MINUTES

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Minutes of the Board Meeting
held on Tuesday 16th July 2024
at 18:00 at Wood Street Campus Barnet

Governors Present:	Adam Goldstein, Chair Jenny Jarvis, Vice Chair Neil Coker, CEO/Principal Diane Moore Cait O'Riordan (from 6.30pm) Sue Baker Mark Taylor Thomas Streater Adam Morley Dominic Abbott Elita Eliades Phil Harding Tara Jayaratne
In attendance:	Tracy McIntosh, Deputy Principal Michael Norton, interim CFO Victoria Cornwell-Lyons, Interim Vice Principal James Russell, Interim Project Director Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance

Item	Description	Action
1	**Preliminary items** **1) Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received from Hannah Sheath, Tuley Rashid-Grant, Chalene Scott, Alex Middleton, Rebecca Willis, Daniel Yilmaz and Simran Vyas Macias. **2) Declarations of interests** Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted. **3) Quorum** Director of Governance provided confirmation that the meeting was quorate.	

	New governors were welcomed to the meeting and round table introductions were made.	
2	**Minutes of the previous meeting** 1) Minutes of the meeting held on 13th May 2024 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 13th May 2024 as presented. 2) Matters arising and actions tracker There were no matters arising highlighted and board were happy to note the content of the action progress report provided.	
3	**CEO's Report** 1) KPI's 2023/24 - position against targets Key matters highlighted were: • Headline commentary provided in the document circulated • QTSE has had a focus on attendance all year and have been given more assurance on this than would be suggested by the KPI data. • Attendance is a significant focus for everyone in college • All colleges are struggling with the post pandemic attendance position which is impacted by mental health issues, declining secondary school attendance etc. • College does have some pockets of good attendance • There are some concerns regarding attendance at Maths and English and tutorial sessions • Some specific strategies in place to address this • College believes that there are some timetabling issues to unpick and resolve before next academic year • Start of the 2023/24 was low and this needs to be avoided again • Timetabling is a significant focus • College is expecting attendance in the first month to be stronger than the prior year position • College has a focus on registers to make sure that everything is being recorded correctly • Staff are spending this term trying to address any underpinning issues Chair of the QTSE Committee provided assurance that reporting and analysis is being provided from a number of different directions and that the team have been able to answer all governor questions. Attendance generally is a challenge, and college needs to carefully look at mental health, quality of teaching and learning, method of delivery etc.	

	• Attendance is going to be an important aspect at next Ofsted inspection as this impacts upon preparation for employment and supporting students to achieve and achieve well. • Current high grades/predicted achievement rates are a significant improvement and therefore staff know that lots of the preparatory work/support taking place is having an impact. • Links into employment are critical i.e. attendance required for the working world One governor asked how much the college has taken on board the changed working environment/arrangements post pandemic. Staff advised that college is trying to get context attendance data from schools so that this can be better understood. College is seeing significant impact of increased mental health issues in young people. Question and challenge posed was whether the college is flexing its approach. CEO confirmed that the college's approach to positive behaviour is supportive. Staff always try to better understand the why, so that support can be provided. In some areas there is work to do to change mindsets e.g. what does it actually mean to be 'ill'. It was acknowledged that, with online working the approach to attendance has changed. Question and challenge from one governor was on the previous request to have SMART targets, and they commented that there were still a number outstanding. Request from the board was to resolve this by the end of this academic year and avoid a similar position happening next academic year. CEO provided assurance that there are now staff in place focusing on compliance with much swifter interventions planned. Training is planned for both academic and pastoral target setting and monitoring. Observation from one governor was that some universities and sixth forms are seeing successful strategies i.e. giving really clear links between attendance data and success, and she suggested that there are some key messages that can be shared to better encourage attendance. One governor asked when the board will receive the 'first cut' of agreed attainment data. Staff advised that the college is starting to trial predictions now. GCSE, A Level and BTEC results will be available in the third week of August and then information can be shared with governors once analysis is completed. Governors asked for an update on their preparation for the next Ofsted inspection. It was confirmed that a workshop is planned for the first half term in the autumn. This will allow staff to provide a guide for all governors. Governors were reminded that slides and a recording of the recent AOC masterclass on this had also been circulated. 2) Strategic Plan 2024-2030 – update	

