

MINUTES OF LONDON & PARTNERS BOARD MEETING FOR PUBLICATION
Thursday 18 February 2021 | 9.00 am – 12.00 noon
Via Zoom

Present:

Directors:

Rajesh Agrawal, Chairman (RA)
Laura Citron (LC)
Andrew Cooke (AC)
Catherine McGuinness (CM)
Sacha Romanovitch (SR)
Mark Taylor (MT)
Massy Larizadeh (ML)
Dominic Field (DF)
Chris McLeod (CM)
Jo Wright (JW)
Manju Malhotra (MM)

Management Committee:

Rose Wangen-Jones (RWJ)
Janet Coyle (JCo)
Allen Simpson (AS)

Minutes

Gill Manners (GM) L&P

Additional attendees

Kristina Nordsten (KN) L&P
Nayan Rughani (NR) L&P
Lan Feng (LF), GLA

Observers:

Ben Johnson (BJ), GLA
Leah Kreitzman (LK), GLA
Justine Simons (JS), GLA

Apologies:

Reza Razavi (RR)
Luke Bruce (LB), GLA
Tamara Rajah (TR)

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

1.1 The Chairman welcomed the Board to the formal Board meeting.

1.2 Apologies were noted from Reza Razavi, Tamara Rajah and Luke Bruce from the GLA.

1.3 The Chairman informed the Board that Sacha Romanovitch had decided to stand down due to other work commitments and thanked Sacha for her work on the Board over the last three years and her time on the Audit & Finance and Remuneration Committees.

1.4 The Chairman updated the Board on the Mayor of London's announcement on 17 February 2021 to invest £5m to support the eventual reopening of Central London, including a brand-new drive to attract visitors – including Londoners and tourists from the rest of the UK, to hospitality, retail and cultural districts as soon as it is safe to do so.

1.5 The Chairman also noted the launch of a new competitive award process for adult education: Good Work for All. It is open to all skills providers located in London and the London Fringe to apply to deliver adult education and training services to Londoners. The deadline for applications is 19 March 2021.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1. The Chairman advised the Board that Tamara Rajah had updated her Declaration of Interests to reflect her new appointment as non-executive director of Holland & Barrett.

2.2. There were no other declarations of interest noted.

3. Minutes of last Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the Board call held on Wednesday 16 December 2020 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 There were no matters arising that were not covered in the agenda.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Nayan Rughani, Director of Finance, joined the meeting

5. CEO's Report

- 5.1. Laura Citron updated the Board on the highlights of her CEO's report since its circulation to the Board.
- 5.2. Outcomes - London & Partners has continued to perform strongly for London and has already met the bottom of their full-year target range for GVA and exceeded full-year targets for perceptions and engagement. Trade GVA is up 85% year on year. 100 new investors have landed this year.
- 5.3. Staff engagement – Laura advised a staff survey was conducted in December 2020. Results demonstrated a significant increase in staff engagement between October 2019 and May 2020. This gave the Executive confidence that was trust in the leadership, which is particularly important during the restructure period.
- 5.4. Priorities - Laura noted her two priorities for this quarter are completing the strategy and preparing the organisation to implement it from April 2021; and launching a new income-generating programme including a project to refresh the West End's consumer offer.
- 5.5. Income project – Laura advised that 12-13 landlords have signed up to the project. It is hoped by the end of this week to be able to confirm the project will go ahead.
- 5.6. Strategy – the Board noted the consultation with stakeholders that London & Partners has carried out and that the strategic restructure has been shared with the London Covid Business Forum.
- 5.7. Brexit and Media Relations – Laura thanked Allen Simpson who has been London & Partners lead Brexit spokesperson. The Board noted the significant international media coverage telling London's story and the business engagement workshops carried out.
- 5.8. Maternity cover – it was noted that Allen Simpson will be acting CEO from 12 April. Laura's maternity cover will commence on 19 April.
- 5.9. The effects of this latest lockdown on colleagues was discussed. It was agreed that it was important to encourage colleagues to take their annual leave. The challenge of managing workloads whilst on flexible furlough was discussed.

6. Finance Director's Report

6.1. Nayan Rughani provided a summary update of the Q3 Management Accounts – noting that London & Partners is performing well from a financial perspective.

6.2. The Q3 deficit for the Group is £835k against a budgeted deficit of £1,537k. NR noted that this related to some overperformance on income and London & Partners ability to reduce costs through the year including some organic cost reductions arising from not being able to travel, run events etc.

6.3. Nayan Rughani provided a brief overview of the forecast for this financial year at both London & Partners Ltd level as well as the group level. NR noted that this and the budget will be covered in a later agenda item where further detail would be given.

7. Audit and Finance Committee

7.1. Jo Wright updated the Board on the meeting of the Audit & Finance Committee (A&FC) on 11 February and subsequent conversations.

7.2. Jo noted that London & Partners are in good shape and have made significant cost savings whilst in lockdown. It was noted that some of the online events organised by London & Partners were more successful and accessible than they would have been as live events.

