

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation

Board of Governors Meeting 9 November 2017

Minutes

Time	18.30 – 21.43	
Venue	Southgate Campus boardroom	
Present (governors)	Ann Zinkin Graham Duncan Mervin Archer Fiona Bulmer Sheila Dawson Bernard Manson Christalla Tsattala	Chair Vice Chair Staff Governor
In attendance	Toni Beck Stephen Forster Peter Harrison Lizzie Jones Tracy McIntosh Melissa Drayson	Dir Quality and Learner Experience Dir Finance and Corporate Ops Dir of Curriculum Dir of Organisational Development Dir of Employer Ptnerships Clerk to the Corporation
Apologies	Sue Baldwin David Byrne	Governor Principal and CEO
Vacancies	Student Governors External Governor	

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

Item	Action lead
1. Preliminary Items	
1.i Chair's welcome	
<p>The Chair opened the meeting and proposed that the agenda should be re-ordered so that Item 3i Capital Options Presentation, was taken first. The confidential Part B agenda would then be taken.</p> <p>The Minutes are written in the order of items on the agenda.</p> <p>The Board congratulated Christalla Tsattala for her re-election as Staff Governor for a further two-year term of office.</p>	

Governors were thanked for having submitted detailed questions in advance on the papers. The collated questions and responses had been circulated by email. However, the number of questions being raised had increased substantially. Governors were asked to consider different ways of raising queries (e.g. by phone or in person) and to be mindful of keeping additional workload for ELG and the Clerk to a manageable level when submitting questions.

1.ii **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Sue Baldwin and David Byrne

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

It was confirmed that all present were eligible to take part in the meeting, there were no new declarations of interests and the meeting was quorate

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

None received.

2. **Minutes**

2.i **Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2017**

Subject to minor amendment, the Minutes were approved 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 noted that most actions had been completed or were in progress. There was further discussion of the following:

Item 4ii: It was confirmed that governors had contacted the DQ&LE directly to arrange to shadow a lesson observation.

Item 5: The governance self-assessment form would be circulated to governors. It would follow a new format, but combine with best elements of the NCVO governance wheel used in 2015.

Item 6: Targets for 17-18, set against three-year trend data, would now be brought to the December Board meeting for approval.

Item 9: Governors who had not yet returned their skills audit form were asked to do so. The Clerk reported that two applications had been received for the governor vacancies and these would be matched against the skills needs of the Board by the Search Committee. Governors suggested that Property/Capital skills would be useful, possibly through the addition of a co-opted member. It was noted that the student governor appointment process was in progress.

The Chair sought governors' views on the appointment process to committees. The majority confirmed that they were comfortable that this should be through approaching governors with the skills required. It was agreed that committee membership should be reviewed periodically, and the Clerk would review the policy for this.

3. **Capital Projects**

3i **Capital Options Update**

Presentation by RLC Property Consultants. A handout of the presentation was provided.

The Board considered the alternative opportunities presented for the development of the Southgate Campus. There was discussion of traffic considerations and the neighbourhood implications of any residential accommodation. Governors were attracted to the idea of linking and harmonising college buildings. It was confirmed that the next stage would be to consider an evaluation of costs and possible investment by third parties.

Governors observed that it was important that any property decisions should be based on a clear strategic rationale and analysis of future curriculum needs.

AGREED: that further exploration of a Property Strategy should take place at the December Strategy and Training Day.

3ii **Update on Southgate Capital Works Project**

Supporting paper by the DFCO

The Board noted the background to the recommendation to approve an additional budget. It was agreed that the Southgate multi-phased refurbishment project, which included unique specialist facilities, was highly complex. This had made it difficult to assess an exact cost, and flexibility had been required in terms of the allocation of expenditure within the overall funding envelope up to this point.

It was confirmed that the College had sufficient funds to cover the additional spend and reported that there was a risk to not delivering the project approved by the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Governors were supportive of the proposal for the additional funding, but highlighted the need to ensure that monitoring of Capital projects by the Board was consistent and robust. Options were either to set up a Capital Project Task and Finish Group, or to report to the Board as part of the suite of monthly assurance reports. This would assess progress against a set of agreed deliverables, highlight any variance to costs and the project timeline, and ensure that timely Board approval was gained as required.

An additional section was required within the Scheme of Delegation and Executive Limitations to give clarity about delegated approval limits for individual items of capital expenditure.

Governors were given assurance that there was sufficient staff resource within the College to oversee the Capital project. It was confirmed that additional expertise was brought in as required.

The Chair thanked governors for their contributions on an important topic.

RESOLVED: that additional funding of [redacted] be approved to complete the refurbishment of Southgate Campus

AGREED:

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|------|---|-------|
| (i) | that an additional section be added to the Scheme of Delegation and Executive Limitations Policy relating to Capital Expenditure in January. | Clerk |
| (ii) | that a monthly Capital Project monitoring report be brought to the Board in January | ELG |

4 Key Performance Indicators

Supporting paper presented by the DEP

It was highlighted that many of the green rated KPIs related to achievement of income targets. Of particular note was that the college had achieved adult skills budget targets, which was unusual in the sector. It was also noted that several of the 'amber-rated' KPIs were very close to target.