	CEO referred to the Strategic Pillars and Statement of Intent and explained that these were now planned to go out for consultation. Next phase of development will include: • Design – examples of student work were shared • Consultation on the success measures and values • Staff have been invited to have strategic conversations with the CEO at the end of August and beginning of September • Flesh out the underpinning cross cutting themes • Reports to board will be on a template which aligns with the 2024/25 Strategic Pillars • All KPIs will be aligned with the pillars • All pillars have an executive lead • All pillars will have appropriate KPIs • Success measures will align • Execution approach will be taken to the strategy (Tara Jayaratne joined the meeting at 6.30pm) Governors asked whether feedback had been obtained during the most recent staff development day. CEO advised that he had received no specific feedback and that he is taking this as a positive. Governors asked when the strategy will be 'launched'. CEO confirmed that the soft launch has already taken place internally. Anticipation is to conclude the remaining works with a final strategy document ready for board approval at the October meeting (CEO, 24th October 2024). He confirmed a more formal/wider launch planned after board approval. One governor asked for an update in relation to the timetable for finalisation. CEO acknowledged that the college is slightly behind plan but explained that the reality is that the time required to get to this point has been an influence, and that the original timetable agreed was always ambitious. CEO advised that he had wanted to use the staff development day this month as an opportunity to discuss in more detail with staff, given that the process i.e. inclusivity, is as important as the outcome. Challenge from one governor was to eventually get to the point of being able to summarise the strategy on one page. Observation for one governor was that he really liked how forward looking the document is and that it clearly demonstrates that the college is on the front foot. CEO confirmed that the team will pull together a launch campaign which will include a stakeholder event. (Cait O'Riordan joined the meeting at 6.35pm) 3) DfE letter to CEO dated 17th April 2024 following the annual strategic conversation Board was happy to note the content and agreed that it was a positive summary, with it clearly evident that the DfE and ESFA have engaged. CEO reminded that termly conversations now take place.	

	One governor asked whether there had been any follow up following the strategic conversation. CEO confirmed that there is, and an example given was the introduction made to Locate Ed with ESFA approving their support. Governors acknowledged that these were part of very important stakeholder conversations and that these should include college providing invitations to events and making the important connections. AGREED to: a) Note the content of the 2023/24 KPI report b) Approve the Strategic Pillars and the associated Statement of Intent that will form the foundations of the Strategic Plan 2024-2030. c) Note the content of the DfE letter dated 17th April 2024.	
4	**2023/2024 Budget and 3 Year Financial Forecast** Interim CFO introduced this item, and key matters highlighted included: • Proposed budget has been reviewed twice now by the Finance Committee • Financial forecast provides a route to surplus in 2025/26 • 2024/25 is an investment year to support growth and unwinding the current banding position • Since a review of this document by the Finance Committee there have been several updates: - Lloyds bank have confirmed that they will provide a waiver regarding the covenant breach if the college maintains £4 million cash. - Lloyds bank have indicated that they would want 60% of disposal proceeds - College is now in negotiation regarding High Needs funding owed/requested • First meeting of the Finance Committee took place in June where governors challenged on identifying the route to surplus • 2024/25 investment is designed to bring the college closer to its growth expectations • Identification of the banding options/opportunities is a positive and the college now needs to deliver on this • Budget and forecast are clear in terms of both the upside opportunities and the risks • 2024/25 will be impacted by lagged funding and bandings • In 2025/26 there is no pay inflation included in the cost line, however alongside this there is no assumption regarding a funding rate increase One governor asked whether Lloyds bank have now confirmed their position formally regarding their technical breach. Staff confirmed that they have. One governor noted the 2% pay increase proposed for 2024/25 and asked how this sits with both the national position and BSC	

