Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Governing Board meeting
held on Tuesday 23rd May 2023
18:00

Present	Adam Goldstein, Chair Alex Middleton Cait O'Riordan Chalene Scott, Staff Governor Daniel Yilmaz, Student Governor (from 6.20pm) Darren Mepham, CEO Diane Moore Imelda Galvin Jenny Jarvis Mark Sweeny Mark Taylor Rouzbeh Faramazian Sue Baker, Staff Governor Thomas Streater
In attendance	Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance Neil Coker, Principal/assistant CEO Mark Sellis, Executive Director of Corporate Services Tracey McIntosh, Executive Director of Commercial Partnership

Item	Description	Action
1	**Preliminary items** **i) Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received from Alessandra Almeida-Jones and Hannah Sheath. **ii) Declarations of interest** Declarations of interest were received from: • Sue Baker as she is a UCU representative • Mark Sweeney – he has just taken on the position of interim Director of Governance at a housing association in London which is situated next to New City College • Imelda Galvin advised that she has been appointed as the Deputy CEO at New City College **iii) Quorum** Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate.	

2	**Minutes of the previous meetings** **1) Minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2023** The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions. AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2023 as presented. **2) Matters arising** Matters discussed were: • Increase in board membership 'up to 20' is intended to provide flexibility and the Search Committee will look at options in relation to recruitment when it next meets. • Page 14 – update from audit and risk committee. Governors agreed that they would like to see the full risk register at board (Executive Director Corporate Services, each meeting) • First meeting of the property strategy steering group will take place on 8th June 2023. Project management will be a specific discussion item. Director of Governance to ensure that the meeting invite has been sent to Mark Taylor (Director of Governance, May 2023) Board were happy to note the content of the updated action tracker.	 * *
3	**CEO's Report** CEO drew governors' attention to his detailed written report and all agreed to 'take it as read'. A number of aspects were particularly discussed, including: • <u>Curriculum offer developments</u> Question from one governor was in relation to any affordability issues in relation to T Levels. Governors also asked for an update on the reference made to 'sports partnerships' and particularly what the gap in funding would be. In relation to T Levels, CEO advised that the issues to be balanced are utilisation of grant funding as it is a one off payment. Risk is that if the college does not recruit the numbers required it will mean clawback. This means a careful balance therefore in relation to what the organisation does and doesn't push forward on. He provided assurance that staff are tracking the number of starts/applications and it is currently believed that four T Levels will be viable. He confirmed that, if an offer is not viable then it doesn't make sense to run the course. One governor asked what the minimum numbers required are. CEO	

	explained that it is twelve but that, sitting alongside this, there is a need to ensure that the curriculum for each of the T Levels is up and running. In relation to sports partnerships, CEO advised that the college is working to firm up relationships in relation to this and he is in dialogue with the QTSE and finance committee chairs looking at options. If it is to be progressed the college would need to find £150k in 2023/24 but in the following years funding would catch up on a lagged basis. He expressed the view that the organisation could not afford to stretch itself further than this. Challenge from one governor, in relation to sports development, was just to be cautious and have confidence in relation to proposed partners, it being the case that the organisation does not want to be disappointed. In relation to the proposed partner one governor noted that their HE offer is currently with Loughborough which is outside of London and therefore how confident are they in terms of what we can offer. CEO explained that it is a 3 year deal that is proposed so as to offset the first year costs throughout the longer contract. He expressed a view that if BSC is the single provider then it will be possible to offer better progression opportunities. One governor noted that students would be in West London and they therefore asked whether travel would be an issue. CEO confirmed that there is a strong belief that students would prefer BSC. Challenge from the board was the need to include all potential costs in the 2023/24 budget planning process. Question and challenge from one governor was whether or not the organisation has learnt lessons from previous partnerships. CEO acknowledged that partnerships can be quite a 'fickle market' and gave assurance that some potential partners have been discounted, with the ones remaining being more solid. It was agreed that this would be included as a point of analysis during discussions with the two committee chairs (CEO, June 2023). • <u>Regulatory updates</u> – board were happy to note the information provided, specifically in relation to the annual strategic conversation letter. • <u>Negotiations with UCU</u> – key matters discussed were: • Whether or not the BSC pay award for 2022/23 is in line with others in the sector. CEO confirmed that BSC is comfortably above the median in terms of staff salaries and that the 3-5 year strategy is to move this up in to the upper percentiles. Over the years BSC has paid the AOC recommended percentage increase whilst others have not but, in and around us, they are catching up. Central London colleges do pay more. CEO advised that the most significant gap is with the schools sector, where their pay award has been circa 8%. It is also the case that other sixth forms pay more.	*

