MINUTES

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Governing Board Meeting
held on Tuesday 17th October 2023
at 18:00

Present	Adam Goldstein, Chair Alex Middleton Dianne Moore Cait O'Riorden Chalene Scott Jenny Jarvis Sue Baker Mark Taylor Thomas Streater
In attendance	Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance Neil Coker, Principal/Deputy CEO Tracy McIntosh, Executive Director of Commercial Partnerships James Russel, Interim Project Manager Shirley Collier, Observer

Item	Description	Action
1	**Preliminary items** **i. Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received from Imelda Galvin, Rouzbeh Faramarzian, Darren Mepham, Hannah Sheath, Daniel Yilmaz and Alessandra Almeida-Jones. **ii. Declarations of interest** Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed and he also drew attention to the summary of declared interests circulated with papers. Governors confirmed that there were no additional declarations to be made other than those already highlighted. **iii. Quorum** Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Chair welcomed Shirley Collier to the meeting and explained that she was attending today as an observer as part of the external review of governance underway. She advised the board that she works with a wide range of colleges and is conducting both ERGs	

	and other work. She confirmed that everything discussed at the meeting today she would treated as confidential.	
2	**Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2023** The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they are an accurate record of discussions. AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2023. One governor noted the reference on page 9 to work placements and employer data and challenged whether there should be an action associated with this. All agreed that it would be helpful to know the employers that the college works with and it was agreed that the Executive Director of Commercial Partnerships would summarise and circulate (ED:CP, November 2023).	
3	**Action progress report** Committee were happy to note the content of the update provided and it was confirmed that all completed items would be removed from the next iteration of the document.	
4	**Property Strategy – an update on disposal options** Chair indicated that, staff should take the report as read by governors and that there is a need to be clear what is being asked of the board. There appears to be two strands to the paper, covering: 1) Pre-approved aspects in the property strategy, & 2) New additions which are outside the property strategy previously agreed. In summary, the Chair confirmed that the report advises that some of the potential parcels of land for disposal will have different values, with these valuations due on 28th October 2023. Report includes an invitation to consider delegation options once valuations are obtained to either ELT or PSSG. Interim Project Director advised that the options were discussed earlier in the day at an ELT meeting and particularly timescales, with the view reached that decision requirements will align with the already scheduled November PSSG meeting and December Board therefore delegation is not required. He advised that the valuation of the W Block land parcels have not been to PSSG before but that the other areas have been considered. When considering the report governors all agreed that good progress looks to have been made and they thanked staff for the very clear report. Chair of the PSSG confirmed that they had spent a lot of time discussing risks and the interdependencies regarding income, disposals and actions.	

	One governor asked whether the college would get to keep all of the proceeds from disposals. Staff advised that the proceeds will need to be reinvested into the estate. Staff confirmed that they were cognisant of anticipated ONS pressure regarding proceeds in the future. Governors asked for clarification regarding timescales on this. It was confirmed that previous communication suggests March 2025. One governor asked for an update regarding space modelling and how this aligns with the curriculum and growth strategies i.e. 5% growth. Staff indicated that modelling would suggest that there will still be up to 2,000 metre squared excess even if there is 5% growth and planned disposals. Staff expressed a belief that there will be sufficient space but acknowledged that there was a need to consider risks in relation to this. It was confirmed that there are other parcels of land which can be retained. It was confirmed that capacity measurements will be revisited with Fusion Consultants when the valuations are obtained. All agreed that there was no real benefit to the college to retain land when this would mean it is over spaced. All acknowledged that currently this is a very fluid situation. Staff confirmed that the next stage is to revisit the specifications in relation to each parcel and look at over/under spacing. Challenge from the board was to consider the look and feel of the campuses when considering options as well as the numbers. In terms of the options available, it was acknowledged that this is a lifetime potential change for one of the campuses i.e. the scale of options to be considered. Challenge from the board was, given the scale and significance of options, this needs to be a board decision with the board and executive being cognisant of all potential associated risks. Challenge from one governor was to consider the outside as well as internal space. Challenge from the board was that they will really need assurance that decisions being made, and recommendations put forward, are on the basis of 'students at the heart'. In relation to the update provided regarding potential plans for P Block, one governor asked whether there are any implications for T Level provision and funding. Staff confirmed that there will be a need to go through the DFE change process and that DFE are likely to be very focused on the meterage/size. That said, it was acknowledged to be a risk and the college will need to be able to mitigate this i.e. fully explain the plans including better site options etc. Challenge from one governor was to also consider the impact on staff and students who work and study at Southgate, as potentially the changes are significant if the college decides to go ahead with the larger sale option. Challenge from the board was for the executive team to gather informal staff views, it being acknowledged that they may see things that others don't.	

