

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation

Board of Governors Meeting 27 March 2018

Minutes

Time	18.30 – 22.20	
Venue	Southgate Campus Board Room	
Present (governors)	Ann Zinkin David Byrne Mervin Archer Sue Baldwin Sheila Dawson Graham Duncan Bernard Manson Christalla Tsattala Pooja Patel Sebahatin Karaasanov	Chair Principal Vice Chair Staff Governor Student Governor Student Governor
In attendance	Toni Beck Peter Harrison Lizzie Jones Tracy McIntosh Ian Rule Melissa Drayson	Dir Quality and Learner Experience Dir of Curriculum Dir of Organisational Development Dir of Employer Partnerships Dir Finance and Corporate Ops Clerk to the Corporation
Apologies	Fiona Bulmer	
Vacancies	External Governor x 2	
Quorum (6)	The meeting was quorate	

PART A – OPEN MEETING

Some minutes have been redacted on the grounds of commercial or personal sensitivity.

Item	Action lead
1. Preliminary Items	
1.i Chair's welcome The Chair reported that she had met Claude Littner, businessman/ adviser on The Apprentice and found that he was an alumnus of Barnet College. He had phoned her earlier that afternoon. Arrangements would be made for him to visit the College.	

As the Part B discussion would start at 9pm prompt, some items might need to be deferred to the May meeting if they did not require urgent Board action.

1.ii **Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Fiona Bulmer

1.iii **Confirmation of eligibility, quorum and declarations of interests**

It was confirmed that all present were eligible to take part in the meeting and that the meeting was quorate

Graham Duncan and Sue Baldwin declared an interest in the discussion of provision for students with LLDD under Item 3, in their capacity as Chief Executive and Trustee of Action for Kids.

1.iv **Notification of urgent items of other business**

No notifications

2. Minutes

2.i **Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2018**

It was agreed that the minutes should state that the GLA capital funding application had been rejected because of the late submission and high level of competition. Subject to this alteration:

The Minutes of the meeting were confirmed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

2.ii **Matters arising and any outstanding actions**

Supporting paper by the Clerk

It was confirmed that all actions were completed, on the agenda, or in progress.

The Director of Quality and Learner Experience reported that the student first impressions survey data showed no correlation between dissatisfaction and student withdrawal.

An update was provided on new governor recruitment. The Clerk, assisted by governors, had identified several potential candidates. However, these would not now be taken forward until the executive recruitment process had been concluded.

3. Strategic and Operational Review

Supporting paper by the Principal

David/Board to advise on confidentiality on commercially sensitive grounds

An options analysis relating to four strategic and operational areas was presented for Board discussion and a steer from governors. The drivers were the need to improve efficiency and consistency in curriculum management whilst meeting pan-London priorities.

Apprenticeships

The report followed up the detailed discussion at the previous Board meeting.

Two options had been evaluated by ELG in the light of the changes to apprenticeship funding, which was resulting in a reduction in income and financial contribution. ELG's preference was for option 2: continuing to offer apprenticeships whilst managing the transition process and aiming for longer-term growth. Many colleges were taking this approach, whereas some smaller training providers were likely to withdraw from apprenticeships because they lacked the resources to support the transitional period. The main risk would be a reduction in income during 2018-19.

The Board supported Option 2. There was a discussion about the cost of maintaining the infrastructure during the transitional period, and the need to be pro-active during this time in terms of maintaining and building relationships.

Pay award

Three options had been analysed by ELG, [redu

Pension scheme (LGPS)

Four options had been evaluated by ELG, leading to a preference of Option 4: retain membership of LGPS but offer an alternative.

The background for this was that, although colleges were obliged to offer LGPS for support staff, some colleges were offering alternatives either directly or via the employment of staff through a subsidiary. The costs of remaining in LGPS for all staff, versus the risks of leaving were recognised. The likelihood that the deficit would materialise into a cash risk whilst remaining in the scheme were considered very low.

Governors were keen to understand more on issues such as:

- Whether an alternative scheme would provide the same level of benefits as LGPS
- What the likely staff take-up would be, and how to ensure that any pensions scheme was affordable for lower paid staff
- How staff would be provided with independent advice on options

Curriculum rescaling – Motor Vehicle

Three options had been evaluated by ELG with a preference for Option 3: realignment of current course in terms re-engineering provision, building capacity and developing a more future-focussed curriculum meeting employment needs and progression.

Governors understood that technological changes meant that the nature of motor vehicle was changing. They wished, however, to understand how option 3 would providing better value to employers, and how the proposed progression programme would link to higher-level qualifications, including T-levels.

Governors reported that they had met Motor Vehicle students at the Meet the Governors session and had received feedback that there was a demand, among students, for IMI Level 3 as this would enable them to work in larger companies. There was understood to be little alternative Level 3 provision locally.

