

COUNCIL MINUTES – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021
APPROVED ON 22 NOVEMBER 2021

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Date of meeting:

Wednesday 22 September 2021, 14:00 to 16:00

Place of meeting:

ZOOM Video Conference

Present: Don Robert, John O'Donnell, Una O'Brien, Diana Layfield, Hitesh Patel, Annalisa Jenkins, Mohamed Osman, Mishal Khan, Effua Usuf, Angela Darlington, Anne Mills, Matt Lee, Jenny Jenkin, Precious Lunga, Kevin Tetteh, Alana Luckraft and Liam Smeeth.

Apologies: Diana Layfield, Mike Turner, Sunil Sharma and Oluwagbemileke Bolajoko.

Minutes: Ayisha Govindasamy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed the following new members and observers of Council:

- Liam Smeeth as LSHTM Director and member of Council
- Kevin Tetteh as recently elected academic staff member of Council
- Alana Luckraft, the Director's Strategic Advisor, as an observer.

1.1. Actions taken by the Chair: None.

1.2. Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

1.3. Minutes of the previous meeting and matter arising:

Noted:

- 1.3.1. Council received an update from the Executive Team on plans to return to LSHTM's buildings in London.
- 1.3.2. In-house academic expertise had been sought on when staff and students should return to LSHTM's London buildings and there was a divergence of thought. There were concerns over the spread of COVID-19 due to a lack of ventilation within the building, but students were keen to have face to face teaching as soon as possible.
- 1.3.3. The Executive Team had agreed that from 27 September staff who wished to return to the building on wellbeing grounds could do so, and that mitigations such as mandatory face masks, regular lateral flow tests and encouragement of vaccinations would remain. Face to face teaching for students would return after reading week in November 2021.
- 1.3.4. Student numbers for intensive MSc programmes for 2021/22 were below target but Distance Learning student numbers were above target.

Resolved:

- 1.3.5. Council approved the minutes of its previous meeting on 29 June 2021.

2. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Noted:

- 2.1.1. The Director's report template has been updated and now includes a written report summarising the Director's main priorities, as well as highlighting research and teaching achievements. The Director welcomed feedback on the format of the report from Council members.
- 2.1.2. In his new role, the Director has spent a significant amount of time engaging with the LSHTM community and has been providing regular communications and Q&A sessions for both staff and students.
- 2.1.3. The Executive Team was being transformed into a collective decision-making body and significant improvements had been made to ensure decisions made were communicated in a transparent way, along with clear rationales.

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- 2.1.4. The Staff Council Representatives Report to Council noted that this new style of report from the Director was welcome, as was the opportunity to raise issues with the Director in advance of Council meetings.

3. SPOTLIGHT SESSION

3.1. Director: Vision, first 50 days and strategic objectives

Noted:

- 3.1.1. The Director had shared his vision with staff in a number of open meetings, and this was provided to Council for information.
- 3.1.2. Proposed strategic objectives had been provisionally agreed by both the Director and Chair of Council.
- 3.1.3. It was recommended that for each strategic objective, measures of success be identified to ensure outcomes could be assessed.
- 3.1.4. It was noted that nine objectives were a lot and that these should be prioritised so that they are realistic/achievable, and that financial sustainability should feature within the Director's priorities.

3.2. Research: Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Diseases

Noted:

- 3.2.1. Stefan Flasche (Professor Of Vaccine Epidemiology), Nicholas Davies (Assistant Professor of Mathematical Modelling), Gwen Knight (Mathematical Modeller of Antibiotic Resistance) and Caroline Mburu (PhD Student) provided an overview of their research activities.

4. ITEMS FOR ATTENTION

4.1. Council Engagement Options

Noted

- 4.1.1 Council received a paper setting out a range of ways in which Council members could engage more closely with the life and work of the School. This included LSHTM events (conferences, lectures, webinars, symposia), programme inductions, meetings with faculty and unit staff and so on. A number of additional options were made available including informal breakfast meetings with staff and students and listening sessions. These will be scheduled at Council's request during the course of the year, including taking up specific topics of interest.

4.2. Independent Review Update

Noted:

- 4.2.1. Nous, the independent reviewers, were engaging with the LSHTM community and it was noted that engagement so far had been lower than expected.
- 4.2.2. There were concerns over staff/students being hesitant in coming forward for one-to-one interviews and the low response rate to the anonymous survey.
- 4.2.3. The review would continue to be promoted via a specific all staff email and intranet page and featured within Chariot (weekly all staff email), faculty weekly newsletters and on the LSHTM website.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

5.1. Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Noted:

- 5.1.1. Council noted the meeting and away day summary from the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, and received a quarterly update on progress against the delivery of the EDI Strategy.

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5.2. Audit & Risk Committee

Noted:

- 5.2.1. Council received a summary from the Audit & Risk Committee away day.
- 5.2.2. The chair reported that the away day focused on key risks and opportunities at the Units, deep dives into cyber and data protection risks as well as reviewing the risk appetite statements within the new Risk Management Policy.
- 5.2.3. LSHTM had recently carried out a phishing exercise and the disappointing response rate highlighted the need to train and educate staff on their cyber security and data protection responsibilities.
- 5.2.4. Progress to support LSHTM's compliance with GDPR was slow, but a Data Protection Officer was being recruited to help support this work.
- 5.2.5. The Secretary to Council reported in an ongoing investigation into alleged fraud at The Gambia Unit; the Fraud Group had commissioned LSHTM's internal auditors to carry out an investigation and the outcomes of this investigation would be reported to and monitored by the Audit & Risk Committee. This has been reported to the Office for Students as a 'reportable event'.

6. OTHER REPORTS

6.1. Council Terms of Reference

Noted:

- 6.1.1. It was acknowledged that more could be done to improve the student voice and engagement at Council and it was proposed that a Research Degree and Distance Learning Student be included as 'in attendance' at future Council meetings.
- 6.1.2. Concerns were raised over how the effectiveness of these proposals would be measured, and that a term limit e.g. 2/3 years should be incorporated.

Resolved

- 6.1.3. It would be useful to engage with the Student Representative Council on what proposals they would prefer and what barriers may prevent students from raising issues in the current Council format and that a proposal be re-developed for Council's consideration.

6.2. Council noted the following reports:

- Council Annual Schedule of Business 2021/22
- Council & Committee Meeting Dates
- Use of LSHTM Seal

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 22 November 2021

8. CLOSED MEETING OF COUNCIL