Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Board of Governors Meeting
5 March 2020

MINUTES

Time	18.25 to 21.40	
Venue	Southgate, 008A/B (Dentistry)	
Governors present (Quorum: 6)	Ann Zinkin Alessandra Almeida-Jones Mervin Archer Fiona Bulmer Sheila Dawson Graham Duncan Imelda Galvin Darren Mepham Christalla Tsattala	Chair
In attendance	Neil Coker Tracy McIntosh Mark Sellis Hiten Sivla Melissa Drayson	Principal and Assistant CE (P/DCE) Executive Director Partnerships and Commercial (EDPC) Exec Director Corp Services (EDCS) Director of Finance Clerk to the Corporation
Apologies	Nana Brew Pooja Patel	

Items deemed confidential on the grounds of commercial or personal sensitivity have been redacted from the published minutes.

Pre-board briefing: The Gatsby Career Benchmarks.
A separate note of the key presentation and discussion points was made and distributed to governors.

Item		**Action lead**
1.	**Preliminary Items**	
1.1	**Chair's welcome** The Chair thanked all governors who had been able to attend the Special Board meeting the previous week to approved the Integrated Financial Model for Colleges (IFMC).	
1.2	**Apologies for absence** Apologies were received as listed above. It was noted that Pooja Patel was currently on jury service.	

1.3 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.

1.4 Notification of urgent items of other business
One urgent item of business was raised on the College's response to the Covid-19 crisis.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

i. Meetings held on 23 January and 27th February

The Part A and Part B minutes of the meeting on 23 January were APPROVED as a correct record and confidential sections were confirmed.

No minutes were, as yet, available for the meeting on 27th February. It was noted that the Board had met for two hours to review the Integrated Financial Model for Colleges. There had been a very rigorous discussion of key assumptions and targets. The IFMC had been approved with some minor amendments and was circulated to the Board and submitted to the ESFA on 28th February.

ii. Matters arising and outstanding actions

The Board confirmed that it was satisfied that all actions from previous meetings had been addressed by the deadline, or were not yet due for completion.

3. CEO Report

Supporting paper presented by the Chief Executive

A new approach to the CEO report was presented, reflecting the emerging strategic themes from the November board development day and subsequent work by ELT, including internal consultation.

The timescale for finalisation of the overarching strategy was outlined. This would involve engagement with staff, students and key partners. The board development day in May would provide an opportunity to agree success measures and indicators, and to confirm that the current strategic themes were still appropriate.

Governors considered the sections of the report reflecting the four key themes:

A. Core business of making BSC the destination of choice for staff, students and partners
B. Key enablers to finance and support our increased aspirations

C. Presence in our communities
D. College character

The following discussion points were raised:

Strategic theme B.
Governors considered that the Brent Cross scheme provided an important cross-college opportunity and proposed that this should be a flagged as a key project.

Assurance was sought around campus security and safeguarding at the Edmonton Green site. Management confirmed that plans were in place to address this.

Strategic theme C
Governors asked if external organisations were being charged for the use of college space. This was confirmed although there were some quid pro quo arrangements, e.g Barnet Council's use of the Wood Street for the consultation on the Barnet Community Plan. The benefits to the college of hosting this event were discussed. It had been attended by over 60 people who had been into the college before and was also part of a wider drive to be a visible community partner. .

The scope to let out space for other community use, especially in college holidays was also discussed.

Comments were provided on the overall approach to the report. Whilst welcoming the active use of the strategic themes, it was considered that these should not be stuck to too rigidly and that 'news' items should be separate from strategic developments. It was suggested that, where items didn't fit naturally within one of the themes, they might be put under an 'other issues' heading.

Governors were keen not to lose sight of news items, particularly relating to staff and student success. The sector policy update in previous reports had also been useful.

AGREED: To ensure that Governors are notified in advance of all college events involving the local community Clerk

4. Principal report, including Validated Quality Improvement Plan
Supporting paper presented by the Principal

The Quality Improvement Plan was presented for approval, having been through a validation process by the Post Inspection Monitoring Group.

Once approved, the QIP would be rolled out to curriculum teams and monitoring mechanisms put in place. These would focus on impacts rather than processes and actions. The quality assurance cycle would move away from the tradition of waiting until Autumn to review the previous year as it would be possible to make accurate judgments in Spring/Summer in order to put in improvements for the new academic year.