	One staff governor shared her own challenges in terms of losing teaching staff during the year and she urged the college to have a strategy in place to retain staff as they are going elsewhere. All agreed that it would be helpful if the People Committee could have a benchmarking data report at its next meeting. This should include staff retention and turnover information in relation to: • Teaching staff • Support roles • Comparison with colleges • Comparison with schools • Any exit data which would give a sense of how many staff move for a higher salary • Analysis by subject areas It was explained that the area of provision that this staff governor works in does have school competition challenges. CEO advised that the Finance Committee has had a lot of discussions this year on the options available, including data analysis, however it is simply too risky to do more this year particularly given the unknowns in 2023/24 and banking covenant challenges. One governor asked for more information in relation to the exit interviews conducted with staff and questioned whether it is absolutely salary that is the reason for departure or whether there are occasions that the organisation could provide additional support to incentivise retention. Staff advised that people leave for a number of reasons and, in the particular team highlighted by the staff governor, there was some quite aggressive poaching this year. CEO expressed a view that there is more that the organisation can do to make continuing working at BSC attractive and he provided assurance that the organisation will continue to focus on: • Wellbeing • Celebrating success • Succession planning • Career progression Challenge from the board was that they would like to see a Pay Strategy which includes a broad range of options. Governors indicated that they would like to explore the potential of more radical options given the flat funding environment. It was agreed that Pay Strategy options and analysis would be presented to the finance and/or people committee (ED:CS, June 2023). One governor asked how the college is managing the impact of industrial action. CEO advised that there were a large number of GCSE exams which took place on Friday which was a strike day and that, whilst there were some challenges, any issues were dealt with effectively. He confirmed that a lot of detailed planning took place in advance and that there were extra 'feet on the ground' to address issues as and when they arose. Board were advised that other strike action days planned do coincide with GCSE exams and the intention is for the organisation to take the same planning approach. All agreed that the feedback to students is that they should not let a small number of disruptive	*

	days at the end of the year detract from the great teaching and learning they have had all the way throughout the year. Staff advised that A Level students are currently on study leave and therefore have not been as negatively impacted as potentially some others. Chair advised that he has received email comments from UCU and he agreed to share these with governors outside the meeting (Chair, May 2023). • Executive Director Corporate Services departure – key matters highlighted were: • Interim arrangements were considered and agreed by the Remuneration Committee • Committee and the college are very clear that these are interim arrangements and not permanent changes • There are planned check in points agreed to assess the effectiveness of the interim arrangements One governor specifically asked what the arrangements will be for property and estates management. CEO advised that the intention is to bring in additional interim external support. He has a number of CVs and will be liaising with the Chair of PSSG/Audit and Risk committee to review. Challenge from the board was to make sure that there are clear lines in place linking curriculum planning, delivery and quality so that there are no gaps. One governor asked what the format of the check in meetings to assess the interim arrangements will be. It was explained that these will be via Remuneration Committee with a meeting scheduled in June/July and then over the summer. It was explained that different aspects will come on stream at different points in the coming months. CEO provided assurance that risks are known and that the intention is to use these points to identify check in dates. These will be with Remuneration Committee and also one to ones with the Chair. Board agreed that it would be helpful to have a schedule of check in points presented to the July board meeting (CEO, July 2023). Challenge from one governor was to be clear in terms of the CEO's role in relation to the changes. It was agreed to share a copy of the organogram that was considered by the Remuneration Committee at their most recent meeting (CEO, May 2023). • Accountability Agreement – key matters highlighted were: • This is a new responsibility for this year • It will feature in the annual strategic conversations with ESFA in future years • QTSE has tested the outline priorities proposed and links with the LSIPs • College has included a priority in relation to culture, particularly for new provision • Purpose of the document is clear One governor asked whether there are any risks associated with submitting this before all the LSIPs are finally published. CEO	* * *

