



**Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Held at 11.00am on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
Finlaison House, 15-17 Furnival Street, London EC4A 1AB**

<b>Present:</b>	Chris Brodie	Chairman	CB
	David Wallace	Chief Executive	DW
	Willie Gallagher (by phone)	Non-Executive Director	WG
	Michael Yuille (by phone)	Non-Executive Director	MY
	Rob Kennedy (by phone)	Non-Executive Director	RK
	Prof Dame Glynis Breakwell	Non-Executive Director	GB
	Gary Womersley	Company Secretary	GW
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Ruth Elliot	BIS	RE
	Joanna Rodin	BIS	JR
	Rowena Ridout	BIS (Observer)	RR
	Neil Surman (by phone)	Welsh Government	NS
	Jonny O'Callaghan (by phone)	DELNI	JO
	Linda Meldrum (by phone)	DELNI	LM
	Stephen White (by phone)	Scottish Government	SW
	Les Ebdon (item 2 only)	OFFA	LE
	Anne Spinali (item 3 only)	ShEx	AS
	Ed Westhead (item 3 only)	ShEx	EW
<b>By Invitation:</b>	Derek Ross	Executive Director of Finance, Strategy & Corporate Services	DR
	Mark Cassidy	Executive Director of Customer Services & Operations.	MC
	Jacqueline Steed	Chief Digital Officer	JS
	Paul Mason	Executive Director of Repayments & Fraud	PM
	Christine McAllister (by phone)	Head of Corporate Communications (Observer)	CM
<b>Distribution:</b>	As Above		

**1. Chairman's Opening Remarks and Directors' Matters**

The Chairman declared that he had been nominated by CUC to Chair the UCAS Council. There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Presentation from OFFA**

The Board received a presentation from Les Ebdon CBE, Director of Fair Access to Higher Education (OFFA).

LE explained the background to OFFA, why it had come into being and its stated role – “to promote and safeguard fair access to higher education for people from lower income backgrounds and other under-represented groups”.

LE informed how OFFA worked, in particular with SLC and re challenges for widening access to HE in general.

Board enjoyed a question and answer session and thanked LE for his presentation.

## **3. Presentation from ShEx**

The Board received a presentation from Ann Spinali and Ed Westhead from ShEx, by way of ICR Debt Sale Update.

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Board enjoyed a question and answer session and thanked AS/EW for their presentation.

### **4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>TH</sup> January 2016**

Board approved the minutes of the meeting of the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

### **4.2 Matters arising from previous minutes**

GW intimated that of the eight actions listed, five were for closure, with three being carried forward for future meetings.

### **5.1 CEO Report**

DW presented his CEO Report to the Board.

DW notified Board that a fourth model office had taken place in Darlington to demonstrate progress made in respect of PGL by SLC. DW stated that the event had been attended by Ben Coates, the BIS SRO for the project and the other BIS officials. DW informed that feedback from Ben/BIS had been complimentary and DW shared this with the Board. Board were advised that they would be kept informed on progress re PGL, as it was a key policy deliverable.

DW advised Board that Assess to Pay customer satisfaction levels were currently at 86% up 3.7% from January 2015. DW also advised that Repay Customer Satisfaction levels were also up to 81.2% up 4.1% from January 2015. DW noted that 2015/16 year end forecast reflected a Green RAG status for customer satisfaction for both Assess to Pay and Repay.

DW informed that complaints were up in December and January year on year. DW advised that the driver for repayment complaints increasing was the firmer stance and action being taken with overseas students. \* DW also advised that Processing complaints had fallen as a result of experienced staff retention, minimal policy/system change and ongoing focus on improving quality and processes – this stable and improved service having positive knock-on effect on reducing Contact complaints. DW confirmed that in total cumulative complaints were down 12%.

DW notified Board that he and CB had attended SLC's quarterly performance review meeting with the Minister on 9<sup>th</sup> February and that the Minister was pleased with progress being made by SLC both in operational terms and also in terms of delivery against the Government's policy priorities.

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DW further highlighted that the Committee Chair had also written to BIS and SLC seeking a written response prior to any potential hearing. **ACTION 174 MB – DR & MW** – Draft SLC response to be shared with Members/BIS.

DW reported that at the invite of Mary Curnock Cook, CEO of UCAS, he had attended a presentation re the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016 deadline applicant statistics in respect of AY16/17, followed by a dinner attended by UCAS Board Members, Vice Chancellors, Principals and sector colleagues. DW further reported that contact was made at the event with Professor Sir Ian Diamond, who is undertaking the Diamond Review of Higher Education in Wales. DW informed that he and Sir Ian had agreed to meet further so that Sir Ian could "road test" in confidence the deliverability of some of his "work in progress" thinking. NS confirmed that he was happy for this to happen.

DW informed Board of the Application Cycle 15/16 and congratulated the staff concerned for the impressive performance. DW intimated that he felt the performance merited specific minuting by the Board. CB agreed that the performance represented SLC's best year yet and that the appreciation and congratulations of the Board be noted accordingly.

DW updated the Board that it was proposed to conduct a short all-staff "Pulse" survey at the start of March to focus on those areas where scores had caused discussion following last year's annual staff survey. DW stated that the "Pulse" survey was intended to help determine the extent to which many initiatives introduced in the last two to three months have had a positive impact and be reflected in the year end scorecard.

