

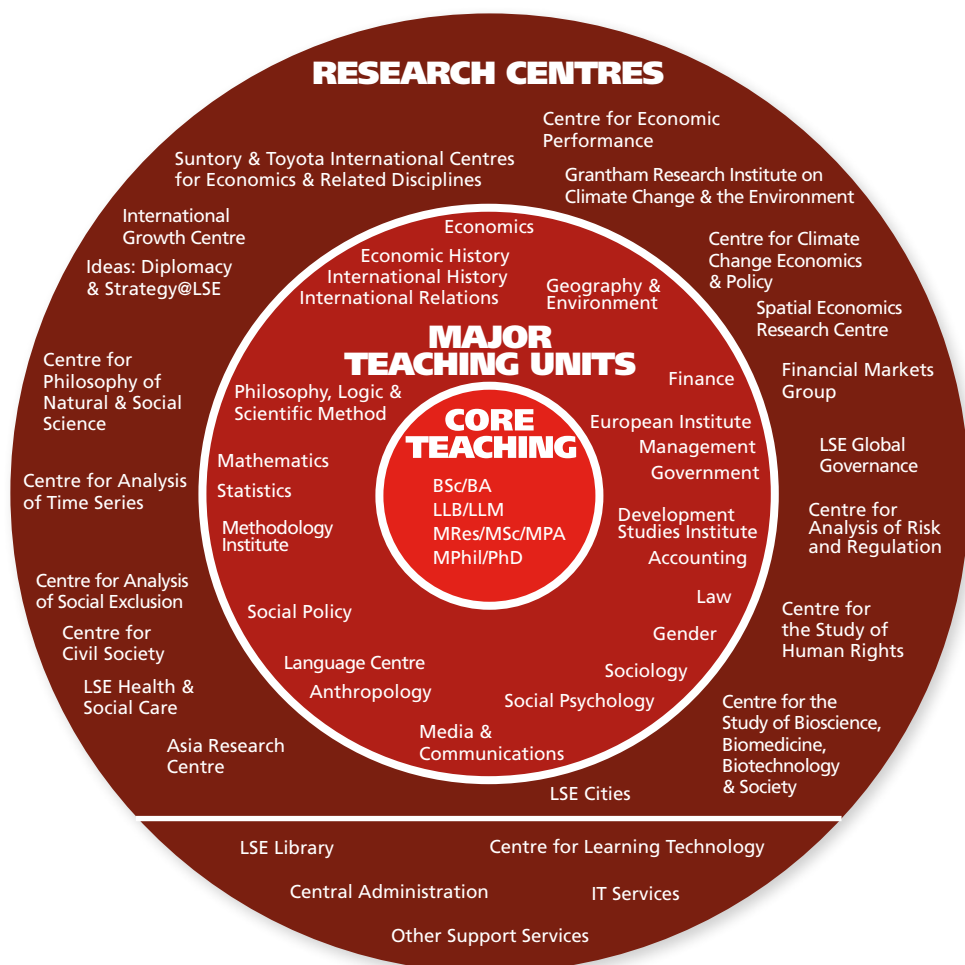


THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

# Strategic Plan 2009-14



# LSE in Profile



The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is one of the world's foremost centres for social science teaching and research. This profile illustrates the breadth of academic expertise in the School's major teaching units and research centres. All academics are involved in teaching and research. Teaching is organised by departments and by inter-departmental collaborations, while research is based in both departments and in major single and interdisciplinary research centres and groups.

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# 1 Chairman's foreword

**This Strategic Plan is a new statement of the School's purposes, aspirations and intended actions between 2009 and 2014.**



Over recent years we have benefited from a time of relative plenty. Now we are in a different era, in which funding, both private and public, is likely to be more constrained – presenting us with some tough choices.

LSE's excellence in research was reaffirmed in the 2008 UK Research Assessment Exercise. But as Howard Davies explains below, the School's growth over recent years requires us to reassess and enhance our

students' experience while at LSE – especially in teaching and improved buildings and facilities.