Governors asked that a progression map for the proposed Motor Vehicle provision, showing routes to employment, should be brought back to the Board.

LLDD

Three options had been evaluated by ELG with a preference for Option 2: Improving LLDD provision to ‘outstanding’, expanding mild learning difficulty (MLD) provision from 2019 with a focus on preparation for work; and expand Profound and Moderate LD (PMLD) from 2020 subject to funding, accommodation, resources and staff expertise

This proposal followed the presentation to Governors at the January meeting. Comment was made that, if the college was serving a community need with an excellent service, there was a clear rationale to grow. It was agreed that the priority was to achieve Ofsted outstanding for MLD provision first, and then grow from that. It was also acknowledged that current accommodation would not be able to support a growth in PCLD provision. The college was in the process of developing employer links for its MLD learners

It was confirmed that the College was still interested in developing an outreach model in other boroughs, but this depended on clarity over the boroughs’ funding position.

AGREED: that more detailed reports be brought back to the Board on:

- i. **The preferred Pay Award option**
- ii. **The option of retaining LGPS but offering an alternative**

- iii. **The option of realigning the Motor Vehicle curriculum and qualifications, including progression routes to employment**
- iv. **Option 3 for LLDD**

4. **Principal's Report**

Supporting paper presented by the Principal

Governors welcomed the following news and success stories:

- One of the lecturing staff had been judged, by University of Derby visiting professors, as the most outstanding teacher observed by them over fifteen different training providers in the country. **It was agreed that a letter from the Board should be sent to the teacher in question.**
- Former student governor, had returned to the college as a newly qualified teacher;
- A group of students from the BTEC Business Level 3 had made it through to the finals of the Big Idea Competition

Chair

The Board noted and discussed several strategic developments with implications for the college, including:

- the West London Alliance drive for the concept of 'Cities of Learning'. This was a mass engagement programmes around learning and skills which would aim to break down barriers and close gaps in opportunity.
- The emerging plans for devolution of Health and Social Care, and the need for these to be backed by credible, locally generated plans and proposals. Of particular interest to the college would be the 'workforce planning and delivery of education and training' strand of the three proposed levers of change.
- The proposal to change the current method of allocating funding for Adult and Community Learning to a commissioning process.

Governors considered the London First consultation document on the 'Employment and Skills Action Plan.

AGREED: Governors to email any comments on the London First action plan

5. **KPI Report**

Supporting papers by the Director of Employer Partnerships

The report showed a similar picture to the previous month. English and Maths attendance had declined slightly and there had been an increase in 16-18 learners. The latter would have a positive impact on future funding.

Governors raised questions and comments on the following:

- Actual student numbers were requested alongside percentages. For instance, how many students did the drop of 0.4% in attendance relate to?
- Retention had dropped, although it was still rated 'green'. What was being done to prevent it becoming 'amber'? It was explained that some withdrawals were due to exclusion after a disciplinary process, or a student not re-engaging after a period of absence. Students who hadn't attended for a period of time were now taken off the register
- It was too soon to judge the impact of the new approach to encouraging better attendance and re-engaging students, compared to the more draconian approach of previous years.
- Governors asked that comparisons with the previous year's profile would be helpful, especially to identify seasonal trends.

AGREED: that future reports would include:

DEP

- i. **Actual numbers as well as percentages**
- ii. **The previous year's data for comparison.**

6. Finance Reports

Supporting papers by the DFCO

6.i Management Accounts – Period 6, January 2018

Key discussion points from the college accounts were:

- The revised forecast table showed that income was down, but costs were being well managed. It was anticipated that it should still be possible to achieve the budgeted operating surplus;
- Departmental budget meetings had been held. There were no major areas of concern, although some areas were more highly spent than others
- Cashflow continued to be positive.
- The MBC management accounts continued to show a deficit although catering income was beginning to improve. Supportive measures were being put in place, including a dedicated member of the finance team, with Baird Road the main area of focus. Governors expressed a need to review Baird Road performance thoroughly at a future date.
- It was queried whether further non-pay reductions would be sustainable next year. This was currently being tested through meetings with individual managers.
- The Audit Committee had considered the student debt issue in detail. The question was raised of why this had not been picked up by the auditors. There was a possibility that debt had been mis-recorded as student debt in 2015-16 and this was still being investigated. The Board stressed the need for a clear and consistent policy to recover debt, including the trigger for taking further action, and following up any warnings of action.

6ii Capital Project Monitoring

The progress report on current works was noted. The M Block façade renovation was progressing well and there were no change controls requiring Board approval.