	staff expectations. She also asked when it is proposed that the increase occur. CEO advised that there is no national position so far from the AOC. Historically the college has paid a 1% award but wants to go beyond this. If board approves at the meeting today, then this will be communicated to staff and actioned. CEO confirmed that, at the recent staff development day he had highlighted the direction of travel for the 2024/25 budget and particularly the importance of achieving growth. Position was also shared with the joint unions today. One governor asked why a 2% and not 1% award. CEO confirmed that the cost-of-living issue is still very much alive. A 2% increase would be a positive message i.e. approving a pay award whilst still in a deficit position. One governor asked whether there is any room for negotiation with the bank in relation to the 60% they are asking for from capital receipts. Interim CFO indicated that this is the current communicated position from the Lloyds credit team and reflects the fact that they have security over the Barnet campus. He expressed the view that there is a balance to be struck between paying off loan and reducing repayments versus capital plans. Challenge from one governor was whether this is sufficient to achieve college plans. Staff expressed the view that 60% repayment rather than 100% repayment does give options and now it is a matter of testing and modelling those options i.e. it may be best for the college to pay off the loan more quickly than is currently planned. Governors asked whether there is an early repayment penalty. Staff confirmed that there is but reminded that the loan charge at 8% on a fixed rate is high. Interim CFO confirmed that any repayment will not impact upon the ESFA financial health calculations. Board acknowledged that the team have been very proactive with the bank and that it was positive to have a resolution before the end of the academic year. Board considered the detailed Finance Committee meeting minutes and were satisfied that a robust process had been followed to reach the proposed budget and, on that basis, they were happy to approve. In approving they recognised the 2% pay award planned for staff in 2024/25, which would be effective from 1st August 2024. CEO confirmed that he would communicate this very early in the next academic year. AGREED to approve the 2024/25 Budget and 3 Year Financial Forecast as presented. One governor asked for an update in relation to 2024/25 student numbers. Staff advised that the college hasn't planned for growth in 16-18 but is confident that 109% against targets will be achieved, however a cautious approach has been taken in the budget as there are no guarantees that there will be any in year additional funding and therefore this has not been included. Governors were reminded that in 2023/24 there was a 12%	

	growth in 16-18 funding. Some additional funding to support this was received in January 2024 and the remainder will come by way of increased allocation in 2024/25. If the college can secure any in year growth income in 2024/25 then that will be a positive contribution to the 2024/25 budget. Governors asked whether there is any expectation regarding an increase in per student funding rates. Staff advised that in 2024/25 this is very unlikely as the rates have already been set. Interim CFO indicated that one aspect that will need to be closely monitored and negotiated is High Needs funding as it is believed that there will 500 students coming in to college but funding has only been agreed for 360.	
5	**Governance** Director of Governance presented her summary report and key matters highlighted included 1) <u>Ratification of written resolutions</u> Board was reminded that there have been three approvals agreed via written resolution since the last meeting and governors are now formally asked to ratify. These decisions were in relation to: a) Sale of Elm Road land parcel to Gavacan Homes (preferred purchaser), b) Content of the 2024/25 Accountability Statement, and c) The appointment of Tara Jayaratne as a governor and Chair of the Finance Committee. Board was happy to ratify the written resolutions as presented. 2) <u>Student governor recruitment update</u> Board was advised that the college has received four expressions of interest for the position that will be vacant when Daniel Yilmaz concludes his term of office at the end of this month. Two candidates have been shortlisted for interview, with interviews planned over the summer. Board was asked to provide delegated authority to staff governors (Chalene Scott and Sue Baker) to appoint the successful candidate following interviews planned. Board was happy to delegate the appointment decision as requested. 3) <u>Committee Membership 2024/25</u> Director of Governance drew board attention to committee membership recommended by the Search and Governance Committee. Board was happy to approve as presented. 4) <u>Committee Terms of Reference 2024/25</u>	