LSE's distinction in international social science remains fully recognised, along with our contribution to wider society. We intend to extend these roles, assisted especially by our myriad alumni living and working across the world.

This Plan sets out our objectives, and our priorities for action. It is designed to guide every member of the LSE community and I commend it to you.

**Peter Sutherland KCMG**



## 2 Our vision



### Our vision over the next five years is

- to deliver challenging, stimulating and research led degree programmes in an environment that supports learning and the development of independent thinking among our students;
- to ensure, through self-reflection, that our teaching and research remain at the forefront of the social sciences, addressing the evolving challenges of society;
- to be among the most internationally-oriented centres of social science excellence in the world and

- to extend our engagement with society across our full academic portfolio and into key regions of the world.

# 3 Our values and commitments

## In all that we do as a University we hold to the following values and commitments:

**Integrity:** we will uphold the highest standards of ethics and conduct.

**Intellectual freedom:** we will defend and promote the right of all staff, students and the wider LSE community to express their views freely in a civil way in the pursuit, advancement and dissemination of knowledge. We will ensure that intellectual freedom and freedom of expression within the law is secured for all our community and those we invite to the School.

**Excellence in education:** we aim to cultivate graduates of distinctive quality with a breadth and depth of knowledge, the capacity for independent critical thinking, an awareness of global economic and political issues and a commitment to the School's core institutional values.

**Engagement:** we will promote interaction with the wider world so that the insights of the social sciences are disseminated as widely as possible for the improvement of society.

**Supporting the LSE community:** we are committed to involving and encouraging our 92,000 alumni and LSE Association Groups in 69 countries to take an active part in the spread of LSE values and in the development of the School.

**Respect for the environment:** we will manage the School's resources in ways that meet the needs of the present without compromising the options of future generations.

**Equality and diversity:** we will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds. We will uphold a culture

free of discrimination on the basis of race, disability, gender, age, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

**Participation:** we will encourage the involvement of staff, students, alumni and governors in the School's decision-making processes as an essential part of our organisational culture.

**Good governance:** we will continue, through the Court of Governors and the Council, to aspire to the highest levels of governance, fully complying with the standards required of universities.

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When the LSE Teaching Task Force reported in July 2008, it made over 40 recommendations designed to raise the status of teaching at the School and satisfaction

levels among students. The review, similar to one carried out by Harvard, was a School-wide exercise involving students as well as staff.

The report covered many areas of teaching, including reducing class size, increasing contact between senior staff and undergraduates, rewarding and encouraging good and innovative teaching and the training of teachers. All its recommendations were approved by the School's Academic Board. It led to an additional investment of over £2 million a year in teaching. These changes are already feeding through the School and are being closely monitored.

”

**Professor Janet Hartley**, Pro-director for Teaching and Learning.

# 4 Director's statement

**In implementing our vision and our core values over this planning period the overarching principle is that the School's focus in the coming years should be on quality not quantity.**

In some areas, of course, the quality of what we do is high already, notably in research. But in some other areas we are less content. In national surveys, our students do not rate the School's teaching as highly as we would wish. Some of our management and administrative practices need upgrading. The new building we have recently opened has, paradoxically, shown up the poor quality of much of the rest of our estate.

What is happening in financial markets and the economy in general impact on the School. The fall in Sterling has improved our competitiveness for international students, but may push up some of our costs. Students themselves are under pressure, perhaps because loan finance is more difficult to obtain, or because they have relied on part-time or vacation jobs to carry them through their time at university. The public expenditure prospect is very uncertain. We can expect very tight settlements in the medium term, when the government seeks to recover its fiscal position. And we already face a sizeable cut in our research funding in spite of the excellent

result we achieved in the latest Research Assessment Exercise.

But an institution's strategy, and the risk management surrounding it, should be robust to the vicissitudes of the external environment – as far as possible. The School's financial position is one where on a £170m turnover we are aiming for a 3-4 per cent surplus for reinvestment. While there are substantial risks to this narrow margin, we believe that the broad lines of our approach are valid and that our plans are sustainable.

We think that the School's rapid growth in the last two decades may have put our processes, and the staff/student relationship under pressure.

