Board of Governors Meeting

Date:	**21 October 2021**
Time:	**17.30 Pre- Board Briefing**
Venue:	**18.15-20.30**
	Southgate Campus Room 302a/302b

Governors present	Adam Goldstein	Chair
	Alessandra Almeida-Jones	
	Sheila Dawson	Vice Chair
	Imelda Galvin	
	Jenny Jarvis	
	Darren Mepham	Chief Executive
	Sakina Quettawala	Student Governor
	Cait O'Riordan	
	Hannah Sheath	
	Mark Sweeny	
	Christalla Tsatalla	Staff Governor
	Nana Brew	
	Ezgi Yaman Ozturk	***Student Governor***
In attendance	Neil Coker	Principal and Assistant CE P/DCE)
	Tracey MacIntosh	Exec Director Commercial (EDC)
	Mark Sellis	Exec Director Corp Services (EDCS)
	Lorna Lloyd-Williams	Head of Governance & Corporate Affairs

Italics denotes absence **MINUTES**

Item	**The briefing commenced at 17.38**
	PRE-BOARD BRIEFING: SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT UPDATE Governors received a helpful and informative presentation on the key safeguarding updates for 2020/21. Governors were taken through the key policies and procedures within the college to ensure that it operates in the best interest of students care and safety. The Board were advised of the key themes that Ofsted would be looking at. Governors asked if there had been a response within the college to the everybody is invited website and were informed there had not been and instead details of how the college has been responding to cases of sexual abuse and harassment were outlined. Governors received assurance that a lot of work was being undertaken in relation to sexual violence and harassment and that this had been incorporated into the safeguarding action plan. Governors commented that it would be helpful to link back to the discussions that were had last term by the Board and to see what developments there has been since then. **ACTION: Head of Governance, Principal and Ms Dawson discuss how to bring this to the next meeting.**

	The Board were also informed of the impact of Covid-19 on safeguarding and prevent. Cross college developments were outlined to the Board. Governors asked if the college was adequately resourced to deal with the increase in cases specifically in relation to early help and the safeguarding officer advised that she would need to look into this and report back. **Action: Designated Safeguarding Lead** Governors asked whether the key recommendations built on the list from the previous year and it was confirmed that it did. Governors asked whether any of the recommendations would be difficult to implement and were advised the dashboard and capturing destinations data. Governors also questioned whether the safeguarding team had sufficient resources to implement the recommendations and were advised that it would be good to have more Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's). The Board asked whether the college could afford to do this and were advised that the budgets had been set and should be adequate but there was a mechanism to raise requests for additional resource if it was needed. Governors commented that it would be helpful to have a mechanism of how these recommendations were being implemented in year; **Action: Head of Governance and Designated Safeguarding Lead** The safeguarding governor commended the work of the safeguarding officer and gave assurance that safeguarding was very robust in college and gave further details of the work that is undertaken. Governors were asked to ensure that they completed their safeguarding training. Thanks were expressed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
	The formal meeting commenced at 18.31 and was quorate with at least 6 governors being present. Governors attended both in person and remotely.
1.	**PRELIMINARY ITEMS**
	APOLOGIES Apologies were received and accepted from Ms Almeida Jones and Ms Quettawala.
	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.
	REQUESTS FOR URGENT BUSINESS There was no urgent business. Ms Tsalla was thanked for her outstanding contribution as a staff governor.
2.	**MINUTES OF 15 JULY 2021 FOR APPROVAL** It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th July 2021 would be circulated by email for approval.
	MATTERS ARISING The Head of Governance advised the Board of the status of outstanding actions

	as follows: i) Action to provide Ofsted briefing to Board in October- on the agenda ii) Action to appoint successor EDI Link Governor as part of review of Link Governor roles – ongoing discussion at Search committee regarding requirements for link governors iii) Take forward development of Environment and Sustainability strategy to 2021-22- outstanding for this academic year iv) That a report would be brought to the Board in October on the outcomes and impacts of the curriculum business planning process, including an EDI impact assessment. – curriculum business planning ongoing and therefore not appropriate to bring this to the Board at this stage. v) That consideration be given to establishing a risk appetite framework against which to evaluate options and opportunities. - risk management framework being established in the college. It was agreed that the internal auditor would be asked to give some training as offered at the next board development day. **Action: Head of Governance** vi) That a report on the evaluation of safeguarding data, the key issues identified and the triangulation with the action plan would be brought to the October Board meeting. The safeguarding link governor would be asked to assist with this. - covered in safeguarding briefing. vii) That an update on subcontracting be brought to the Finance Committee in the Autumn Term- completed.
3	**RISK REGISTER** <u>Corporate Risk Register</u> The EDCS advised of the key changes to the corporate risk register and that all risks were now linked to the college's strategic themes where applicable. It was noted that target risk had also been refined. Risk assurance mapping had also been included. The Board were advised that the colleges risk management committee (RMC) had reviewed the risk register. RMC would also be reviewing local risk registers and risk culture within the college. Audit committee members confirmed that risk management was a work in progress and there had been progress, however the Board had to be assured that target risks are where they should be and that further work would be needed so the Board can have confidence that risks are being managed. Governors questioned whether there should be more risks in relation to the quality of provision. It was agreed that the risk register would be considered at the next quality committee meeting to look at this both in terms of corporate risk register and an operational local curriculum risk register. **ACTION: Head of Governance** Governors also commented that consideration needed to be given outside of the meeting as to how risks are dealt with in the committee structure and referred across to audit. **ACTION: Head of Governance, Chair of Governing Board & CEO.**

