failing to engage with LSIP has reduced from Medium to Low as funding ended in March, but collaboration will continue for another year, with possible future funding.</p> <p>Government Policy Changes (Risk C35) risk has increased to Medium due to ongoing reforms in High Needs Funding and EHCPs, with spending exceeding government budgets. This had been a focus for the Group Audit & Risk Committee in March 2025.</p>
	Questions and Comments
	<p>There were no questions the Board acknowledge that financial risks had diminished. The Board NOTED the update.</p>
A4.	GCGO Update
	<p>The Board received an update on the new Governor Link Programme and Standing Orders for 2025/26.</p> <p>It was reported that new areas had been assigned to each Governor for next year with expected visits per term to designated areas.</p> <p>The Board received and updated Standing Orders and Governance Statement for APPROVAL plus the Board and Committee dates scheduled for 2025/26</p> <p>The Board received information about the election for new Student Governor and were advised that a new Staff Governor would also be appointed in September 2025.</p> <p>The Board were updated on the Inclusive Governance Review had been completed in the Trust and the external governance review of the Curriculum & Standards Committee.</p>
	Questions and Comments
	<p>The Board extended thanks to the outgoing Student and Staff Governors and extended thanks for their service.</p> <p>There was no further question.</p> <p>The Board APPROVED the Standing Orders, Governance Statement and Meeting Schedule for 2025/26</p>

PART 2: BELOW THE LINE (30-45 mins to cover pre questions and comments on papers and decisions)

Items **Below the line** are presented for approval and/or for information, monitoring and noting.

B1.	Executive Principal Operational & Performance Update
B1.1	Quality Improvement Action Plans: NOTED
B2	Group CFO Update
B2.1	2023/24 Financial Update: Management Accounts NOTED
B3	Information or Recommendations from Committees
B3.1	<p>College Financial Regulations These had been APPROVED as recommended and reviewed by the Group Finance Committee.</p> <p>It was reported that there were some Increased delegated authority limits. The Procurement thresholds had been adjusted for inflation and the Whistleblowing policy aligned with latest guidance.</p>
B3.2	<p>Group Internal Audit Plan 2025/26</p> <p>This had been APPROVED as recommended by the Group Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>It was reported that the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 included 94.5 audit days across key risk areas.</p>
B3.3	<p>Group Risk Management Framework Policy</p> <p>This had been APPROVED as recommended by the Group Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>It was reported that the framework had been updated with clear roles and scoring system.</p>
B3.4	<p>Fraud Avoidance Policy</p> <p>This had been APPROVED.</p>
B3.5	<p>2025/26 Subcontracting Controls and Plan</p> <p>This had been APPROVED.</p> <p>It was reported that the subcontracting value for 2025/26: £2.56m. Management fees were set at 15–20% depending on provision type. Strong assurance from 2024/25 external audit with no recommendations. Comprehensive controls reported for procurement, due diligence, and quality monitoring.</p>

B3.6	TLA Policy This had been approved by the Curriculum & Standards Committee and was NOTED
B3.7	English and Maths Policy This had been approved by the Curriculum & Standards Committee and was NOTED
B3.8	Accountability Agreement This had been approved and recommended by the Curriculum & Standards Committee and was represented to the Corporation and APPROVED.
B4	Governance
B4.1	Governor Visits Update Verbal : JAS noted some suggestions and improvements following visit to HH.
B4.2	Complaints Policy Updated This had been APPROVED It was reported that the policy had been updated and revised to clarify appeal timelines and exclusions. It was reported that four-stage process: informal resolution, formal complaint, appeal, and escalation to DfE or OIA. In addition, monitoring and reporting mechanisms were in place to ensure transparency and accountability.

AOB: NONE

Date of Next Meeting – 15 October 2025 at 5.30pm



Approved: David Eastgate Chair LSEC Corporation