**So, with that in mind, the key building blocks of our strategy, the details of which are set out in this strategic plan, are as follows:**

- to maintain the size of the School at roughly 9,000 full-time students, at least until the next phase of campus redevelopment is completed. In addition to allowing us to focus on upgrading the quality of what we do across the board, it will also reduce the institution's risk profile somewhat, at a time of great uncertainty in the global economy. We have to recognise, however, that in recent years growth has allowed us to avoid making some difficult choices. In a low growth environment we shall need to develop procedures for making trade-offs between programmes and staffing resources which we have been able to avoid in recent years. We





are making changes to our decision making practices to make them more robust.

- to enhance the quality of our teaching and of our academic support to students. The Teaching Task Force in the last academic year achieved a high degree of consensus on what needs to be done, and was fully supported at the Academic Board when it put forward forty recommendations including reductions in class sizes and greater student access to faculty. There is a distance, nonetheless, between an Academic Board resolution and its implementation. So our focus now is on ensuring that all the Teaching Task Force recommendations are carried through so that the student experience at the School is significantly improved.

- to enhance the quality of what we do. This covers both the academic domain, where we are enhancing the environment in which research is carried out, and the administrative functions. Each of the seventeen service areas has developed a plan for quality improvement. Staff have brought great enthusiasm to this task, but it

will need continued application and senior management support to achieve real change.

- to continue to enhance the quality of our estate. We are still worse off than our key competitors in terms of the proportion of our space which is categorised as poor quality. So we cannot afford to pull back from our ambitious plans for campus redevelopment, but we have to ensure that the plans are achievable within a sound financial framework.

The prime responsibility of the management of the institution is to ensure that we create and maintain a strong platform for teaching and research, where financial sustainability is assured and staff and students can plan ahead with confidence. Achieving sustainability will be more challenging in the near future than it has been in the last few years which, though we barely appreciated it at the time, were years of relative plenty for the School. We are nonetheless confident that we have the management, governance procedures and faculty strength to allow us to navigate through more choppy waters.

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During 2008-09 I worked with Yasmine Chahed, an LSE fellow also in the Department of Accounting, to introduce radical changes in the teaching of one of the largest compulsory first year undergraduate courses in accounting at LSE. Our aim was to make the course – known as AC100 Elements of Accounting and Finance – fun and engaging for this highly diverse student body. We worked with the Students Union Accounting Society to train second and third year students to act as peer-tutors. This highly innovative scheme has proved very successful, with the peer-tutors running fun, informal and lively sessions that benefit all parties. The feedback from students has been excellent.

**Dr Andrea Mennicken**, lecturer in Accounting

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The last five years have seen a number of academic innovations in line with developments in society including the establishment of a Department of Management and new research centres in climate change, international growth, international diplomacy, spatial economics and dysfunctional capital markets. With our ethos of research-led teaching, the work of all of our research centres will feed into revised courses and new teaching programmes.

However, the commitment to cap full time student numbers at 9,000 presents a challenge – how to ensure continued innovation in the context of zero growth. To maintain and enhance our position as a centre of academic excellence, the School leadership will support the faculty in regularly reviewing the academic portfolio to ensure that the range of subjects covered in both teaching and research and the

emphasis being given to each subject area is appropriate. The School's faculty must have the opportunity to set agendas at the forefront of the social sciences, enabling research outputs and our graduates to contribute to the challenges confronting contemporary societies.

**Howard Davies**

# 5 The School's Priorities

all of which will be tackled  
with equal commitment

## Priority: teaching and student experience

### At the centre of the student experience is teaching

Students at LSE receive research-led teaching from an internationally renowned academic staff. At the heart of this is intellectual challenge. Through exposure to the latest developments in social science and to the thinking of visiting world leaders, business figures and academics in debates and public lectures, students are challenged and inspired by LSE's vision of intellectual excellence combined with real-world engagement.

Distinctive features of LSE are the high proportion of postgraduates and the cultural diversity of the student body. LSE's central London location gives students access to an enviable range of professional, intellectual and cultural resources.