	In terms of next steps, challenge from the board was that PSSG will need to have a full options analysis covering both risks and opportunities. Any proposals for consideration will need to be really clear in terms of the scale of change and the potential impact on students, staff, external space, the look and feel and the environment. All agreed that any proposals to PSSG, and then the board, would need to have clearly agreed criteria upon which to base decisions. All agreed that it would be helpful to have stakeholder groups involved in options analysis. AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.	
5	**CEO's report** The Principal presented the CEO's report in his absence and key matters highlighted were: 1) National developments effecting FE He confirmed that this information was provided for noting at this stage and summarises the direction of travel, however the challenge now could be the negative political comments made regarding T Levels and the colleges future plans for growth in relation to this. One governor asked what labours response has been. Principal confirmed that they have been non-committal with no significant plans shared by them in relation to FE. He described the current significant challenge as the continuation of defunding plans regarding non T Level qualifications. Aspects particularly highlighted included: • Increase focus on student hours and focus on skills, • Continuing plans to rollout T Levels, • LSIF bid has been submitted and there is collective confidence that it is a strong bid. One governor asked whether the organisation captures information in relation to where 16-18 students are coming from i.e. schools. All agreed that it would be good to assess the trends. Principal confirmed that the data does exist. Question and challenge from the board was whether or not the plans in place, and work being done to grow this cohort, is having an effect. 2) Implementation of the growth strategy All agreed that student numbers reported were incredibly positive and the board asked that their congratulations and appreciation be passed on to staff. Current position is that the college, for 16-18 year olds, is 107% of allocation, however it was acknowledged that there are still some withdrawals working their way through the system. Staff view is that the college is likely to land at around 105% which is a real positive in terms of the growth plan. Challenge from the board was to really understand what has and hasn't worked this year. It was confirmed that students who enrolled but didn't then turn up are being targeted for follow up. 6% of 16-18 year olds didn't start	

as anticipated and the college needs to better understand this. Staff confirmed that there has been a much better student journey this year but that there is still work to do in relation to getting them onto the right course first time. Assurance was provided that the college has a Early retention strategy that is effectively supporting this.

One governor asked whether the college can afford to deliver the +5%. Staff provided assurance that this was the case and explained that there are better systems and processes, alongside a better culture at the start of the year, leading to success. Board was advised that there has been a much more collegiate approach to the beginning of the year with everyone 'in it together'. All acknowledged that better culture leads to retention and better morale.

One governor asked how morale is. Staff described it as 'a bit mixed' and explained that this is for a number of reasons including the fact that this has been a very long half term. Staff are also having to respond to some large class sizes and there continues to be some concerns regarding workload. Staff advised that this is always a difficult term as staff are starting new students whilst still finishing off work required for the prior academic year. Once all actions and activity relating to 2022/23 are concluded the workload will lessen. Challenge from the board was to ensure that staff capture all the lessons learned.
It was confirmed that the college has been very transparent in relation to data that is available which allows managers and staff to see clearly 'what and where' and this then allows them to take action.

One governor asked whether there are any ways to celebrate successes. Staff confirmed that there are smaller and more frequent celebrations planned and that a key part of improving morale is ensuring that all staff share the positive messages.

One governor asked a query in relation to T Levels and asked specifically, where the college has failed to recruit does the organisation have any insight/lessons learned from others. Sitting alongside this, what is the college doing to attract learners to green skills provision. Staff advised that in some areas e.g. gas there was significant interest/demand however many of the students did not have the entry criteria needed as it is very specialist. Intention for next year is to advertise more in specialist trade publications. Board was advised that, generally there was less interest and therefore recruitment at Southgate. Staff expressed the view that there is likely to be a lag in demand until the work/jobs are available particularly for trade skills regarding heat pumps in the UK and an example given was much more increased household demand.

In relation to T Levels it was explained that, where the college has offered dual qualifications alongside BTECs then students have self-selected the latter. There has also been some staff caution with a view to potentially avoiding failure. It was

