

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Date of meeting:

Thursday 02 July 2020, 15:00

Place of meeting:

ZOOM Conference Call

Present: Don Robert (Chair), John O'Donnell, Alison Grant, Ann Grant, Anne Mills, Diana Layfield, Gemma Donaldson, Jonathan Roper, Nicholas Mays, Peter Piot, Precious Lunga, Richard White, Una O'Brien, Jenny Jenkin, Hitesh Patel, Pablo Ruiz Cuenca, Matt Lee and Umberto D'Alessandro.

Apologies: Annalisa Jenkins.

Minutes: Ayisha Govindasamy.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conflicts of Interest: Secretary's note – One of the shortlisted candidates for the Council Member vacancies (item 2.8), Mohamed Osman, is known to Ann Grant, Precious Lunga and Peter Piot.

1.2 Actions taken by the Chair since the previous meeting: None.

1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting

Resolved that:

1.3.1 The minutes from the previous meeting of Council on 01 May 2020 were approved subject to one minor amendment to minute 3.1.4.

2 FOCUS OF THE MEETING

2.1 Black Lives Matter and Tackling Racial Inequalities - Kara Hanson, SLT lead for tackling racial inequalities, joined for this item.

Noted:

1.3.2 LSHTM's colonial origins, white structural privilege and the racist lived experience of staff and students needed to be fully acknowledged and action was needed to address racial inequality within the way LSHTM researches, teaches, hires and promotes.

1.3.3 Following the Council listening session, members were extremely concerned about the culture of fear for staff and students to raise issues and their lack of trust within the current reporting mechanisms.

1.3.4 Reports of bullying and harassment were not new, and many junior academic staff may feel uncomfortable raising concerns because of small research fields and implications for their future career.

1.3.5 While the new Report and Support system was welcomed, all available reporting routes should be well communicated e.g. Bullying and Harassment Policy, Grievance Policy, Whistleblowing Policy.

1.3.6 The proposed EDI review would need careful consideration to ensure the review process was transparent, and that staff and students had confidence in the review group's ability to have independence of thought from LSHTM's status quo.

1.3.7 It was important to acknowledge the work already taken place by bottom up groups such as Decolonising Global Health and Black Lives Matter.

1.3.8 Through digitalising LSHTM's education content there was an opportunity to review teaching material and to decolonise reading lists.

1.3.9 It would be beneficial for LSHTM to have a long-term strategic vision for its culture over the next 20-30 years, so that actions were not short-lived and change can be embedded.

1.3.10 In monitoring subsequent actions and initiatives, Council and SLT would need to clearly understand their own responsibilities; SLT to deliver on tackling racial inequalities within LSHTM and Council to scrutinise and hold SLT to account.

- 1.3.11 Members were encouraged to seek areas of good practice from outside of higher education.
- 1.3.12 Council reflected on the need to ensure other underrepresented groups were given the opportunity to share their experiences.

Resolved:

- 1.3.13 Council would fully consider how to champion diversity within its upcoming appointments e.g. Council Member and Director Recruitment, and a subgroup of Council would work collaboratively with LSHTM colleagues to agree immediate next steps.
- 1.3.14 Key actions and next steps would be reported to Council in September 2020. (*Senior Leadership Team*)

2.2 Director's Presentation

Received: A presentation from the Director on LSHTM's response to Black Lives Matters, COVID-19; recent research achievements and current SLT priorities.

2.3 Financial Impact and opportunities from COVID-19

Noted:

- 2.3.1 LSHTM would be operating a moderate surplus of £0.3million for this academic year.
- 2.3.2 Distance learning applications were above target, but it was far trickier to confirm face to face student numbers as many were still undecided on whether to defer or withdraw their application.
- 2.3.3 While EU funded research projects were at risk of not receiving costed extensions, there has been good success in recent COVID-19 research grants.
- 2.3.4 LSHTM would acquire a revolving credit facility (RCF) as a prudent measure to support liquidity.
- 2.3.5 COVID-19 presented opportunities to invest in enhancing LSHTM's education provision, estates, IT systems, flexible working, philanthropy, research areas, such as big data and climate change, and LSHTM'S internal research centres.
- 2.3.6 A communications plan would be developed to ensure the staff community are informed of each workstream and it was important to continue communicating LSHTM's financial situation to staff.
- 2.3.7 It was confirmed that the Finance and Development Committee unanimously agreed with the proposals and the investment needed to realise opportunities to secure LSHTM's future.