	expressed the view that there are no risks, particularly as this year is being seen very much as a 'trial run' in the sector. Question and challenge from one governor was in relation to the fact that, within the colleges catchment there are two regeneration areas, but that these don't really feature in this document. CEO confirmed that it will be much more of a feature in the next academic years iteration. One governor asked how confident the organisation is that it can make it work i.e. the plan not to go in to central London. Governors asked how the organisation will ensure that it is on track with everything proposed. One governor asked how confident the organisation is in terms of funding for the identified priorities when they don't all match with the London stated priorities. CEO advised that having a number of LSIPs to consider is more complicated but that the organisation is confident in terms of the sub-regional priorities. He confirmed that this agreement is responding to the local LSIP and national priorities and that the colleges ten priorities track back to London or sub-regional priorities. Governors discussed sports provision and acknowledged that, whilst not an LSIP priority, the college does know that there is high demand in the area and good progression. Challenge from the board was that there is a risk associated with this and therefore college needs to be aware of moving forward with something that is not a priority for anyone other than us. CEO expressed confidence that it is possible to demonstrate local need in relation to this. One governor indicated that, eventually the organisation will need to be accountable for what is included within the agreement, and they therefore asked what the confidence levels are in relation to this. CEO provided assurance that for all of the areas there will be a curriculum in place for September 2023 and that, thereafter it will be gradual expansion rather than transformational in just one year. He provided assurance that this document aligns with the curriculum strategy and that QTSE will be seeing and discussing the delivery plans for each area. He described 23/24 as a trial year and that there will be lessons learned ready for 24/25. Governors all agreed that they would like to see risk monitoring in relation to this in 23/24 as the board will need assurance regarding delivery and progress on the priorities identified (CEO, each meeting). AGREED: to approve the content of the Accountability Agreement as presented. One governor commented on the ESFA letter received following the annual strategic conversation and asked whether the college raised risks in relation to recruitment and retention as part of discussions. CEO confirmed that these were highlighted. Challenge from the board was to do this at every opportunity. One governor noted that this was not specifically mentioned	

	within the letter and therefore suggested it may be worth pointing this out to them and requesting that it be included.	
4	**KPI's - 2022/23 position against targets** CEO presented this item and it was acknowledged that there was significant discussion regarding format at the last meeting and it was therefore agreed to move straight to questions. Key matters discussed were: • In relation to the quality of teaching and learning there are quite a number of aspects RAG rated as red whereas by comparison the Finance KPIs are green – governors questioned whether this was right. • These KPIs are all about the here and now and historic rather than forward looking. Is it possible to have a greater focus on forward planning. • Can we do more in terms of employers, partnerships, collaboration etc. There needs to be some KPIs to give the board assurance in relation to this. • Given earlier discussions it is a surprise that the KPI in relation to staff turnover is green and the board asked what the metric underpinning this is. • Attendance KPI is red and governors asked for more contextual information in relation to this In relation to attendance, key matters highlighted by staff were: • BSC is not out of sync with other colleges and schools and this is unlikely to change in future years. • Young people have more challenges post pandemic including mental health, confidence and resilience. These impact upon whether they do or don't attend. • College continues to put in new strategies but there are challenges. • The position honeycomb is lighter red as this includes the context. • QTSE have conducted deep dives on a number of areas and this has included the plans that they have in place to address attendance challenges. • Staff have noticed a very different set of reasons for non-attendance post pandemic. Nationally and locally there is a different environment and therefore the college may need to consider whether or not the target for this is reduced. • There is a correlation between attendance and results. • College is seeing a different type of student now. • There is the possibility that attendance challenges will play out in outcomes this year, particularly for the year 2 students. • Interventions are carefully tracked but for some students it is just not having the desired impact. • Expectation is that there will be a national shift. • English and Maths attendance is negatively impacting upon the overall statistics.	

