

# MEETING OF COUNCIL

**Date of meeting:**

Tuesday 31 March 2020, 14:00 to 16:00

**Place of meeting:**

ZOOM Conference Call

**Present:**

John O'Donnell (Acting Chair), Don Robert (Chair Elect), Gemma Donaldson, Ann Grant, Precious Lunga, Nicholas Mays, Jonathan Roper, Diana Layfield, Hitesh Patel, Richard White, Jenny Jenkin, Matt Lee, Anne Mills, Alison Grant, Una O'Brien, Annalisa Jenkins and Umberto D'Allessandro.

**Apologies:**

Peter Piot

**Minutes:**

Ayisha Govindasamy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Don Robert was welcomed to Council as Chair Elect and would begin his term on 01 April 2020.*

**1.1 Conflicts of Interest:** None.

**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 28 November 2019 were approved.

## 2. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*Received: A presentation from the Acting Director on LSHTM's response to COVID-19; and recent achievements and events.*

## 3. COVID-19

### 3.1 Financial Impact

*Noted:*

3.1.1 The Director had written to all major research funders to highlight the issues LSHTM would face if no funded cost extensions were granted. Media coverage of this issue was low.

3.1.2 It was likely that there would be wider impact on the availability of future research grants because of an economic downturn.

*Resolved:*

3.1.3 A framework to enable decisions on which staff groups should be added to the Government's Job Retention Scheme would be developed. *(Senior Leadership Team).*

### 3.2 Education

*Noted:*

3.2.1 LSHTM's face to face (F2F) education provision was now being delivered online. There was likely to be a reduction in F2F student numbers next year but there was an opportunity to create more blended learning in the future.

3.2.2 LSHTM would also identify staff with spare capacity who may be able to support teaching activities.

3.2.3 The Student Representative Council (SRC) fed back that student communications had been good and they had been canvassing students on how to continue the social structure of student life.

3.2.4 Many students were concerned about their summer projects, and anxiety was understandably high.

3.2.5 The SRC had found it difficult to engage with distance learning students as the only method was through Moodle and access to student contact details was held by University of London.

- 3.2.6 A student survey would be carried out to gauge what areas of online teaching went well and what could be improved for next term and incoming students for 2020/21 academic year.
- 3.2.7 The COVID-19 MOOC had been extremely successful with over 140,000 registrations.
- 3.2.8 Council thanked the Secretary & Registrar and Pro-Director Education for all their hard work to ensure education was still provided to LSHTM students during COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3.3 Capital Projects**

*Noted:*

- 3.3.1 Contractors were no longer working at any LSHTM London buildings sites. Building works were ongoing at the Units but were progressing at a slower pace.
- 3.3.2 There was no exposure on Tavistock Place building works as the contractors independently decided to stop work before government advice. There was exposure on stopping Keppel Street building works as this decision was taken by LSHTM as it was a safe time to stop works in the schedule.
- 3.3.3 It would be difficult to predict how contractors and tenders would react in light of COVID-19.

*Resolved:*

- 3.3.4 Details of LSHTM's amount of liability for capital projects would be shared with Council. (*Chief Operating Officer*).

### **3.4 Major Incident Teams Governance**

*Received: An overview of the purpose, reporting lines and membership of LSHTM's Major Incident Teams.*

*Noted:*

- 3.4.1 The Crisis Committee made decisions on high level crisis mitigation policy; the committee met twice a week and was chaired by the Director.
- 3.4.2 The Major Incident Team focused on operational COVID-19 issues; the team met weekly and was co-chaired by the Secretary & Registrar and Chief Operating Officer.
- 3.4.3 The Education Contingency Group focused on actions related to LSHTM's education provision; the group met three times a week and was co-chaired by the Secretary & Registrar and Pro-Director of Education.
- 3.4.4 The COVID-19 taskforce met weekly and was an information sharing group that providing updates on LSHTM research agenda, funding opportunities and research collaborations, coordination and communication.
- 3.4.5 Communications from all meetings were being shared with staff, students, researchers and the public as appropriate.
- 3.4.6 Academic staff members of Council noted that they were impressed by the communications which were clear, honest and thorough.

*Resolved:*

- 3.4.7 Once major incident work was completed for COVID-19, a de-brief should be organised to ensure 'lessons learnt' were identified. (*Senior Leadership Team*).