DW directed Board to the SLC Recognition Awards which the Board noted and expressed congratulations and thanks to the SLC staff concerned.

Board noted the CEO Report.

## **5.2 SLC Change Portfolio Update**

### **5.2.0 Summary Portfolio Headlines**

JS provided an update on SLC Portfolio Headlines to Board. \* **ACTION MB 175** - \*

Board noted the Summary Portfolio Headlines Update.

#### **5.2.1 \***

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## **5.2.2 Update on DR & DC Consolidation**

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Board noted the DR/DC Consolidation Update.

## **5.2.3 Security Programme Update**

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Board noted the Security Programme Update.

## **5.3 McKinsey Review Update**

### **5.3.0 SLC External Governance – Proposal for Change**

JR presented the SLC External Governance – Proposals for Change Report.

JR intimated that following the McKinsey Review/SLC 2020, work had been ongoing with BIS and the DAs, together with SLC Main Board and ELT, to help define and resolve identified problems with SLC's External Governance.

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Board endorsed the proposals as set out in the SLC External Governance – Proposals for Change Paper.

### **5.3.1 SLC 2020**

JR intimated that in addition to work progressing under SLC 2020 on Governance, work had progressed on the four additional themes.

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On Organisational Health, JR noted the good anecdotal progress to date and that SLC intended to carry out a "Pulse" survey.

On Repayments, JR informed that following a meeting of the Repayments Board, a joint Repayments Strategy had been published with work continuing on a Delivery Plan.

Board noted the SLC 2020 update.

#### **5.4 AY 16/17 Commission and AY 17/18 Commission, incorporating Post Graduate Loans Update**

DR presented the AY16/17 Policy Stability & AY17/18 Commission (including PGL) Update. DR notified that, with the exception of Welsh Government changes, the priorities were as per the AY16/17 Policy Stability & AY17/18 Commission report presented to the January Board. DR informed that SLC had worked with Welsh Government colleagues to assess potential priorities to ensure there was a “marker” in the plans and portfolio for AY17/18. DR noted that not to do would result in a greater risk that SLC capacity may be fully utilised by other Administrations or that SLC were asked to start doing initial work and analysis too late to meet the next AY launch date, or both, effectively a repeat of AY16/17.

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DR informed that SLC were still delivering elements of the AY16/17 programme when work was due to commence on the AY17/18 programme, which was anticipated to be as big, if not bigger, than AY16/17. DR further informed that SLC may have to start work on some AY18/19 initiatives at some point in FY16/17 due to the size and complexity of the work.

DR notified Board that SLC were currently undertaking a portfolio wide assessment re deliverability of BIS and DA priorities against the in-flight programme of work and other initiatives, with further quadrilateral talks planned for later in the day to discuss and hopefully progress a final position being agreed upon.

Board noted the AY16/17 Commission & AY17/18 Commission (including PGL) Update.

#### **5.5 Corporate and Business Plan Refresh**

DR updated that work re refreshing SLC’s Corporate & Business Plan was still ongoing and that the specific framing of objectives and supporting narrative outlining the initiatives underpinning these would be approved by ELT prior to being presented at the March Board. **ACTION MB 176 - DR** Draft SLC Corporate & Business Plan to be presented at March Board for approval.

#### **5.6 Monthly Finance Report**

DR introduced the SLC Monthly Finance Report. DR intimated that a large proportion of variance from forecast against actual spend was due to programme slippage. DR stated that this was an area that SLC were continuing to make significant improvements, including taking on new programme specialist resource.

Board noted the Monthly Finance Report.

## **5.7 Managing People**

### **5.7.0 Draft People Strategy 2020**

DR intimated that SLC's Draft People Strategy had been developed taking into account various factors, including:-

- SLC's Vision & Mission and strategic objectives;
- SLC's TOMF and PMF;
- Results of SLC's latest employee survey (Nov 14), the recommendations of Investors in People Review (July 15) and Strengthening SLC for Success to 2020 : McKinsey Report (Aug 15);
- Employee legislation and best practice in HR.

CB commented that the draft People Strategy should apply to all resource utilised by SLC.

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Board approved the SLC People Strategy 2020.

### **5.7.1 Quarterly Report**

DR introduced the Managing People Quarterly Report. DR noted that this year had seen improved levels of engagement in the performance development process with the proportion of indicative ratings recorded at mid-year point increasing from 84.7% in FY2014-15 to 95.8% in FY2015-16. DR also noted that SLC's Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit had been revised and that implementation was underway, following discussion with key stakeholders, including PCS.

Board noted the Managing People Quarterly Report.

## **5.8 BIS SLC Steering Board**

DW intimated that there had been no BIS/SLC Steering Board since the last SLC Board meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and therefore no matters to update the Board. Board noted the position.

## **5.9 Main Board Risk Review**

Board noted the Main Board Risk Review.

## **6. AOB**

There was no AOB.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

The Board noted that the next meeting would take place in Glasgow on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 at 09.30AM.

**The Board meeting closed at 14.30pm**

**NB: Where asterisks appear within a numbered item, these sections have been excluded from the minutes before placing on the website as the subject under discussion falls within one or more of the exemptions contained in Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and can be reasonably withheld.**