

**Barnet and Southgate College Corporation**

**Board of Governors Meeting  
13 November 2018**

**Minutes**

<b>Time</b>	18.30 – 21.40	
<b>Venue</b>	Southgate Campus Boardroom	
<b>Governors present</b>	Ann Zinkin David Byrne Puneet Anand Mervin Archer Fiona Bulmer Sheila Dawson Graham Duncan Felicia Hanson Ofori-Quaah Harvinder Rattan Christalla Tsattala Seb Karaasanov Pooja Patel	Chair Principal     Vice Chair From 19.25 Staff Governor Student Governor Student Governor
<b>In attendance</b>	Toni Beck Lizzie Jones Tracy McIntosh Ian Rule Rose Turner Melissa Drayson  Darren Mepham	Dir Quality and Learner Experience Dir Organisational Development Dir of Employer Partnerships Interim Dir Finance Interim Dir Curriculum Clerk to the Corporation  CEO designate
<b>Apologies</b>	Sue Baldwin	
<b>Quorum (6)</b>	The meeting was quorate	

**PART A - OPEN MEETING**

Minutes deemed confidential on the grounds of commercial or personal sensitivity have been redacted.

Item	Action lead
<b>1. Preliminary Items</b>	
<b>1.1 Chair’s welcome</b>	

The Chair welcomed Darren Mepham, (CEO designate) and Felicia Hanson Ofori-Quaah (new governor), to their first meeting. Round the table introductions were made. New governor, Harvinder Rattan, would be joining the meeting late.

It was noted that, due to internal pressures, some papers had been sent out late, giving governors limited time to read them. The Board accepted that this was an exceptional one-off occurrence.

#### **1.2 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were as listed above.

#### **1.3 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.

#### **1.4 Notification of urgent items of other business**

There were none

### **2. Minutes**

#### **2.1 Part A meeting held on 16 October 2018**

**The Part A minutes were confirmed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.**

#### **2.2 Matters arising and any outstanding actions**

*Supporting paper by the Clerk*

Completed actions and items covered on the agenda were noted. It was confirmed that the items flagged for the 6 December Away Day were in the process of being considered for the agenda.

#### **2.3 Part A written resolutions since 16 October**

*Supporting paper by the Clerk*

The Board **ratified** the following decision which had been approved through written resolution:

2 November: Approval of the appointment of Felicia Hanson Ofori-Quaah as a Governor, with immediate effect, on an initial one-year term of office, extendable to four years upon satisfactory completion of the first year. *(carried by a majority of governors)*

### **3. Principal's report**

*Supporting paper by the Principal*

The headlines from the report were discussed.

In response to previous Board discussion, an invitation had been made to a senior lead for Africa and the Middle East from the Department of International Trade to attend the December Strategy Day to advise on current political, ethical and reputational considerations in respect of developing international business. The Board was reminded that, at the previous December Strategy Day, it had agreed that the College should be open to opportunities and endorsed the invitation.

A significant recent development was the launch of the London commissioning web-portal for Adult Education Budget (AEB) bids. The ELG would be working hard to finalise the College bid by 21 December. Levels of competition were likely to be high as the bidding process was open to a broad range of providers from all sectors and regions. The College had a number of strengths which fitted the bidding criteria.

The Board noted the new ESFA apprenticeship provider online-review system which provided publicly available ratings of all providers. On the small number of reviews provided, the college was rated well compared with similar institutions.

It was reported that unacceptable delays in finalising end point assessments (EPAs) for some new apprenticeships standards Trailblazers had meant that some students from 15/16 were still unable to complete their qualifications. This had negative consequences both on individual learners and college achievement rates.

Governors asked if there had been extra funding for colleges in the Spending Review. Unfortunately, despite the national campaign, there had been no significant increase. The Teachers Pensions Scheme changes reported in October, which were anticipated to have a serious financial impact on colleges, had also been confirmed.

#### **4. Key Performance Indicators**

*Supporting papers by the Director of Employer Partnerships*

##### **4.1 2017-18 year end KPI report**

For the benefit of new governors, it was explained that the KPI report was brought to the Board monthly to show progress against a set of challenging monthly targets. This report summarised the position at the end of the previous academic year.

There were five 5 'red' KPIs:

- Two of the red KPIs related to apprenticeship funding. The issues with this had been reported to the Board early in the year, and reasons for not hitting targets were well known. Nationally, there had been a 45% drop in apprenticeships which mirrored the College's experience. Issues included problems with the new system, a reduction in non-levy paying SMEs and

new rules about subcontracting provision. Only 14% of Levy funding had been spent. These factors had been largely out of the College's control, although prompt action had been taken to mitigate the impact.