4	**CEO REPORT** The CEO spoke to his paper which covered the following matters: • a range of new or emerging opportunities which would allow the college to further develop its profile and have potential to lead to further growth • The College as signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant in place between the armed forces and public services in Barnet • Staff forums in the week preceding the board meeting. The Board were updated on the NFL bid and advised that an outcome was expected in November. Governors advised that it would be good to see and understand the rationale around initiatives and requested that at the next Board meeting there be a focus on employer/stakeholder engagement. The Head of Governance suggested that this might form part of a wider discussion regarding strategy at the Board development day. The CEO and Head of Governance were tasked with preparing a draft agenda for the Board development day and bringing it to the next Board meeting. **ACTION CEO & Head of Governance** The Board were informed that the college was also connected in to a bid regarding screen skills. The CEO advised the Board of the staff forums and explained that the format had been Q&A sessions with staff, out of which the main themes had been regarding admissions and college culture variation across campuses. The Board noted that pay was not raised by staff. Governors were informed that generally the forums had been positive and feedback from staff who attended was they liked the format and the intention was to repeat this.
5	**QUALITY AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE** <u>Ofsted Briefing including student outcomes 2020-21</u> The Principal gave a presentation to the Board by way of an Ofsted briefing with governors being reminded of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and the Ofsted journey of the college to date. Governors were reminded that the college has a three-year strategy in relation to curriculum. The Board were advised that the inspection framework had been updated regarding Covid-19 and sexual violence and members were taken through the headlines of the framework. Key considerations for the Board under the framework are: 1. What does the curriculum look like and is it relevant? 2. Is the curriculum responsive and how does the Board know and challenge this? 3. Is the curriculum ambitious and does it provide equal opportunity for all learners including those with special needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds? Governors asked what steps were being taken to prepare students for inspection. The Principal gave further particulars and emphasised that these steps were taken not specifically for Ofsted preparation. Governors discussed whether they felt they were confident that they could address all of the governance/leadership

	requirements and whether this could be triangulated. The Principal also provided headline outcomes for 2020/2021 which were noted to still be being finalised. Overall outcomes for Level 2 had dropped by 5% below the national average. Within that the Board were advised there were no adapted assessments for ESOL and functional skills students and the Principal advised the college was looking at the detail of this. It was explained that this had contributed to the drop for Level 2 and it was noted that the college had a large number of ESOL learners. Governors asked whether the Board would see actual outcomes compared to predicted outcomes. The Principal confirmed that this exercise would be undertaken but also advised that KPIS were under review. **Action: Principal** Governors were advised that it had been shared from another college who had recently had a monitoring visit, that Ofsted had stated there was an overreliance on KPI's over discussion around curriculum intent etc. Governors asked how the SAR compared to the previous year and were informed that there were now a number of good areas and more outstanding areas. The QTSE committee chair provided feedback on what had been discussed at committee around the SAR. The committee chair advised that student outcomes had moved on positively and that engineering and construction had been picked up on as an area the committee would like to hear more on regarding improvement plans. The student survey and levels of student satisfaction had also been discussed. There had also been discussion about how the committee ensures that it has the right quality measures and how it understands the consistency of the quality of delivery. In conclusion, the Board were informed that more could be done regarding monitoring and tracking. <u>Annual complaints and compliments report</u> The Principal spoke to his report which advised the Board that the number of complaints had increased from 61 last year to 87 in 2020 -21. Governors were advised that the increase was due to the Centre Assessed Grades A Level and GCSE appeal system implemented as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic. The Board were informed that the proportion of complaints being upheld had declined this year, down from 36% in 2019 - 20 to 14%% this year. The proportion of complaints partially upheld was about the same for the last 3 years, around 20%. The proportion of complaints not upheld has been decreasing, however for this year there where a large number associated with the Grade appeals resulting in 56%. Governors received information on the number of complaints according to gender, ethnic groupings, complainant, campus and type. Governors asked about the data for BAME students, whether this reflected the student population and was there anything the college needed to do to address this. Governors also asked about the difference between campuses and were advised that this was due to the size of the campus cohorts. Governors questioned whether any complaints had been made to regulatory bodies and were informed that Board members would be informed in year if that were the case.