	In general discussion, challenge from the board was that by reducing the attendance target it could lower expectations which would then have a knock on in terms of consequences for safeguarding. All agreed that it was really important to go in to next year knowing the context. CEO then provided a response to the point raised in relation to quality of education and key matters highlighted were: • This includes how the organisation thinks it can respond to the risks and issues. • The heatmap approach helps to look to the future. • Heatmap for finance KPIs is still to be developed and it will then be possible to use it to show how the organisation is positioned against longer term aims. It was agreed that the CEO would work with committee chairs over the summer to agree KPIs to be measured in 2023/24. His suggestion was to frontload the work required over the summer (CEO, July/August 2023). In considering the information provided governors agreed that it was helpful to see the holistic approach but challenged that there was a gap i.e. nothing included about the student experience. Committee were given assurance that QTSE committee regularly receive information in relation to student voice as this is included within the score card that they consider at each meeting. One governor asked what the current position is in terms of 16-18 student numbers and the ambition for growth. CEO confirmed that the college is seeing very positive application numbers. One governor observed that this should be compared with apprenticeship numbers which are down and they asked why this was the case. CEO explained that this report was based upon the period 9 data and that there were specifically two large employers who have not taken the numbers expected. Intention is to reprofile in June. Challenge from the board was that the organisation needs to be learning the lessons. CEO provided assurance that this is the case and explained that the position with these two employers was completely unforeseen, rather than the college being over optimistic in terms of numbers. Challenge from the board was that the strategy in place for apprenticeship provision is key and they asked whether the situation is more volatile than originally envisaged. CEO expressed the view that the numbers will be achieved but that there will be a delay. He indicated that, for him, the apprenticeship position is not a significant concern as the organisation receives a smaller margin and therefore a reduced impact on the bottom line. CEO advised that the college has done a lot of work in relation to 16-18 recruitment and, as a consequence, is seeing a positive increase in applications. It is envisaged that this will flow through to offers and enrolments. Organisation has had very positive feedback from the open days and taster events. All acknowledged that what is critically important now is conversion.	

	One member of the board indicated that they would like to see more focus on stakeholder/employer activity and engagement in future reports and it was agreed that proposals would come from the executive in relation to how to track and monitor this, this proposal to come to the next meeting (CEO, July 2023). Staff advised that the quality of education KPIs look at a number of aspects, including: • QIP • Student progress • Student experience • Attendance • Safeguarding All of these component parts link in to student experience. Question and challenge from one governor was in relation to brand identity and whether something could be included going forward, as this links to both reputation and recruitment. Request from the board was to also include something on performance management. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
5	**Safeguarding 2022/23 Midyear Report** The safeguarding manager presented her detailed written report and proposed updated policy. She explained that it was in a different format and that presentation had been brought forward by one meeting and therefore it has a focus on risks. Key issues highlighted were: • Increasing mental health needs, with 400 extra students engaged in mental health workshops this year. This is both 16-18 and adult learners. • Training continues to be a focus. • Plans are in place to ensure that the organisation is fully compliant. • Prevent strategy and risk assessments have been reviewed. • Clear processes and procedures. • Team work both proactive and reactively. One governor asked for a reminder in relation to governor safeguarding and prevent training. It was confirmed that an update on Keeping Children Safe in Education was completed in December 2022 and that an update on the 2023 policy issued will take place in the autumn term. In relation to prevent training, it is likely that the board is coming up to the 2 year annual update anniversary and therefore it was agreed to try and schedule both this and 2023 Keeping Children Safe in Education update in the autumn term (Safeguarding manager, September/October 2023). One governor asked for more information in relation to the Southgate safety incident referred to in the report. Board were advised that this is more to do with intruders coming on to site	

	and that, to try and address this, additional staff capacity has been resourced as well as providing training. In relation to the latter, examples given were how to respond to students bringing their friends on site and the visitor on site processes. Board were given assurance that a full risk assessment has been completed and that, as a consequence, organisation is looking at working with a different security company and also reception cover. In relation to the statistics provided, one governor observed that there appears to be a disproportionately high number of safeguarding issues at Wood Street. It was explained that there are a higher number of 16-18 year olds at Wood Street and that they do generally have higher safeguarding needs when compared to adults. Board were given assurance that staff are fully trained and are working with the community. One governor noted the information provided in relation to referrals made against staff and all agreed that the safeguarding lead/link governor to be recruited would be provided with much more detail in relation to these. One governor noted the rise in relation to 'victims of crime'. It was explained that most are to do with incidents outside the college and that what the college works to do is provide wraparound support. Staff advised that common themes in college are: • Bullying, and • Conflict • However, there are low numbers where there are sexual concerns and the statistics in the main relate to a small number of students. Boards attention was then drawn to the updated policy and it was explained that the main changes are to bring it in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. The document is now in two parts i.e. • Risks, indicators etc. • Procedures One governor asked whether the organisation receives local intelligence through partnership work. It was confirmed that it does and particularly in relation to sexual exploitation. Staff described the police as very supportive and responsive to student concerns and disclosures. AGREED: a) To note the content of the update provided b) To approve the updated Safeguarding Policy as presented	
6	**Report from QTSE committee** Committee Chair referred to the assurance report provided and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2023. Key matters highlighted were:	