5. Principal's Report

Supporting paper presented by the DCurr

The Board put on record its congratulations to Borehamwood FC and its thanks for the great publicity on Match Of The Day. The Principal would be taking a group of students to Coventry.

The CETEC initiative was also bringing the College positive publicity and partnerships as a leader in the field of cutting-edge assistive technologies

[redacted on grounds of commercial sensitivity]

The confirmation of the financial health grading of 'outstanding' for 2018/19 was applauded by the Board.

6 Management accounts

Supporting paper by the DFCO

The strength of the College's financial position was noted, against the sector-wide situation that only 55% of colleges had achieved good or better financial health in 2016-17. Key issues were:

- The start of the annual budgeting exercise would be brought forward to April;
- The segmental analysis remained work in progress;

- To ensure compliance with the Treasury Management Policy, a third bank account with Nat West had been opened to spread capital exposure risk;
- Board approval was sought for a temporary increase of counterparty limits with Lloyds Banks.

It was queried how much bad debt had been passed to debt collectors.

Governors provided positive feedback on the new format of the accounts, finding them clearer and easier to understand.

RESOLVED: that a temporary increase to Lloyds Bank counterparty limits for two months be approved.

AGREED: a detailed report on bad debt be brought to the December meeting with the management accounts.

DFCO

7. Quality and the Learner Experience

7.i Achievement report 2016-17

Supporting paper presented by the DQ&LE

The drop in overall achievement in 2016-17 was discussed in detail. The biggest factor was a decrease in 16-18 retention, which was lower than predicted. This was apparent across all levels, although pass-rates had increased overall. Governors were reminded that, in the previous year, achievement rates had risen by 6% and were well above national average.

A detailed forensic analysis was currently being undertaken to establish the reasons for the pockets of low achievement. An extremely robust approach would be taken to getting students on the right courses in the first six weeks of their time at college. Students exhibiting poor commitment and attendance may be withdrawn from courses. MIS reports would be used to enable rigorous individual student tracking and intervention. More needed to be done to establish consistent good practice in tutorial and other areas of student support. Governors agreed that individual tracking was key to remedying problems with student progress.

Governors noted that English and Maths students presented the greatest challenge, although high grades had increased. Some students were recorded as withdrawals as they had missed a test, even though they had part-completed the qualification.

There was discussion of the resourcing of quality improvement. Governors were reassured that the central quality team was working smoothly and that reporting was improving considerably, although there was more to be done to improve individualised reporting. Problems with obtaining consistent staff engagement with the use of

the mark-book tracking mechanism were being addressed by increasing administrative support.

Governors raised the question of how they could most effectively play a part in addressing areas of concern and improving the learner experience. Practice from other colleges might be informative. Governors were invited to discuss this further with the Director of Quality and Learner Experience.

Governors had submitted a number of detailed questions in advance of the meeting on this topic and received clear responses.

7ii Student Survey

Supporting paper by Director of Quality and Learner Experience

It was noted that there had been some very positive responses, but course organisation was an area of lower satisfaction. Students on Motor Vehicle had also shown less satisfaction than other courses. Both of these would be areas of management focus for the year.

7iii Annual Complaints Report

Supporting paper by the Director of Quality and Learner Experience

Although the number of complaints had increased, this was partly due to the greater opportunity to make complaints. There was no anecdotal evidence from managers that they were dealing with an increasing number of complaints informally. One of the highest area for complaints was course organisation, mirroring the results of the student survey.

7iv Safeguarding monthly report

Supporting paper by the Director of Quality and Learner Experience

As this was the first time that this report had been brought to the Board, governor feedback was requested on the content and level of detail. Governors requesting more information were offered the opportunity to speak to the DQLE outside of the meeting. Governors confirmed that they found the report to be clear and well presented. The safeguarding governor commented that it might be sufficient to present trends and a comment on the overall burden of cases. A more detailed report would be brought following the safeguarding governor meetings with management.

8. Higher Education Annual Quality Assessment

Supporting paper by the Director of Curriculum

Governors reviewed the Higher-Level skills self-evaluation document (SED) and action plan for improvement. It was agreed that good overall progress was being made in improving quality in HE and the action plan adequately set out the areas where more needed to be done.

AGREED: that the SED met the criteria for the HEFCE Annual Quality Assessment and the Principal be authorised to sign it.

9. Outstanding audit recommendations

9i Capital post-project evaluation

Supporting paper by the DFCO

The Board confirmed that it was satisfied that this action had now been completed.

9.ii Fire safety assurance

Supporting paper by the DFCO

The report had been compiled from information from several sources. Governors commented that it was difficult to judge whether the measures taken were adequate and discussed whether external verification should be sought. It was confirmed, however, that the question which had triggered the review, regarding the cladding on the buildings, had been answered and there were no risks or concerns.

Governors expressed some uncertainty about how they would gain adequate assurance on fire safety matters and requested input from a Health and Safety professional on this. This might form a topic for the December Strategy and Training day.

10. Franchise Values 2017-18

Supporting paper by the DEP

RESOLVED: that the partners maximum contract values 2017-18 be approved.

11. Governance policies review

Supporting paper by the Clerk

It was noted that it would be helpful to involve governors in a more comprehensive review at the next review point. Subject to a new section on Capital project delegated authorities, it was:

RESOLVED: that the updated Governance Policies be approved.

Signed:(Chair)