Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Board of Governors Meeting
28th January 2021

PART A

MINUTES

Time	17.30 – 18.15	
Venue	By videoconferencing	
Governors present (Quorum: 6)	Adam Goldstein	Chair
	Alessandra Almeida-Jones	
	Mervin Archer	
	Nana Brew	
	Fiona Bulmer	
	Sheila Dawson	
	Graham Duncan	Vice Chair
	Imelda Galvin	
	Jenny Jarvis	
	Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
	Cait O'Riordan	
	Christalla Tsattala	Staff Governor
	Ann Zinkin	
In attendance	Neil Coker	Principal and Assistant CE (P/DCE)
	Tracey MacIntosh	Exec Director Commercial (EDC)
	Mark Sellis	Exec Director Corp Services (EDCS)
	Melissa Drayson	Clerk to the Corporation
Apologies	Sakina Quettawala	Student Governor
	Ezgi	
	Mark Sweeny	

Some Items for have been redacted on the grounds of commercial sensitivity and personal sensitivity

Item		Action lead
1.	**Preliminary Items** Consent was granted for the meeting to be recorded to assist with the minutes.	
1.1	**Apologies for absence and quorum.** Apologies noted as above. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate	

1.2 Confirmation of eligibility 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

1.3 Notification of urgent items of other business
There had been no advance requests to raise any other business.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

2.1 The Minutes of the meeting on 10th December were APPROVED, and confidential sections confirmed

2.2 Matters Arising and outstanding actions

It was confirmed that all actions were either completed or in progress, and that there were no significant matters outstanding.

3. Corporate Risk Register update
Supporting paper by the Chief Executive

Covid-19 Update

The CE was thanked for keeping governors updated by email. The Principal reported on the current situation. The college was continuing to offer four day-a-week provision for students who required it, with staff coming onsite on a rota. Learning centres were open on all sites. Regular Lateral Flow testing had now been put in place for staff and students who were coming onsite.

January exams had not, however, taken place. Other risks and challenges included a loss of engagement by ESOL students, and lost learning, particularly for students on technical courses with a high level of practical skills training. Governors asked that lost learning should be kept under review and any risk to students reported to the QTSEG.

There was discussion of maintaining the quality of, and student engagement with, online learning. Overall attendance was reported to be strong, albeit with some pockets of lower engagement. Discussions with the curriculum leads and heads of learning were taking place on how to ensure consistency of standards with online learning without placing undue additional pressure on staff.

Governors expressed concern for staff wellbeing during the pandemic and sought assurance that all staff were being given access to appropriate support, whether onsite or working from home. It was confirmed that a range of team-level and staff development initiatives were in place, along with sign-posting to external sources of support. Areas where staff were under particular strain had been identified, including LLDD and high needs students. The Board requested a follow-up report on the outputs from the staff wellbeing work being undertaken.

In response to governor questions about progression, it was reported that a campaign was about to be launched to promote internal progression to Higher Education via a Progression Passport. Any student who passed L3 would be guaranteed a HE place.

Corporate risk register

Governors queried whether some of the post-mitigation risk ratings were now too optimistic, in the light of lockdown 3. These would be reviewed in the next iteration.

There was discussion of whether risk appetite should be established as part of a formal process or, alternatively, whether risk appetite was naturally expressed as part of decision making on a case-by-case basis. This would be picked up at the Audit Committee.

AGREED:

(i) That a follow-up report be brought to the Board on staff wellbeing during the pandemic as part of the HR and Organisational Development report to the March Board meeting.

(ii) That further discussion of risk appetite would take place at the Audit Committee.

4. **Finance and Resources**

Finance Scrutiny Group Report and Recommendations

Summary of 19 January FSG meeting; P4 Management accounts summary, reported by the Chair of FSG

It was reported that FSG had fully scrutinised the Period 4 (November) management accounts. These had indicated an adverse forecast year end position. The financial health score currently stood at 10 points lower than forecast. In response to governor feedback, several improvements had been made to the presentation of the accounts, including a helpful Executive Summary. Additional suggestions had been made to improve clarity further.

The cash position would be better off due to additional grant funding.

Early indications from period 5 showed a further detrimental impact on several income lines that had been particularly affected by Covid-19. Lockdown 3 meant that these would now be unlikely to recover in-year. FSG had asked management to undertake a detailed reforecast, including any impact of any mitigations, and the implications of the revised position on financial health and bank covenants.

A comprehensive debtor schedule had been considered, which provided governors with assurance that debt was being managed. This would now be brought to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

In the light of the impact of Lockdown-3, the FSG had asked for a review of the Business Improvement Plan to identify any areas for more radical cost savings.

The FSG had considered an indicative settlement figure for the withdrawal from the leasehold of Baird Road. The final figure primarily related to dilapidations plus a break penalty. Board approval was sought for the final settlement figure and the execution of the surrender deed. It was noted that, although there was no provision in the budget for the final settlement, this would not be factored into bank covenant calculations or reflected in the operating position. The sum was also less than had originally been reported, and would be offset by 4.5 years' rent and service charge savings.

Governors sought assurance that provision was being made for any future end-of-lease costs. Management confirmed that this was being implemented.

The question was also raised whether it would be possible to build up a financial pot to target learning gaps within students joining from year 11 in September 2021. It was confirmed that this year's 16-18 catch-up fund had been fully committed and it was not known whether further funding would be made available by the ESFA.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the proposed settlement figure for the termination of the lease for Baird Road be APPROVED

(ii) That the Surrender Deed be executed by seal, in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

5. **Health and Safety Annual Report 2019-20 and policy 2020-21**

Presented by the EDCS

The Board noted that the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) membership had been strengthened and it had been meeting more frequently during the year. The Staff Governor was a member of the committee, as well as representatives of all college unions and staff groups.

The HSC had overseen the production of detailed risk assessments during the pandemic, and had broadened its remit to include mental health.

The Staff Governor confirmed that the HSC was meeting weekly to respond quickly to the changing situation with Covid-19. In response to a request from unions, sickness absence data was being monitored weekly at campus level.

Data monitoring showed an increase in the reporting of negative behaviour and aggression within LLDD. This was, however, considered to be a reflection of increased reporting as a result of staff training.

Governors asked for changes to the descriptor of the Coronavirus. This was agreed.

The status of a number of legacy internal audit recommendations was queried. It was confirmed that a staff member had now been given responsibility for audit recommendations, so these should be picked up and completed.

The policy was in same format as previous years, with the addition of the new Health and Safety Officer role, and changes to other job titles. The policy on assistance dogs had also been added.

RESOLVED: That, with agreed edits, the Health and Safety Annual Report 2019-20 and the Health and Safety Policy 2020-21 be APPROVED

6. Committee membership

Report by the Chair of the Search Committee

It was reported that the Search Committee had met the previous week to consider further governor recruitment and the allocation of the new governors to committees/ task and finish groups. The need for two further governors with financial and education backgrounds had been identified.

RESOLVED That:

- **Jenny Jarvis should join the Finance Scrutiny Group**
- **Cait O'Riordan should join the Quality, Teaching and Student Experience Group**
- **Mark Sweeny should join the Audit Committee**

7. **Other urgent business**

Following the previous evening's meeting, it was noted that the financial statements had been signed and submitted to the ESFA.

8. Dates of forthcoming meetings

25 March, 20 May, 15 July 2021

The meeting closed at 18.15

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