	• Heat map has now been introduced and gives assurance based upon shades of colours. • Student voice report is scheduled for the next meeting. • Employer engagement is planned as a report for next board meeting. • Assurance has been sought in terms of what sits behind each of the subsections/topics. • Aim is for each committee member to score during the meeting and then at the end take a view of what can be agreed. • 20th April was a large meeting and committee has reflected upon the high number of presentations. • Deep dive was completed in relation to engineering with very focused intervention now taking place. • Planned deep dive at the next meeting is teaching and learning. • Committee had the opportunity to review the accountability agreement which was discussed earlier in the meeting. • Committee is planning a deep dive on A Levels in the autumn term. • Teaching and learning report was comprehensive but committee did not feel it had sufficient time to review. hence the deep dive request for the next meeting. • In relation to the curriculum strategy. committee has requested sight of the detailed plans when they are finalised in July 2023. These will be uploaded to the QTSE shared area. • Committee have reframed their terms of reference and they are presented for board consideration and approval today. • There is an open invitation for any governor to attend QTSE committee meetings AGREED: a) To note the content of the update provided, b) Note the content of the committee chairs assurance report, c) Note the content of the 20th April 2023 meeting minutes, and d) Approve updated terms of reference as presented	
7	**Report from the Finance Committee** Committee Chair drew governors' attention to her summary note and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 4th May 2023. Key matters highlighted were: • Growth plans to be presented to the next meeting which underpin the curriculum strategy, • In relation to subsidiary company liquidation there is a need to notify ESFA/DfE, • ESFA letter has now been received following review of the 21/22 year. They have accepted the colleges calculation of 'good' rather than 'outstanding' financial health.	

	- Steer from the committee was that they want to see a realistic budget set for 2023/24 - Committee considered information provided in relation to AEB and apprenticeships - Bank covenants are a focus and the board will not be able to set a budget without knowing a firm position for next year. This is an important conversation for the senior team to have with the bank. - In relation to the 23/24 budget there is a significant amount of work to do and staff have been tasked with drafting up a budget which gets as near as possible to a £1 million deficit. - Committee has asked for more clarity in relation to investments as well as risks - There is only a small subcontracting arrangement in place - There needs to be a real focus now on pay, bank covenants and developing the 2023/24 budget - There is a requirement to update the 3-year forecast - Managing Public Money return was completed, this is a new requirement following ONS reclassification. In relation to bank covenants, staff advised that they have had some initial conversations but that nothing firm agreed yet. In relation to the budget strategy, CEO advised that he needed to catch up on this with the Chair and Chair of Finance Committee, particularly in relation to the implications for sports partnerships. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
8	**Minutes of the People Committee meeting held on 13th March 2023** Board were happy to note the content of the meeting minutes and it was acknowledged that a verbal update had been provided at the last meeting.	
9	**AOB** As a matter of additional business, governors asked for an update in relation to Tudor Hall. Staff advised that there are potential long-term letting options to explore, however there are calls on the space for curriculum and other parts of the business which need to be considered. It was confirmed that these aspects will be overseen by the Property Strategy Steering Group going forward. Staff advised that the building cannot be demolished and therefore, if the college was to sell it, it will have a long term neighbour that it has no influence over. It was confirmed that, within the estates strategy it is identified as a potential for disposal, but that the initial advice obtained is that it is unlikely to be desirable on the open market, however this will be tested.	
10	**Date and time of next meeting** This was confirmed as 13th July 2023	