	confirmed that other colleges are in a similar position, however some of the local schools have been successful and an example given was Saracens in relation to their digital offer. Board was advised that plumbing has been a surprise success. Challenge from the board was to always be cautious regarding the tension between the requirement for student numbers but also getting students on the right course. Governors indicated that it would be helpful to have some more analysis regarding progression opportunities in all of the communities that the college serves, and a particular example was health and social care. Staff confirmed that work is underway on some aspects of this with the mayoral academies. Governors asked staff to be mindful of the scale/proportion of enrolments on to new courses as this will give an indication of growth. Staff explained that the increase in student numbers was not just to new provision this year but is also linked to expansion of new courses that were started 2 to 3 years ago. 3) 2023 Accountability Agreement Board was happy to note the content of the update provided and the progress reported. It was agreed that this would continue to be considered as a standing agenda item at each board meeting. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
6	**KPI's** Board was happy to take CEO's report as read and noted the yearend position reported for 2022/23. All agreed that reviews planned by each of the subcommittees were important so as to ensure detailed testing. One governor asked for an update in relation to apprenticeship provision as discussed at the last meeting and the current achievement position. Staff advised that, in terms of Apprenticeship outcomes, 2023 was the best performance ever with the college being in a positive position regarding national averages. Unfortunately, however the financial position is not so positive. Board were reminded that this was known as an issue back at period 6/7. It was confirmed that there will be no clawback regarding apprenticeship funding. Board acknowledged that apprenticeship delivery is a challenge for the sector and staff indicated that the hope is that there will be some policy changes. Board was given assurance that the organisation has very carefully considered the offer for 2023/24 so as to ensure it is high quality and delivers higher margins so that risks can be mitigated. Challenge from the board was whether, when an offer is changed, does the college make sure that students have other options. Staff confirmed that this is always the case. It was noted that there are some large organisations which are moving out of the apprenticeship market which is a reflection of the challenges to be faced. Staff indicated	

	that when apprenticeship delivery works best for a college it is where there is a big employer fully committed e.g. Jaguar, however this also has risks as there is then a reliance on a single source of activity. It was acknowledged that BSC is very much surrounded by SMEs rather than large companies. Staff provided assurance that risks are being considered carefully which is why the aim again for 2023/24 is £1 million income. Challenge from one governor was that the college would really benefit from an influential NHS link so that delivery could be looked at very broadly and an example given was customer service apprenticeships. Staff confirmed that there is a real breadth of employers engaged with the college and that these are maximised at every opportunity. Board then discussed the SMART targets for students and all agreed that it is important to go beyond what is already done with a move away from 'ticks in boxes' so as to have confidence regarding the quality of provision and delivery. When considering the KPIs proposed challenge from one governor was whether more could be included in relation to: • Staff performance • Staff satisfaction • Sickness • Turnover i.e. the reasons why staff leave • Absence • IIP review Staff confirmed that these are all aspects that will be available to the People Committee who can review in detail. Challenge from the board was that, at the appropriate time, governors will want to see staff surveyed and the results of this shared. It was confirmed that the college is currently in the process of reviewing the survey format with the intention to commission in April/May 2024. Challenge from the board was to look at both the lagging and leading indicators an example given was specifically leading indicators in relation to attendance. Challenge from the board was to move away from 'waiting for a result'. Board all agreed that it was important to be able to see things in the round. Staff confirmed that in year student progress is a leading indicator and that this is an example of whether they are on track to meet target grades. Challenge from the board was that they would like better clarity in relation to what the committees will be tracking so that it is possible to see the whole. When considering the KPIs proposed for 2023/24 there were several challenges issued, including: • Is it possible to see the context e.g. for subcontracting, what is our aim? • Important to be able to see how targets proposed compare to national. • Ensure that there are targets which get governors and the organisation as close to teaching and learning as possible.	

	• Governors are interested in the movement/trend and not the absolute so that, at board level, these are what start the conversations. • Nothing should be created just for governors. It was confirmed that ELT consider circa 92 KPIs during the year and therefore most aspects intended for presentation to board are already tracked. Observer for this meeting made a recommendation to link with Lakes College in West Cumbria as they have created one dashboard that fits on to a screen. She indicated that, for them, the 'K' is what is important i.e. what is key. They can give a live demonstration at meetings which is graphic and visual and really helps the board to focus discussions. It was agreed that the observer would make an introduction for the Chair to follow up in relation to this (Shirley Collier, October 2023). Board when considering the proposed KPIs all agreed that they were appropriate and acknowledged that more detailed analysis of sub areas would be considered by committees. AGREED: to approve the KPIs as proposed for 2023/24 and the reporting cycle suggested.	
7	**Sustainability – current position and plans** Principal provided a verbal update and confirmed that two training/raising awareness sessions have now taken place with Steve Frampton. The first was with the senior executive team and the second with governors last week. He indicated that, following the governor session a survey/questionnaire was issued, albeit it was acknowledged that not everyone has as yet replied. It was agreed to extend the deadline with a reminder email, alongside the link to the survey, to be circulated to those who have not yet responded. This will then allow a view to be taken on where the college currently is, particularly in relation to governance that needs to wrap around the colleges strategy in relation to this. Principal described the sessions with Steve Frampton as impactful, particularly the fact that he reinforces the urgency regarding the need for action. Colleges next step is to complete/start to work through the AOC roadmap. Challenge from the board was that there needs to be a focus on this, whilst acknowledging that it is a significant piece of work. All agreed that a wider college group needs to be created to look at this including staff, student ambassadors and curriculum managers. All acknowledged that FE colleges have a responsibility in this area. It was agreed that the Principal would provide an update at the next meeting following further governor survey completion with a focus on what governance arrangements are required to ensure this moves forward (Principal, December 2023). AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	