The Library gives students access to one of the best specialist social science collections anywhere.

### **LSE aspires to teach students to the highest standards and to achieve this we will take the following action over the planning period:**

- we will continue to implement a major new initiative to significantly improve our teaching by cultivating and rewarding excellence and increasing contact between students and academic staff. We will seek to build greater recognition of teaching performance into academic career progression
- teaching must be supported by facilities and services of the highest order. LSE will continue to invest as heavily as resources allow in bringing its estate – particularly student facilities – up to the standards of the best urban universities, and in maintaining a leading-edge IT infrastructure
- we will improve communication with students through more effective orientation on arrival and a new website and intranet. Senior management will continue to actively promote good relations on our diverse campus.

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The LSE100 course is a new initiative at LSE designed to introduce all first year undergraduates to a wide range of

social science concepts and forms of reasoning. It will be unique to LSE, allowing students to talk across disciplines and broaden their outlook. The course was a proposal of the Teaching Task Force, and will challenge students to think creatively about some of the most pressing issues of our time while further developing their research and communication skills. It is being piloted in 2009-10 with full implementation in the following academic year.

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**Dr Jonathan Leape,**  
course director and senior  
lecturer in Economics



In 2009-10, we will focus on increasing contact hours between permanent academic staff and undergraduate students; reducing postgraduate class sizes; and improving teaching quality, staff and student contact and student satisfaction levels in relation to the academic experience, including Library and IT services. In the facilities area, we will concentrate on staged improvements to the quality of existing space and on ensuring that Residences remain sustainably self-financing, as well as on planning for the new Students' Centre on the St Philips site.

## Priority: research

### **LSE is a world leader in social science research**

The UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2008 revealed LSE to have the highest percentage of world-leading research of any university in the country, topping or coming close to the top of a number of rankings of research excellence. LSE submitted over 90 per cent of eligible staff for assessment. Economics, Law, Anthropology, Social Policy and the European Institute headed the national rankings. Our achievement surpassed our outstanding showing in the previous RAE in 2001.

LSE protects and encourages theoretical and 'blue skies' research while promoting engagement with wider society. A decentralised structure protects and promotes academic freedom. Collectively, members of the faculty combine the highest standards of intellectual rigour and independence with contributions to wider society including the development of policy in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Research in the School is supported by the Library, designated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as one of five National Research Libraries.

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Following the successful opening of the New Academic Building, the Estates Division is starting on the next phase

of LSE's campus improvement with the redevelopment of St Philips. Housing the Students' Union, the site will become a student hub at the heart of LSE's campus. Our aim is to improve the student experience at the School by creating the best student building in the UK.

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**Julian Robinson**, Director – Planning and Development

The training of PhD students, who make an important contribution to the intellectual life of the School and will form the next generation of academics, is central to the School's mission. All departments run PhD programmes, and support for PhD students has increased with the introduction of some 30 full scholarships alongside some £2.2 million available to research students. We will bid to become an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Centre, strive to increase our scholarship provision and ensure that facilities for research students are progressively improved.

LSE researchers are in the forefront of developing innovative ways to explore the increasingly complex and inter-related problems of modern society. Major new research centres include a Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, bringing together LSE's social science research perspectives with the natural science research carried out by a

# The School's Priorities continued...

sister Grantham Institute at Imperial College. The groundbreaking International Growth Centre brings together LSE's development economists with others from Oxford and the USA to research and support growth in the developing world.

LSE is implementing the UK Research Councils' Concordat in order to attract and retain the best research staff, by offering a supportive and stimulating research environment.

**Despite these strengths in research, we must address challenges over the planning period to maintain our leading position:**

- we will make every effort to increase the amount of research funding coming from peer-reviewed external sources
- we will try to influence the development of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) so that it takes due account of LSE's interests as a specialist social science university. Within LSE, we will encourage and help academics to ensure that their research achievements are fully recognised by the REF, especially in the new area of 'impact'

- we will put in place appropriate facilities to support our expanding portfolio of research activities.