	Governors also commented that consistently highest number of complaints related to staff attitude and course organisation and challenged the executive as to what the college was learning from this or was it the case that complaints of this nature were not consistently upheld. Following discussion, it was agreed that further analysis was needed in particular regarding what appeared to be a disproportionate number of complaints from BAME students. Governors asked that an updated report be provided with both analysis and recommendations. Governors also asked for information regarding complaints in the context of behaviour and attitudes from the Ofsted framework. **Action Principal: bring back to next Board meeting with analysis requested and recommendations and narrative.** Ms O 'Riordan asked that the Executive Director Commercial provide an update to on how apprentices are performing. **Action: Executive Director Commercial** **20.00 Ms O 'Riordan left the meeting and it remained quorate.** <u>Quality committee report from meeting of 23 September including student survey feedback</u> This was provided above. <u>Student Governor feedback on student survey</u> It was not possible to consider this agenda item as the student governors were unable to attend and therefore this item was postponed to the next meeting.
6	**FINANCE AND RESOURCES** <u>Finance committee report from meeting of 30th September</u> The committee chair gave a verbal update to the Board on the meeting of the 30th September. Key points were noted to be: • Discussed likely year end outcome and the college has been brought back on budget. • Health score will still be requires improvement • Pension deficit will decrease • Cash position as expected and in a good place • Bank covenants will not be breached. • Budget- some of the targets have proven to be ambitious and the college will be 97% against allocation which means allocation will be down for the college. Governors queried when they would receive the management accounts and the EDCS advised this would normally be at the end of the month. Assurance was given to the Board that the executive team were tracking changes from the budget on a weekly basis. The Board were reminded that the colleges national insurance will be increasing and advised that there is a shortfall in HE figures but on the positive side that was some flexibility in relation to gap hours in the budget. The

	Board were informed that the executive team continued to discuss the issue of a pay rise and the CEO advised how this was being actively managed. Governors asked if at the next meeting they could have financial KPIS as well as the financial statements. **Action ECDS** Governors also asked how progress against the financial plan would be monitored and were advised that incrementally financial reports would come to the finance committee. **Action: Head of Governance to ensure that in the schedule of business for finance committee to monitor at each meeting.**
7	**AUDIT AND RISK** <u>Internal Audit Plan 2021-22</u> The Board were presented with the internal audit plan for recommendation upon the advice of the audit committee. The Audit committee chair explained that there is the possibility to vary the plan if a significant matter arose and on the recommendation of the committee it was **Resolved** to approve the internal audit plan for 2021/22. <u>Audit and risk committee report from meeting of 22nd September</u> In relation to the risk register it was agreed that at the next audit committee meeting, Governors would consider whether they were satisfied with the sources of external assurance for each risk. **Action: EDCS consider further sources of assurance to add to risk register for consideration at next Audit committee meeting.** The committee chair confirmed that the other areas of the risk register were being addressed. The Board were advised that the annual internal audit report had provided a limited opinion for the second year and the key criticism was that in routine audit work there are too many weaknesses in the colleges control environment. Governors were informed that Audit committee have asked management to provide a plan to address this. The Board were also informed that one of the issues discussed by the committee, was a lack of compliance with rules and procedures which meant that the audit committee discussed the colleges performance and appraisal framework and concluded that the Board may need to hear more on HR. The Head of Governance gave advice on this and what she had seen as good practice in other colleges. **ACTION: For further discussion by Head of Governance, Chair of Governing Board & CEO.** Cladding – the EDCs gave a verbal update and advised that there were no issues and gave further particulars in relation to the individual campuses.

8	**GOVERNANCE - SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT FROM 7TH OCTOBER** In the absence of the committee chair, the Head of Governance gave a verbal report on the key issues discussed by the committee and it was noted that the recruitment of further members to the Audit committee was a matter of urgent priority. Governors were asked to explore their contacts in this regard.
9	**OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** The Board were advised that there had been a black history event organised by a staff member at wood street and the Head of Governance was asked to convey the Board's thanks to all staff involved. **Action: Head of Governance**
10	**Date of next meeting** 16 December 2021
	The meeting closed at 20.45