8	**Purpose, values and strategic plan – timescales for review** Principal provided a verbal update and confirmed that this was very much linked to the work being done around performance enablement. He drew governors' attention to the statement of intent which he described as the starting point. He indicated that almost inevitably the timeline will be longer than originally envisaged however he is keen to move this forward. He explained that a key part of the development is a review of values for both staff and students. All agreed that the mechanism and the how the review is completed is important, it being acknowledged that not everyone wants the same i.e. there will be some who want to collaborate via testing and consulting whereas there will be others who would like to start from a blank sheet of paper. Principal confirmed that governors will be involved in the process/consultation with the aim being that, by February 2024 there will be a new set of organisational values, behaviours and strategic priorities. He confirmed that the process to be followed will ensure alignment. Challenge from the board was that the process is as important as the outcome therefore there is a need to be realistic regarding timescales so that there is sufficient time and space as required. Board all agreed that it was important to avoid a disconnect between what governors want/expect and what the executive think is required. It was agreed that several governors would meet with the executive in early November so that there is real clarity regarding the process and expectations. All agreed that alignment is vital in relation to this. Challenge from the board was for the executive to create an implementation timeline with thoughts around how impact/outcomes will be measured. All agreed that what the board needs to see is milestone reporting and it was agreed that the Principal would provide an update at the December meeting in terms of where the process has got to over the next two months (Principal, December 2023). When considering the values challenge from the board was that not everything needs to be different and that some staff may be passionate about retaining some of what already exists. All agreed that it was important to be guided by the consultation. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
9	**2023 Headline Outcomes** Principal provided a verbal update with key matters highlighted. Principal received challenge from governors on specific areas of focus to be passed through to the QTSE committee and to be monitored through the QIP. Principal confirmed that the detail sitting underneath the headlines will be considered by QTSE as part of the 2022/23 SAR review process. He confirmed that GCSE results are now out	

	nationally and that these show a significant drop on the prior year and compared to 2019. Principal particularly highlighted the fact that resit results have declined, and he indicated that this may reflect a national trend. He confirmed that all data has now been finalised and this therefore allows staff to start the in-depth analysis. Challenge from the board was the need to identify clearly where there are issues, particularly around certain groups. Principal provided assurance that work is already underway in relation to this, and an example given was the aim higher approach/campaign which is an organisational focus. One governor asked whether there was any school information available regarding the results. Principal indicated that there is potentially an emerging picture around the impact of the pandemic is.e. attitude to study/learning, mental health, resilience, and a lack of social skills. Challenge from the board was to better understand what the colleges expectations were and how these sit against the underperformance. Principal confirmed that at curriculum level there are mechanisms in place to complete this analysis and known issues include: • Retention • Progress • Quality of work being submitted • Student readiness to sit exams • Student drive and engagement One governor asked whether more mocks should be completed to better prepare students. Principal confirmed that this is the case in some curriculum areas but that more is needed, with examples given including more regular and high quality feedback and trauma informed teaching and learning. Challenge from the board was that the organisation needs to learn the right lessons so that it can move forward and improve. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
10	**Report from the Property Strategy Steering Group** Chair of the meeting held on 11th September 2023 drew governors' attention to the detailed minutes of the meeting and the summary note. All agreed that the content was self-explanatory with no further points of clarification requested in light of the earlier agenda item which allowed detailed discussion. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
11	**Report from the Search and Governance Committee** Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2023 alongside the committee	