Management oversight had been increased, and curriculum managers were becoming accustomed to higher levels of challenge and support. The Principal was currently heavily involved in reinforcing key messages, particularly around attitudes and culture, but expected to delegate more to Assistant Principals and Heads of Faculty in future.

Student progress was being monitored much more closely and healthchecks undertaken, encompassing verification through other routes. KPIs relating to student progress and attainment would be reviewed. Other approaches were being explored and would be shared with the task and finish group.

A genuine focus on professional development was in place to produce a safe and supported learning environment to create an organisation of reflective practitioners.

Early indications, verified by external assessors, were of improvements in both the quality of teaching and the learner experience.

There was discussion of how governors would review the effectiveness of the QIP through both the task and finish group and whole board reports. The Chair of the 'post inspection' task and finish group described how impact would be reviewed at its meetings through a deep-dive/focus group approach involving staff and students. Faculty areas would be selected using a 'best, worst and biggest' approach.

Members of the PITFG confirmed that they were confident that robust quality assurance and reporting processes were in place, but it was too early for governors to judge their impact.

Governors sought assurance that the QIP would remain a living document, with flexibility to change direction quickly if actions were not having the desired impact. It was confirmed that the RAG rating provide an early warning of areas needing a different approach.

Governors raised again the importance of relaunching a board engagement programme. This had also been discussed at the task and finish group. A review of the effectiveness of different approaches, followed by further discussion, would be helpful.

Although it was recognised that the college had no plans to deliver T Levels, a briefing to update governors was requested.

AGREED:

Clerk/P

(i) **Board discussion of governor engagement strategies to be scheduled** Clerk/P

(ii) **Briefing on T Levels to be scheduled**

RESOLVED: that the Quality Improvement Plan be APPROVED

5. KPI Report – January 2020

Supporting paper presented by the Chief Executive

The Board challenged and discussed the headline KPIs

- Governors asked why measures to improve attendance were not working. The degree of correlation between high attendance and achievement was also questioned. Management responded that attendance improved in areas where curriculum managers made it their business to address the issue. Good practice had been seen in Sport and Early Years and Childcare. In sport, Maths and English attendance had improved by 12 %.

  There was no evidence of a correlation between achievement and attendance in all curriculum areas. For example, in HE and some adult learning, attendance was low, but achievement was high. The areas where low attendance was likely to have the greatest impact were 16-18 and Maths and English.

  The same variable pattern could be seen when correlating attendance with the quality of teaching. Attendance was, however, an indicator when assessing QTL and the aim was to make classes so engaging that students were motivated to attend.

- Management concurred with governors that improved in attainment appeared small. . There were, however, problems with the definitions used with the KPI itself. Assistant Principals had visited two colleges to research more effective ways of measuring attainment.

- In response to governor questions about staff utilisation, it was confirmed that revised, more accurate data would be available the following week.

7. Finance and Resources

Supporting papers presented by the EDCS

7.1 Edmonton Green – renewal of lease

The Board considered the risks and opportunities involved in renewing the lease. Potential risk to ESOL student numbers created by

immigration policy would be mitigated by potential to extend the curriculum beyond ESOL in the future. The lease length had also been reduced with a break clause.
[redacted]

It was understood that Enfield Council may be seeking to redevelop the shopping centre. This might address some safety concerns, particularly for lone women, and attract more people to the centre. Governors asked about the potential for involving college students in the refurbishment.

RESOLVED: that the renewal of the lease at Edmonton Green, on the terms set out in the paper, be APPROVED.

7.2 Cleaning contract tendering

A proposal was brought to the Board for in accordance with procurement policy, due to its value. The Staff Governor had been on the panel in her capacity as Unison rep.

[redacted – commercially sensitive]

RESOLVED: that the proposal to award the cleaning contract to Churchill Contract Services be APPROVED

7. Health and Safety Annual Report 18-19 and mid-year update 19-20
Supporting paper presented by the EDCS

The Board was informed of the staffing issues within the Health and Safety team. It had yet not been possible to recruit to the permanent Health and Safety post.

The report gave assurance about compliance with legal requirements. There would be a focus on addressing local inconsistencies in culture, ownership and procedural compliance. One particular area was college trips.