Phase 3 – Blocks E, W and R

The Board noted that the core refurbishment was out to tender, but that the roof and rooflights would extend the programme and would prove considerably more costly than initially estimated. The cost needed to be weighed up against the consequences of not replacing these elements as there was both an issue of leaks, and an aesthetic consideration. If the work extended the life of the buildings by 20 years, the extra cost might be considered value for money. Governors requested that Net Present Values should be included within future costings to assess value over time.

It was confirmed that the W Block work would accommodate any change in the delivery of Motor Vehicle arising from the strategic review.

R Block had a revised scope and design which should keep the work within budget.

M block refurb

Governors were asked to approve option C which involved progressing the design work of all floors so that a plan was ready to present to the LEP/GLA in the next bidding round, for completion September 2019. The risk was that the college would expend £150k on design costs which would not be recoverable. Governors pointed out that the costs of delaying the end date may well be higher.

AGREED:

- (i) **That the tendering process for E&W Block refurbishment continue, including roofs and rooflights, with a firm commitment to this expenditure once costs and NPV were clearer;**
- (ii) **That the proposal to invest in design work for M Block, in preparation for the next GLA bidding round, be approved.**

6iii Treasury Management Policy

Points raised by BM by email regarding the risks of money market funds, would be discussed with him by the DFCO, and the outcome of the discussion shared with the Board.

AGREED: that the final Treasury Management Policy brought back to the Board for approval at the next meeting. DFCO

6iv Financial Regulations revisions

Proposed changes were minor although there was a need to ensure that references to the Board and its Committees were aligned with current practice. Governors were invited to email any further points to the DFCO and Clerk. Final version to be circulated by email

AGREED: that the final version of the Financial Regulations would be circulated by email for approval by written resolution DFCO/
Clerk

6v MBC Directorship

Oral report by Principal

Governors were informed of the appointment of Craig Deacon as an independent Director. Tracey MacIntosh would be put forward to provide representation from the College.

7. Quality and the Learner Experience

7i Student governor monthly feedback

Oral update by the Student Governors

Seb reported that he had met Motor Vehicle students at the Meet the Governors tour and backed up the points already made about feedback from MV students. These included the importance of the study location to students; a view that attendance and performance should be factors in progressing to higher levels and concerns about large classroom sizes.

In response to student feedback, the gym had been opened at 7.30am to allow members of the volleyball team to practice for the forthcoming championship.

It was also reported that, because of student feedback, the library had improved as a study area. There were more sporting opportunities at Wood Street, and the canteen manager had agreed to open later in the day for a pilot period.

Pooja reported that a meeting on attendance had taken place the previous week. Since then, she had witnessed a marked improvement in attendance. Governors reported that they had also explored issues around attendance with students at the Meet the Governors sessions and found that a number of students had family, caring or work responsibilities that made it harder to attend at certain times of day. Management responded that this appeared to be more an issue this year and that efforts were made to be flexible. The ESOL course was designed to accommodate childcare needs

AGREED: Meet the Governor visit feedback would be emailed to governors

DQLE
Clerk

8. Safeguarding and Prevent

Supporting paper by the DQLE

It was agreed that, in the absence of Fiona Bulmer, the paper would be taken as read.

9. Health and Safety

Oral reports by DFCO

The written reports were deferred to the May meeting.

10. GDPR Update

Supporting paper by the Director of Employer Partnerships

The Board noted the key points in the paper and took on board that a detailed implementation plan was in place and that management were confident that the college would be prepared for the launch of GDPR on 25 May. Guidance was awaited from sector bodies on achieving the necessary consents from students.

The plan to roll out the staff online training to governors was noted.

11. Audit and Risk

Oral report from the Chair of Audit

There had not been sufficient time to provide minutes of the Audit Committee on 22 March, so the Chair gave a summary of key discussion points and recommendations.

- Only one Internal Audit report had been completed so far. This gave substantial assurance on corporate governance, albeit with a reminder of the need to document the strategy;
- Student debt was discussed in detail. Considerable progress had been made in gaining clarity over the situation, although there was still work to do to unpick 2015-16. Staff in different teams were working well together. Some debt had been recovered but there was likely to be a write-off and provision had been made for this in the accounts.
- The risk register presented only showed red risks, which was helpful in terms of providing a focus. The Committee would, in future, receive the full register periodically. There was some discussion of scores, which may have been overstated in some cases.
- The process of migrating the assurance mapping to 4Risk was underway.
- In the context of GDPR, the IAS would be undertaking a cybersecurity review.

- The retender of Audit Services was discussed. The Committee recommendation was to retender for Internal Audit 2018-19 now, and to retender for External Audit next year, starting the process at the beginning of 2019. It was considered that the staggered approach would provide sufficient stability.

RESOLVED: that a tendering process for Internal Audit be launched immediately, and with External Audit to follow the 2017-18 accounts sign off.

- 12. Urgent Other Business**
There was no other business.

Signed:(Chair)