### **3.5 COVID-19 Risk register**

*Resolved:*

- 3.5.1 Specific feedback on the COVID-19 risk register should be shared with the Secretary & Registrar. (*Council members*)

### **3.6 Office for Students Regulatory Requirements**

*Received: A letter from Office for Students (OfS) outlining their regulatory requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*Noted:*

- 3.6.1 OfS would be reducing their regulatory requirements (including amended advice on reportable events) and have outlined their expectations of Higher Education Providers during COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.6.2 OfS were keen that student voices were heard as part of the decision-making process when implementing COVID-19 mitigating actions.
- 3.6.3 Whilst teaching and assessments were transitioning to online delivery, consideration was continually given to adhering to Competition and Markets Authority legislation.

## **4 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

### **4.1 Nominations Committee**

*Resolved:*

- 4.1.1 Council approved the appointment Amish Nathwani, and the re-appointment of Stan Farmer to Audit and Risk Committee.

### **4.2 Finance and Development Committee**

*Received: A verbal update on COVID-19 related fundraising from the Director of Development and Alumni Relations (Valerie Boulet).*

*Noted:*

- 4.2.1 As a result of COVID-19, the fundraising team have had to re-organise and re-prioritise their efforts.
- 4.2.2 There has been increased visitor travel to LSHTM's website therefore ensuring online content was attractive to prospective donors was critical e.g. media highlights, alumni newsletters.
- 4.2.3 As LSHTM was heavily involved with COVID-19 research and related advice, the potential donor pool had increased far broader than existing public health, science and academic communities. This new audience would be approached with fundraising opportunities.
- 4.2.4 When engaging with donors it was important to emphasise the international context that LSHTM operates in e.g. The Gambia and Uganda Units, international research.
- 4.2.5 The importance of fundraising was emphasised as a key contributing factor to LSHTM's future financial sustainability.

*Resolved:*

- 4.2.6 A detailed discussion on the draft Fundraising Strategy would be scheduled for the next Council meeting. *(Secretary & Registrar)*
- 4.2.7 A follow up email would be sent to Valerie Boulet emphasising Council's members willingness to support LSHTM's COVID-19 fundraising efforts. *(Acting Chair of Council).*
- 4.2.8 COVID-19 respond fund would be featured more prominently on the LSHTM website. *(Director of Development and Alumni Relations).*

### **4.3 Senate**

*Received: A verbal update from the Chair of Senate on the outcomes Senate held on 24 March 2020.*

*Noted:*

- 4.3.1 Senate had agreed to delegate authority to the Education Contingency Group to take appropriate and expedient actions with regard to LSHTM's education provision during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Resolved:*

4.3.2 Council approved the addition of Centre Director representation to Senate's Membership.

#### **4.4 Audit & Risk Committee**

*Received: A verbal update from the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee on the outcomes of the Audit and Risk Committee Away Day held on 09 March 2020.*

*Noted:*

4.4.1 The Committee Away Day focused on the integration of the Units, key financial controls and governance in light of high-risk findings from the internal audits; and were joined by the Unit Directors.

4.4.2 The Committee concluded that significant work was needed to ensure financial controls, policies and procedures were aligned.

4.4.3 The Committee noted that work was ongoing to update the Schedule of Delegation which would help mitigate the high-risk findings.

*Resolved:*

4.4.4 Senior leaders from London and Units would continue efforts to integrate and ensure there were clear reporting and accountability throughout LSHTM. *(Senior Leadership Team).*

#### **4.5 People Committee**

*Received: The EDI Annual Report and gender pay gap figures for 2018/19.*

*Noted:*

4.5.1 The People Committee was well supported and were pleased with the EDI Manager appointment who had a strong data background and would be focussing on updating a number of EDI related policies.

4.5.2 The report on 'staff perceptions on feeling valued' had been published in LSHTM's Chariot newsletter. The vast majority of comments relate to management, communications and bullying and harassment.

4.5.3 Management responses to the staff survey and staff perceptions on feeling valued report would be published shortly to ensure staff had confidence that the results were received and would be acted upon.

*Resolved:*

4.5.4 The 'staff perceptions on feeling valued' Report, and management responses to the report and staff survey would be circulated to members. *(Governance Manager)*

### **5 REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

#### **5.1 Use of the LSHTM Seal**

*Noted:*

5.1.1 The LSHTM seal had been used to formalise a number of contracts and deeds related to capital projects and recorded in the official register of the Seal.

### **6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 02 July 2020**

### **7 CLOSURE**