Resolved:

- 2.3.8 Council endorsed the proposed areas of investment and disinvestment and operating at a £4m deficit for the next financial year.

2.4 Visiting Committee Report

Noted:

- 2.4.1 Council and SLT were supportive of the recommendations made by the Visiting Committee.

2.5 Fundraising

Noted:

- 2.5.1 Members of Council were working with the Director and Development & Alumni Team to develop a broader COVID-19 fundraising campaign.

2.6 Education Update – Craig Higgins, Pro-Director of Education, joined for this item.

Noted:

- 2.6.1 Face to face MSc teaching had been affected the most by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, face to face courses and examinations transitioned to online delivery. There was also

impact to student summer projects, and to research degree students who were unable to travel and utilise the laboratories for research.

- 2.6.2 The pandemic has accelerated initiatives in education and going forward a model of on-campus/online would be used.
- 2.6.3 There was a need to acknowledge and recognise the tremendous work of staff and their efforts to move education content online. This would be recognised at an individual level, within PDR discussions, through updated promotions criteria and LSHTM would provide additional resources to support the conversion to digital content.
- 2.6.4 There was a tension between converting teaching material to digital by September 2020 and having a robust seamless online teaching experience.
- 2.6.5 LSHTM were in negotiation with FutureLearn to obtain access to the data from its MOOCs courses as this would be useful for marketing and fundraising opportunities.

2.7 Director Recruitment

Noted:

- 2.7.1 Egon Zehnder have been appointed as Head-hunters for the recruitment of a new Director and they would be interviewing relevant stakeholders to get a better understanding of LSHTM and what the role requires.
- 2.7.2 The position is due to be advertised in September 2020, and shortlisting and interviews would take place by the Selection Committee in the Autumn Term. Council would expect a formal appointment by January 2021.

Resolved:

- 2.7.3 The Director's resignation would be announced to the LSHTM community by the Chair of Council in July 2020. (*Chair of Council*)

2.8 Council member appointment

Noted:

- 2.8.1 The advert for Council members has obtained over 41 applicants, and individuals were also proposed through existing Council member networks. Four had been shortlisted and their CVs provided to Council.

Resolved:

- 2.8.2 Council endorsed the four shortlisted candidates in principle, subject to the completion of interviews and due diligence.
- 2.8.3 The appointment of Una O'Brien as Chair of People Committee and Remuneration Committee, and subsequent removal from Audit and Risk Committee membership was approved.
- 2.8.4 The appointment of Precious Lungu to Council and Audit and Risk Committee for a second term, and as a member of People Committee was approved.

3 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

3.1 Nominations Committee

Received: A verbal update from the Nominations Committee Chair, and a paper recommending a Council academic election position be designated to Unit Academic/Scientific Staff.

Resolved:

- 3.1.1 Council approved the designation of one academic staff Council position for Unit Academic/Scientific Staff, subject to a review of its effectiveness after one term (three years).

3.2 Finance and Development Committee

Received: A summary report from the committee and a copy of the updated Financial Regulations.

Noted:

- 3.2.1 The Financial Regulations were still London-centric and did not fully integrate the Units. This had previously been discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee away day and the integration of policies across LSHTM would be key to a synchronous regulatory framework.

Resolved:

- 3.2.2 The Financial Regulations were approved, subject to the above feedback. (*Chief Operating Officer*).

3.3 Audit and Risk Committee

Received: A summary report from the committee and the latest version of the Strategic Risk Register.

3.4 People Committee

Received: A summary report from the committee and the staff feeling valued report.

Noted:

- 3.4.1 Much of the People's Committee area of focus (EDI, promotions, training, development and values) would be fundamental to LSHTM's success in the future.

Resolved:

- 3.4.2 The committee's terms of references and name would be reviewed.

3.5 Senate

Received: A summary report from the Senate Chair and Senate's revised Terms of Reference.

Resolved:

- 3.5.1 Council approved the revised Senate Terms of Reference.

4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted:

- 4.1 Jon Roper and Ann Grant were thanked for their outstanding contribution to Council and as Chairs of Audit and Risk Committee, People Committee and Remuneration Committee.

- 4.2 Council acknowledged the 10th anniversary of Pontiano Kaleebu as Director of the Uganda Unit and thanked him for his stewardship of the Unit over that period.

5 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Noted:

- 5.1 The Council and Committee schedule for 2020/21 would be circulated to members shortly.