- English and Maths attendance had been consistently under target throughout the year, although it had shown a slight improvement due to positive action taken.
- Whilst there was a significant improvement in Functional Skills achievement (7.1%), the results were impacted by poor achievement on Level 2 Functional Skills English. Action was being taken to ensure the appropriate placement of learners L2 functional skills this year.

Governors were assured that measures were in place to prevent a similar picture emerging this year but would monitor the situation closely.

There were 14 Amber KPIs:

- Five related to achievement rates and were covered in depth in the Achievement report (item 6.3)
- Two related to 16-18 learner numbers, which had been reported in October.
- 98% of the full-cost income target had been achieved. It was planned that the full target would be achieved in 2018-19.
- Learner attendance was 2.8% below target due to lower attendance in specific curriculum areas, including English and Maths. It was discussed that attendance and achievement did not always correlate. Feedback from learners was that they did not always attend when online materials were of a high quality. This was borne out in the English and Maths results which, despite low attendance, had improved significantly. Governors asked how time spent studying online fitted with the funding methodology. It was confirmed that, currently, all study had to be supervised to count toward guided learning hours.
- Retention had improved dramatically from the previous year and was 1.5% above the National Rates. It was, however, rated 'amber' as the college had not achieved its own challenging target.

There were five 'Green' KPIs, including some major successes:

- The successful award of an additional £1.2m Adult Skills funding. 100% of the AEB allocation was achieved.
- Almost all (96%) of students had completed meaningful work experience placements, as reported to the Board in October.
- The delivery of an end of year operating surplus.
- The achievement of high grades in GCSE English well above national rate.
- An increase in average class size, showing greater efficiency

The Board congratulated staff on these successes.

#### **4.2 2018-19 KPIs – October dashboard**

The Board noted the first KPI report of the new year. This showed two 'red' KPIs, 3 amber and 8 'green' of the 13 due for report. Headlines were:

- After the 42-day qualifying period, the college was below target on 16-18 numbers, although it was anticipated that new enrolments for January courses would help to close the gap. The financial impact would be felt in 2019-20 due to the lagged funding methodology
- There was a negative variance on the operational surplus, partly due to timing differences on contracts
- Attendance was currently rated 'amber', with 19+ attendance above target. Significant effort was being made to retain this position
- Adult skills funding, apprenticeship funding and full cost/commercial funding were all above profile for this period

### **5. Finance and Resources**

*Supporting papers by the Interim Director of Finance*

#### **5.1 Management accounts – September 2018**

The Board noted the limited scope of the period 2 accounts, but that there was sufficient evidence that the overall performance was within expectations.

The current position was a deficit. However, there were two major items impacting on this result and the underlying position was positive. A more detailed picture would be provided in the October (period 3) accounts.

There was a significant variance in tuition fees which was believed to be due to phasing of the budget. This was being reviewed by the finance team and fee income was being reconciled with Customer Services records.

The positive variance in miscellaneous income was also being investigated.

The positive variances on pay costs and cash balances were noted

There was a discussion of the financial position of the College subsidiary, MBC, particularly the performance of the catering section. Other potential opportunities for the company were flagged. An options

review of the company would be undertaken in the new year and brought to the Board.

The Treasury position was in the process of being reviewed to ensure that the college was operating within counterparty limits defined by the Treasury Policy. It was noted that the College's overall deposit with Lloyds Bank continued to exceed this limit.

Governors appreciated the challenges that the finance team had faced in recent months and asked for an update on staffing and resourcing of the finance function. The impact of the high turnover of staff and the number of staff on interim contracts in the past year were both noted. The size of the team was, however, considered adequate for the scale of the operation once the current challenges had been resolved and should work well in a steady state.

The recent work on the end of year accounts had identified some process issues which would be addressed. A new finance system was also being sought which would provide a more sophisticated level of record keeping and reporting.

**AGREED: that an options appraisal for the subsidiary company, MBC Ltd, be undertaken in early 2019 and a paper brought to the Board.**

## 5.2 Capital Projects

*For reasons of commercial sensitivity, a confidential minute was taken of this item.*

**RESOLVED: that the proposed budget of [redacted] for the RIBA Stage 2 design for the Atrium element of the STEM Hub be approved**

**AGREED:**

- (i) **That the Capital Projects Task and Finish Group, chaired by Mervin Archer, should be convened as soon as possible to review the detail of the Bid**
- (ii) **That there should be a session at the Away Day to review the bid and the overarching Capital Strategy.**

## 6. Quality, Curriculum and the Learner Experience

### 6.1 Student governor monthly feedback

The Student Governors gave an oral report on the following:

- Students were currently making UCAS applications. The support from staff with personal statements was very helpful.