In 2009-10, we will focus on increasing the amount of research funding, especially from peer-reviewed external sources; learning lessons from RAE 2008; contributing to the development of the REF; submitting an application for an ESRC doctoral training centre and improving the quality of research space.

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As scientists continue to play their role in analysing the causes and effects of climate change, it is crucial that

social scientists take a lead in the building of policy. The Grantham Research Institute for Climate Change and the Environment, set up as an umbrella body for LSE's extensive work on the environment, and the Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy, a joint partnership with the University of Leeds, will produce high-quality, policy-relevant research. These will inform policy development, raise public awareness and contribute to private-sector strategy formation. ”

**Lord Stern of Brentford**, chair of the Grantham Research Institute and the Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy





## Priority: engagement

Our Fabian Society founders established the School at the end of the nineteenth century to bring academic expertise to bear on the problems of society.

LSE academics are engaged in public debate and the policymaking process. They are frequently to be found in the media, commenting on issues from the global economy to the government of London. Many serve on government panels and advise international organisations, businesses and charities.

The public lectures programme at LSE embodies the School's engagement agenda and caters to the thirst for informed debate.

Global leaders in politics, business and the academic world come to LSE to discuss the issues of the day. Most events are open to the general public; many are recorded and made available online – or webcast live – so that audiences globally may benefit.

Degree study is not the only way to benefit from LSE expertise. Summer Schools in London offer over 60 intensive courses. A China Summer School run in Beijing with Peking University adds a special Asia focus. Many individuals, governments, businesses and other organisations commission tailored executive education or consultancy.

Focused institutional partnerships promote deep and academically-innovative engagement



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The LSE public events programme draws speakers from all over the world and makes the student experience at LSE truly unique. Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton, Dmitry

Medvedev, Angela Merkel and Tony Blair have spoken here, as well as financial figures such as Alan Greenspan and Ben Bernanke – former and current head of the Federal Reserve. Top academics, policymakers and figures from the business world are also attracted to LSE. In June 2009 nobel prize winner Professor Paul Krugman gave three lectures on the return of depression economics. Many of our events are podcast or offered as online videos. Big events are webcast live – attracting global audiences.

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**Alan Revel**, Events Manager, LSE

## The School's Priorities continued...

with a small number of top-level universities. While currently focused on Europe, Asia and North America, new partnerships will be added as relationships develop to extend our global reach. We aim not only to extend LSE's teaching and research, but also to increase our ability to contribute our expertise to wider global society.

Over 92,000 alumni in some 190 countries contribute significantly to the quality and effectiveness of public and private sectors around the world, testifying to LSE's tradition of international engagement. Alumni

show their commitment to the School in many ways and have given generously to support teaching, research and the estate.



LSE is committed to widening participation in higher education, working with schools and their pupils. LSE is also a major contributor of academic direction and support to the University of London External System, through which students may study to degree level anywhere in the world.

**Despite LSE's acknowledged strengths in this area, engagement is still uneven across our academic community. It is also less apparent outside the UK than our avowedly international orientation might suggest. We will therefore assign priority to the following over the planning period:**

- we will encourage and assist more LSE academics to engage with wider non-academic audiences, for example through a special three-year programme which began in 2008 to promote knowledge transfer
- we will use our institutional partnerships and activities overseas to promote engagement in key locations around the world. A new Africa initiative will take forward LSE's engagement with African scholars and society
- we will bring LSE alumni closer to the intellectual life of the School, through online networks, alumni groups and faculty visits overseas. This will bring numerous benefits, including helping alumni to have greater impact in their chosen professions and locations
- LSE's Careers Service, already expanded to meet the challenges of the current recession, will work with employers and help students acquire the skills they need to compete in rapidly-changing job markets



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I am delighted to have been appointed as the first holder of LSE's new chair in African Development.

There is a vibrant but underfunded community of African scholars whose work needs both supporting and disseminating more widely and this is something I hope to help facilitate through this new chair. It is early days but the chair should create the opportunity for more post-doctoral and lectureship posts for African scholars in Africa, visiting scholar fellowships at LSE and a greater range of postgraduate scholarships, research collaboration and summer schools in both.