	Boards attention was drawn to the proposed amendments suggested by committees. Changes are highlighted in each of the relevant documents. No changes are proposed by QTSE or Audit and Risk committee and board was asked to approve continued use for these two committees unchanged AGREED to: a) Approve proposed amendments as presented b) Continue with the content of QTSE and Audit and Risk Committee terms of reference unchanged. Board was invited to provide feedback on the presentation of papers today i.e. four distinct packs, with these being: a) Executive summaries and 'must reads' b) Minutes of committee meetings c) Detailed reports for context d) Confidential matters Board was supportive of the approach and all agreed that it gave flexibility to review each of the different aspects. Request from one governor was for the first page in each of the distinct packs to be a contents page.	
6	**Lead Governor Update – Safeguarding** It was agreed to defer this agenda item to the next meeting (Elita Eliades, October 2024).	
7	**Student Governor update** It was agreed to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting. Request from governors was that any future student governor update be included in pack A rather than pack C (SVM, October 2024).	
8	**Report from the People Committee** Committee Chair referred to the summary report provided and the detailed minutes of the meeting which took place on 21st May 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • Committee is very pleased that Rebecca Willis has agreed to take over the Chair role into next academic year • 2023/24 is the first full year of committee operation and existence. Committee believes that establishing a separate group to focus on this was the right thing to do. • Committee has recognised, through focused deep dives, good progress but believes that the college may be trying to do too much too quickly and that there is still a lot more to do. • EDI group needs to be re-established and work on this needs to be a priority • Overarching strategy and plan are working well • Committee has spent time this year trying to get the reporting metrics right • Confidence that there have been effective deep dives	

	• Risks remain in relation to recruitment, retention and talent acquisition. This is an ongoing challenge, but committee is pleased to see the plans in place. • Strong focus on the employee experience with the desire for the college to be the employer of choice • A lot of good movement evident in the year All agreed that this was an important committee and that it supports the fact that the CEO and ELT are so people focused. Governors asked where there are currently staff vacancies. CEO indicated that there are quite a lot of teaching staff roles still to fill. The number of applications per post is better than in prior years, however college is still struggling to appoint an electrical installation manager. College is about to go live to recruit a Director of Marketing and a Director of MIS. He acknowledged that one or both roles may be difficult to recruit to. College has seen a real increase in the number of applications for teaching roles and therefore the executive is not hearing as many worries on the ground about the ability to appoint. One governor asked whether this was something specific to BSC or was it a sector improvement. CEO expressed the view that it is likely to be in part a reflection of the positive college reputation locally and with some teachers realising that the school sector is not as attractive as originally envisaged. He confirmed that the salary increases made last year have helped. Alongside this, the reputation of FE as a career is better with more stability. Particularly given the unknowns now in the HE sector. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
9	**Report from the QTSE Committee** Committee Chair referred to the assurance report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • A lot covered in the most recent meeting • Update provided on the learner excellence project • Increased confidence in relation to quality assurance processes on multiple fronts. Greater confidence that staff are addressing areas for improvement from every angle. In many areas staff are looking at root cause analysis. • Deep dives are effective, and committee wants to keep focusing on evidence, particularly student voice • Attendance must continue to be a focus • Generally good progress seen on the Quality Improvement Plan. College is moving in the right direction of travel. • Committee always receive strong assurance in relation to safeguarding arrangements • Committee considered the 9 areas for improvement and good progress has been seen, particularly in electrical and engineering which have both been a real focus for QTSE CEO advised that the learning excellence project has moved on since the QTSE meeting with presentations to ELT now received for each area. This is a journey to towards readiness and position	

	statements being developed. One governor asked whether there are any areas of vulnerability. CEO expressed a view that the inspection outcome will reflect the reality of what they see when they visit and what is said by staff, students and stakeholders. He provided assurance that staff will have a CPD plan in place for the autumn term so that they feel fully confident and prepared. He advised that staff are currently working on their self-assessment documents for the year and that the majority are positive and strong. One area which may slip back slightly is Foundation Studies. Governors asked what the line of sight is with employers. CEO expressed the view that this is strong and better than previously reported. He expressed the view that having the headline 9 approach has worked as it has given high level focus. His suggestion was to repeat again in the next academic year, with a high impact focus on achievement. Challenge from one governor was that it would be helpful to have attainment data shared early, even if it is not yet validated. Challenge from the board was to focus on impact. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
10	**Report from the Property Strategy Steering Group** Committee Chair referred to the summary reports and the minutes of the meetings held on 6th June and 18th June 2024. He described the position as 'a fast-moving picture'. Updates were provided on several aspects including: a) <u>Tudor Hall</u> - College has secured a buyer however building now declared as an asset of community value - This gives Barnet Museum 6 months in which to put forward an offer. - A high need for SEN provision in the area and this could influence the outcome. b) <u>Elm Road</u> - Local authority has said that they will not oppose any application for the telecom mast - Preferred purchaser is Gavacon - Local authority already approved pre-planning application submitted by the college - Gavacan is taking their own advice - College is progressing to agree a peppercorn lease with Gavacan Homes - Telecoms operator seems to be simply ignoring the £750k devaluation previously communicated. c) <u>Southgate - B block, L Block, and sports</u> - Enfield local authority have now said that they will not support the pre-application approval - Potentially the local authority wants more housing units to be planned	