- A2 students were having difficulty accessing AS materials on ILearn, which was making revision difficult. Management undertook to look into this.
- Both student governors reported on the pressure on the library in Wood Street and the lack of quiet study space.
- Students suggested that long gaps in timetables might be having a negative impact on student attendance
- Following the extension in hours resulting from student feedback, the canteen at Wood Street was functioning very well.

## 6.2 Annual Complaints Report

*Supporting paper by the Director Quality and Learner Experience*

Governors noted the headline that the number of complaints received under the policy had decreased to the lowest point in five years. The proportion of complaints fully upheld had also decreased, although those 'partially upheld' had increased.

In response to governors' questions, it was confirmed that the report related to formal complaints only which had been through a rigorous process of review and logging.

## 6.3 Achievement report 2017-18

*Supporting paper by the Director Quality and Learner Experience*

Headlines were:

- Achievement data had been thoroughly analysed as part of the quality and self-assessment process
- Overall achievement had improved and was 1.8% above National Rate (NR)
- 16-18 achievement had improved significantly and was around NR. The goal was to exceed National Rate
- Achievement of high grades in GCSE Maths and English had improved in 2017-18 and was above NR in both cases.
- Level 3 achievement was less positive due to a drop-in retention. This was primarily in A Level subjects where there had been a move to the new linear qualifications.

Governors asked if there was a link between lower achievement and curriculum planning decisions. Although achievement considered in the curriculum planning process, there was a need to balance this with other factors, including meeting the needs of the community.

Differences in adult learner achievement in English and Maths were being investigated. This group experienced a range of barriers to learning so placing learners on the right courses was vital.

Governors welcome the future actions planned, including a forensic focus at course level to fully understand areas of underachievement,

and the commissioning of a Curriculum Health Check of 16-18 Level 3 provision. There would also be a forensic investigation of Value Added.

**AGREED: that reports from the investigations into areas of improvement be shared with the Board at future meetings.**

#### **6.4 Higher Education Curriculum and Quality**

- a. **Higher Education Self-Evaluation**
- b. **Office for Students AAR 2018 letter**

*Supporting paper by the Interim Director of Curriculum*

##### **a. Foundation Degree awarding powers**

The Board considered the costs, benefits and drawbacks presented for gaining Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP), as opposed to continuing with the current partnership arrangements. Governors queried the planned increases in HE student numbers over the next four years shown. It was noted that the plan was being revised and would be brought back to the Board.

**AGREED: that a full set of proposals and projections be brought to the Board in summer 2019, to time in with the 2019-20 business and financial planning calendar.**

##### **b. HE Self-Evaluation Document (SED)**

It was confirmed that the SED went through a similarly rigorous quality and validation process as the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), and that student feedback was an important quality indicator.

**AGREED:**

- (i) **That the HE Self-Evaluation Document (SED) met the criteria for the Office for Students Quality Assessment Return**
- (ii) **That the Principal be authorised to sign the OFS Quality Assessment Return on behalf of the Board.**

#### **7. Partnerships**

*Supporting papers by the DEP*

##### **7.1 Employer Engagement - Annual Report 2017-18**

The Board noted the increasing challenges associated with subcontracted apprenticeship provision. Despite improvements, this included achievement rates below National Rates, and well below Direct Delivery apprenticeship achievement. The continuing absence of an end point assessment (EPA) for Trailblazer apprenticeships had impacted negatively on outcomes.



Overall volumes of apprentices had declined since 2015-16 due to the reduction in funding allocations, the introduction of the levy and the phased reduction in subcontracting. This mirrored the national picture. The decision to reduce apprenticeship subcontracting had resulted in a drop in subcontracted provision from 78% to 23% of the college total.

Subcontracted adult learning provision had achieved outstanding outcomes which contributed +2.4% to the College's overall adult achievement rate. The college was now the largest provider in electrical training in North London and there was considerable scope to expand work experience in this area.

## **7.2 Franchise Partner Contract Values**

The Board was presented with the subcontractor and contract values for 2018-19. In line with college policy to reduce apprenticeship subcontracting, the majority were carry-in learners. AEB subcontracting was due to continue with seven existing subcontractors, and two new subcontractors were due to be introduced.

**RESOLVED: that the proposed Franchise Partners Contract Values 2018-19 be approved.**

## **8. Urgent Other Business**

There were no urgent items of other business. However, the opportunity was taken to remind governors of the following:

- The Student Awards Night on 29 November
- Meet the Governors at Wood Street on 4 December, 1-2pm
- Governors were reminded to complete and return the Board Self-Assessment questionnaire by Friday 30 November.

## **9. Dates of forthcoming meetings:**

6 December – Strategy Day and Board Meeting

24 January 2019

7 March 2019

4 April 2019

Signed: .....(Chair)

6 December 2018