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**Professor Thandika Mkandawire,**  
first holder of LSE chair in  
African Development



- a programme of major improvements to our website, through which we represent ourselves to the world, will help this work.

In 2009-10, we will concentrate on promoting knowledge transfer by 'translating' research into accessible formats; supporting academic initiatives and better targeting of public lectures. We will overhaul the LSE website; develop our institutional partnerships overseas and launch the Africa initiative. We will increase the number of pre-departure events run by alumni groups for new LSE students and the number of alumni attending reunions and other events at LSE. We will continue our work to widen participation and seek to maintain the high proportion of students entering graduate-level employment or post-LSE education.

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I completed my master's in the summer of 2009 and faced one of the hardest job markets in years. LSE ran a scheme called 'Yes you

can' which offered practical support to new graduates and encouraged us to think more broadly about our future careers. I applied for an internship with LSE, working in the Careers Service, and was successful. It is interesting work, giving me the opportunity to see my alma mater in a new light.

”

**Elizabeth Koslov**



## Essential foundations:

Responsibility for delivering our three strategic priorities rests with both academic units and the School's service divisions.

### **In the service divisions, our most important objectives over the planning period are as follows:**

- we will aim for the highest standards of effectiveness and accountability in governance
- we will maintain financial sustainability. After several years in which substantial investment in the estate was achieved while reducing net debt virtually to zero, the School now needs to take account of external events such as the global recession, the recent pay settlement of UK university staff and a looming pension funding gap – these will affect the financial outlook. Specific to LSE are the additional commitments to teaching and services to ensure we achieve our aspiration to improve the student experience. The School's response will be proportional to our underlying financial strength. We envisage prudent growth of expenditure over the next five year period. Our objective is to ensure a financial surplus at the School within the HEFCE-advised 3-4 per cent of turnover range for each of the financial years 2009-2014
- in fundraising and alumni relations, we will encourage donors and alumni to commit to support of the School
- a proportion of the School's estate is still of poor quality. We will commission a new student building and other capital projects to create a high quality built environment

- we will aim to achieve the commitments to environmental sustainability set down in the School's 2009 Environmental Policy; and continue to play a leading role in UK universities' commitment to sustainability

- we will enhance our Library services and support the development of an institutional repository, providing web access to teaching materials and improving access to e-resources

- we will enhance our IT facilities to support teaching, learning and research; access to information; collaboration; knowledge sharing and improved communication

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For the last five years we have been encouraging staff and students to reduce their waste through

reuse. All halls of residences have reuse schemes in place where everything from clothes and books to the highly unusual – including dumbbells and weights can be reused. In 2007-2008, 21 tonnes of reuseable items were diverted from landfill, saving the equivalent of 163 tonnes of carbon emissions and winning the National Recycling Award. ”

**Victoria Hands**, Environmental and Sustainability Manager



- we will develop and implement a human resources strategy to attract and motivate high-quality staff and encourage them to give of their best
- we will endeavour to improve equality and diversity across the School
- we will address the most significant risks to the continuity of the School's essential services and activities and ensure that any interruptions are dealt with promptly
- we will maintain a commitment to improve the quality of the services provided for students, staff and other members of the LSE community.

In 2009-10, we will aim to deliver an annual target surplus of 3-4 per cent of turnover; encourage donors and alumni to support the School; develop our Library and IT services and achieve our commitments to environmental sustainability. We will ensure that our Student Services meet students' expectations; improve facilities and buildings; develop an HR strategy; commence work on a Single Equality Scheme; deliver the service quality commitments set out in our service development plans; review our governance and manage risks to business continuity.





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LSE Research Online is an online repository designed to make LSE research more accessible

to fellow academics, policy makers, students and the general public. Run by the Library on behalf of the School, it is a collection of research produced by LSE academics: articles, working papers, book chapters, conference papers and more. It makes LSE research easy to find and academics can link to it through their Experts entry in our Experts Directory – channeling the curious to their work.

”

**Nicola Wright**, Information Services Manager, the Library

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