	- Northern parcel options also have to be considered - College is going to join the two parcels together and submit for local authority feedback, whilst at the same time taking the southern parcel out to market. There is no indication that the local authority opposes residential development. Governors asked for an overview of the role of Locate Ed. It was explained that they are working on the updated masterplan and that this involves discussions with the ESFA. Board acknowledged that staff have done a great job in keeping all options open and progressing. CEO reminded that the college has already done some works at the Barnet campus, including establishing the studio and signage. Over the summer there is a lot of work planned at Southgate including frontage, entrance, landscaping and the T Level centre. College is committed to ongoing improvements. All agreed that the studio was a real showcase piece for the college and the community. CEO confirmed that there would be a summer programme of workshops delivered at the facility. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
11	**Report from the Search and Governance Committee** Meeting Chair referred to the summary report and minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • Recommended merger of the Search and Governance and Remuneration and Appraisal Committee. This is a trial for the next academic year. Committee Chair is to be on a rotational basis meeting to meeting. • 2023/24 committee membership proposed • Suggestion regarding increased student representation, both at board and QTSE, this is to allow students to manage the workload. • Potential to consider an AI expert when next recruiting, however there is confidence that staff internally have a strong grip on this. • Proposed AI development session for governors. Cait O'Riordan confirmed that she would be happy to support on this but that there would need to be clarity regarding what was to be achieved from the session. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
12	**Report from the Finance Committee** The Committee Chair referred to the summary note, and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2024. He confirmed that the incoming committee Chair, Tara Jayaratne, was able to join as an observer. Key matters considered were the budget for 2024/25 which has been discussed earlier in the meeting and the period 9 management accounts. Period 10 management accounts have now been circulated and the college is still on forecast for yearend.	

	Committee chair then presented several documents that require board approval. These were considered individually, and board were happy to accept the committee recommendations. AGREED to: a) Note the content of the update provided b) Approve the 2024/25 subcontracting strategy and contract values c) Approve the 2024/25 subcontracting fees and charges policy and d) Approve the amendments proposed to the Financial Regulations.	
13	**Report from the Audit and Risk Committee** Committee Chair referred to the summary note, and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • A very thorough meeting • Appreciation to the interim CFO for the enhanced profile of several agenda items • Interim CFO provided the first finance report which has a focus on solvency and aligns with the work of the Finance Committee • 2023/24 external audit plan considered in detail • Internal audit reports received. No significant issues identified, and some interesting comments and observations made. Greater focus on internal controls in the programme planned for 2024/25. • Two excellent reports provided from the interim CFO. The first in relation to the risk register and the risk appetite statement which has been revised to pull all aspects together. The college also has the financial handbook summary which is very helpful. • Focused presentation received from the Head of IT. His comments were very insightful and very passionate. Effective explanation given regarding the issues and challenges, examples given were student access to IT and using the MFA system. Students do have some challenges, but assurance was given regarding the level of college support. AGREED to: a) Note the content of the update provided b) Approve the 2023/24 external audit planning memorandum as presented c) Approve the internal audit plan for 2024/25 as presented.	
14	**AOB** As a matter of additional business, the Vice Chair asked that it be noted that she has written a book which is to be published in January 2025, it is called 'Lead with Confidence'. The board congratulated her, and it was agreed that the Vice Chair and other	

	female governors would work with college female managers as an additional way of engaging and supporting. (Staff left the meeting at 7.50pm)	
15	**Confidential items** It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.	