	summary note. Board was asked to consider the report provided on independent governor recruitment and the recommendations made. Board was happy to support the proposals and all agreed that this had been a really successful campaign. Board discussed the recommendations for four new independent governor appointments and agreed that, from a diversity perspective there was assurance including disability, ethnicity and age. All agreed that each of the individuals would add real strength and depth to skills and board debate. AGREED: to approve 1) The appointment of Adam Morley as an independent Governor from 17th October 2023 to 17th October 2027 2) The appointment of Dominic Abbott as an independent Governor from 17th October 2023 to 17th October 2027 3) The appointment of Elita Eliades as an independent Governor from 17th October 2023 to 17th October 2027 4) The appointment of Tulay Rashid-Grant as an independent Governor from 17th October 2023 to 17th October 2027 5) The appointment of Rocco Huesch as a committee co-optee on Property Strategy Steering Group and Finance Committee Boards attention was then drawn to potential committee membership proposals for the new governors. Before confirming, it was agreed that the chair would speak to the four new governors and committee chairs to ensure effective placement. It was acknowledged that it doesn't always have to be 'the obvious' with assumptions to be challenged as and when required. Board was happy to delegate authority to finalise to the chair following further planned conversations. Board was asked to approve the appointment of Diane Moore as the new Audit & Risk Committee Chair. Board was happy to approve and all agreed that this would be a very successful appointment. Board was then asked to note that interviews are planned to take place with a number of students to fill the second vacancy. Interviewers are Diane Moore and Chalene Scott. It was agreed to provide delegated authority to both Diane Moore and Chalene Scott to appoint the second student governor following interviews planned on 20th October 2023. Board all agreed that governance arrangements were now in a good place. It was noted that the external governance review commissioned with Shirley Collier is now well underway. Board was happy to note the summary of themes and actions arising from governor one to ones with the Chair and also the content of the new AOC Code of Good Governance. Chair expressed a view that the next key appointment will be for the Chair of the Finance committee, and he asked governors to	

	test their networks, with the criteria being FE experience and a chartered finance qualification. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
12	**Report from the Audit & Risk Committee** Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2023 together with the summary note. Also provided for review was the strategic risk register. In relation to the risk register, one governor noted that risks in relation to safeguarding have increased and they asked why this is the case. It was explained that the number of safeguarding cases that the college is having to respond to has increased which means that the likelihood of risks has also increased. College is seeing some very complex cases. Also contributing to the risk rating is the fact that there is no link/lead governor currently in place. Staff provided assurance that mitigating actions have been taken i.e. increasing resources to support and respond to the number of cases. One governor noted that risks in relation to regulatory/ILR/ESFA audit has also increased and they asked why this is the case. Staff explained that this is because of the new Managing Public Money permission risks and also the 2022/23 ILR audit underway. In relation to the latter, it was confirmed that there are no significant implications expected. Challenge from the board was for the Audit and Risk committee to monitor the trends and any changes as they emerge. One governor noted the risk score in relation to health and safety and asked for more information in relation to this. Staff confirmed that there are no specific issues to highlight and advised that it is a whole view approach taken. This is because the impact of one incident could be high and therefore it is always considered to be a high risk. Board noted the reference to cyber/recovery risks and specifically business continuity and all agreed that they would want some follow up in relation to this. It was confirmed that Jisc have been commissioned to undertake a cyber security audit and college will develop an action plan following this. Challenge from the board was that they would want to see this through the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting, and particularly the action plan associated with this. All agreed that this needed to be highlighted on the risk register and any actions adding to the Audit & Risk Committee tracker so that there is confidence that any recommendations will be progressed and implemented. Boards attention was then drawn to the internal audit plan proposed for 2023/24 and updated 3-year strategy. Board was happy to approve on the committee's recommendation.	

	AGREED A, to note the content of the update provided B, to note the content of the Risk Register C, to approve the 2023/24 internal audit plan and updated 3-year strategy	
13	**Report from the People Committee** Board was happy to note the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2023 together with the summary note. All acknowledged that there was an awful lot that needed to be achieved in terms of the work planned to review values. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
14	**Report from the QTSE Committee** Board was happy to note the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2023 alongside the committee Chairs assurance report (heatmap). Committee provided assurance that they follow up on any areas of concern and an example given was the deep dive on A Levels conducted. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
15	**Report from the Finance Committee** Governors' attention was drawn to the summary note and it was agreed that the detailed minutes of the meeting would be circulated by email as soon as finalised (Director of Governance, Oct 2023). Provided for governors at this meeting were: • Period 12 (July 2023) management accounts, • Proposed accounting estimates, • Proposed 2023/24 subcontracting declaration and • An update provided on student numbers and forecast implications. Board all agreed that the information provided was self-explanatory and therefore agreed to approve: a) The accounting estimates as proposed, and b) 2023/24 subcontracting declarations as presented.	
16	**AOB** There were no items of additional business for this meeting.	
17	**Date and time of next meeting** This was confirmed as Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 6pm. It was noted that before this at 5.30pm there is an opportunity to meet with several students.	
18	**Confidential items**	

	It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis. (Staff governors left the meeting at 8pm) Meeting closed at 8.25pm.	