Improvements were also needed to ensure a consistent approach to workplace inspections. A successful inspection had recently been undertaken in LLDD, which would be modelled in other curriculum areas.

The Chair of Audit reminded the Board of the outcome of the Health and Safety Audit in 2018. This had drawn attention to some operational inconsistencies. Assurances were given at the time that audit recommendations had been addressed. Management were asked to ensure that audit reports were referenced within the Annual Report, and to provide assurance that processes remained robust. Management confirmed that fire risk assessments and evacuation drills were routinely carried out at all premises.

Questions were raised about references to managing acts of violence and aggression from students, , and whether management was satisfied that reporting procedures were adequate and applied consistently. It was confirmed that measures were in place to apply bespoke safeguarding and health and safety procedures in specific areas.

AGREED:

(i) **that an update be brought to the Board on improving compliance with procedures for organising college trips**

(ii) **That the Board should receive reports on Health and Safety at least twice a year.**

8. HR and Organisational Development Annual Report

Supporting paper by the Head of HR and Head of Organisational Development

The Board noted that responsibility for HR and Organisational Development was now split between two Heads of Department.

Key points were:

- The People Strategy was due for an update. This would be tied in with the strategic planning work. It would include a greater emphasis on staff wellbeing and mental health.

- Staff survey outcomes were down on the previous year but were better than average in all but four measures. It was noted that the timing of the survey might have been partly responsible, having occurred at the end of a difficult year, including Ofsted and restructuring. There would continue to be a focus on meaningful consultation and engagement with staff. It was also important that staff were confident that their feedback was used to bring about change and improvement.

- The next survey would be undertaken at the beginning of the following academic year.

- It was agreed that HR and OD priorities should be cross-referenced with the Quality Improvement Plan.

- The issue of non-disclosure agreements within settlement agreements was raised as this had been publicised as poor practice within the school academy sector. It had been confirmed that clauses were included within settlement agreements, for the protection of both parties. It was requested that governors should receive an overview in the annual report of the volume of settlements and the circumstances under which they were made, with previous years' figures for comparison.

AGREED:

(i)	**That HR and OD priorities should be cross-referenced with the Quality Improvement Plan**	**HHR/ HOD**
(ii)	**That Governors should be informed of the number and nature of settlement agreements with 2018-19 figures being brought to a forthcoming meeting, and thereafter in the HR and OD annual report.**	

9. Committee Task and Finish Group reports

Post inspection Group
The Minutes of the meeting on 13 February were noted, in particular the actions for future monitoring, to include:

i) Half-termly meetings from late March/early April
ii) EIT-style reports to each meeting with opportunity to request a 'deep-dive' of a particular area
iii) Reports by the Head of Faculty against the QIP – biggest, best and worst
iv) Meetings with students to link to the area being reviewed.

10. Governance and policy

10.1 External Governance Review
Supporting paper presented by the Clerk

The Board considered the draft report from the external consultant. A short-term and longer-term approach was suggested. The former would deal with quick wins which would be aimed at streamlining business; the latter would involve the new Chair in bigger issues around strategy and structure. Governors supported this approach.

The Chair and Clerk reminded all governors to submit questions in advance of meetings for ELT response, as this was an effective way of containing discussion at meetings.

10.2 Chair recruitment update
Oral update by the Clerk

There had been two weeks of search activity and the agency was issuing weekly updates. Governors were reminded about the timeline: Shortlisting would take place on 3rd April and the selection day was still scheduled for 9th April. The agency had been notified of the concern that this was too close to the Easter break, and they would undertake to ensure candidates were available at an early stage. .

11. Urgent items of other business

There was discussion of the business continuity plan in relation to Covid-19. Governors reported that the private sector was taking stringent measures to limit contact already. The College as following guidance issued for the public sector but was aware that a case within the college would mean that a rapid response might be needed. The ELT were meeting regularly to prepare for different scenarios, including supporting staff and students. At present, no measures had been taken to limit staff or student activity.

A key concern was the possible cancellation of summer exams. IT was possible that predicted grades would be used for A Levels, so steps were being taken now to ensure that predicated grades were robust.

12. Dates of forthcoming meetings

14 May (all day: Board Development Day)
18 June at 18.30
16 July at 18.30

The meeting closed at 21.40

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………..(Chair)

7 April 2020