7.3. Jo thanked Nayan and advised the Board that he has made a positive impact in a short space of time.

7.4. Jo informed the board that the majority of the rest of the conversation at the Committee was taken up with the budget for the business plan which she would cover under that agenda item.

8. London & Partners Events Board

The discussion related to the London & Partners Events Board were commercially sensitive and have been redacted.

9. London & Partners Business Plan 2021-22

Budget

9.1. Laura Citron provided an overview of the surplus / deficit position of L&P Ltd from 2018/19 through the proposed budget for FY2021/22 and the impact on our Group reserves. LC explained that London & Partners reserves are made up of two parts – London & Partners underlying reserves and the reserves arising from an extraordinary contract payment from our registry provider for Dot London. London & Partners reserves position grew significantly as a result of this extraordinary payment and has reduced down over the life of the Dot London contract to the point that London & Partners are back a similar level of reserves to those they had before the payment.

9.2. There were questions on whether London & Partners had historically achieved budgets. Andrew Cooke responded to state that historically London & Partners targeted to break even and often had a small surplus at the end of the year.

9.3. Nayan Rughani took the Board through the forecast outturn for this financial year, providing the detail on how London & Partners' planning had changed as a result of Covid and the reasons why London & Partners have been able to deliver a better

outcome than planned – primarily as a result of better than planned income and the benefits of furlough.

- 9.4. Nayan Rughani took the Board through the proposed budget for FY2021/22 providing key details on what had changed compared to London & Partners' forecast outturn for this year covering London & Partners' significant decrease in grant funding, London & Partners' increase in non-grant funding and the significant cost reduction (in particular the salary costs). Nayan also noted the key risks and upsides within the plan and the need to regularly reassess London & Partners' plans, He made it clear that if the company were not meeting their income targets then there was scope to cut discretionary items later in the year.
- 9.5. Jo Wright thanked Nayan and provided a summary overview of the views from A&FC.
- 9.6. Jo Wright noted that the phasing of the plan is a key area to consider with costs potentially running ahead of income. This would need to be reviewed regularly. Jo noted that the Board would need to be comfortable with the reserves position and that FY2021/22 is a transition year and that there would need to be flexibility to manage the position and stay on track. Nayan agreed with this and noted that there are several internal checkpoints through monthly management accounts and also quarterly reviews with the Board – these in parallel would allow London & Partners to keep a firm grip on spend and progress with income generation.
- 9.7. Jo Wright noted that the A&FC were broadly happy but would review the detailed budget a bit further and pick up with NR and AC afterwards.
- 9.8. The Board APPROVED the budget subject to Audit & Finance Committee review.

Business Plan

- 9.9. Allen Simpson outlined the London & Partners 2021/22 Business Plan which represents how London & Partners will put into operation the restructure and one-year strategy agreed with the Board.
- 9.10. Technology support systems were discussed. Allen confirmed that London & Partners has good systems in place to cope with the hybrid event role. Ensuring colleagues are familiar with it and able to use it well is key.
- 9.11. Allen advised the Board that Andrew Cooke and Sarah Brook are refreshing the company's values as an organisation to ensure London & Partners has clarity of what these are and how these help shape the organisation.
- 9.12. It was noted that the Mayoral election takes place in a couple of months. Allen noted that London & Partners colleagues have met with the Mayoral candidates and developed productive relationships with their teams. Allen advised that a challenge would be changes to the Mayoral strategy with which London & Partners is aligned. Allen noted that any changes would be manageable due to the way in which the business plan has been designed.
- 9.13. The Board APPROVED the Business Plan approach.

- 9.14. The Board APPROVED the delegation of responsibility to the executive team to finalise the detail of the Business Plan within this approach and to work with the GLA to sign it off.

China

- 9.15. A discussion took place on whether London & Partners should have a more formalised approach to handling Chinese clients and doing business in the country. The Board AGREED that London & Partners should follow government and GLA policy.

10. Adding new Members to the Company and AGM

- 10.1. Andrew Cooke updated the Board on plans to broaden the membership of London & Partners to better reflect its audience and positioning as a social enterprise and to appointment them at an AGM.
- 10.2. Andrew noted that several organisations have been identified to approach to become a member.
- 10.3. The Board APPROVED the Executive team approaching prospective members.
- 10.4. The Board APPROVED holding an AGM in late March/early April to appoint the members and directors who have been appointed in the last year – Manju Malhotra, Dominic Field, Reza Razavi and Chris McLeod.
- 10.5. Andrew informed the Board that Massy Larizadeh had now served three years on the Board and has indicated that she would be happy to stand for another term. The Board approved. Approval will be sought at the AGM for Massy to be re-appointed.

11. Business Case for procurement of a developer for Salesforce CRM

- 11.1. Andrew Cooke outlined the Business case for procurement of a developer for Salesforce CRM.
- 11.2. The question was asked whether London & Partners had considered inhouse expertise to deliver development work as an alternative. Andrew advised that there was a small team of 2 part time staff who manage Salesforce internally but there was need for external expertise for major configuration work on the system.
- 11.3. The Board APPROVED the Business case.

Any other Business

- 11.4. It was noted that the next informal Board call will be on Wednesday 10 March at 13.00.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am.