MINUTES

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Minutes of the Board Meeting
held on Thursday 13th February 2025
at 18:00 at Southgate Campus

Governors Present:	Adam Goldstein, Chair Neil Coker, CEO/Principal Diane Moore Mark Taylor Adam Morley Simran Vyas Macias Becky Willis Cait O'Riordan Hannah Sheath Chalene Scott Phil Harding (Via Teams) Thomas Streater (Via Teams) Jenny Jarvis (Via Teams) Dominic Abbot (Via Teams)
In attendance:	Tracey McIntosh, Deputy Principal Victoria Cornwell-Lyon, Deputy Principal Simon Evans-Evans, COO Ian Rule, Interim CFO Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance

Item	Description	Action
1	**Preliminary items** **1) Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received from Tara Jayaratne, Tulay Rashid-Grant, Alex Middleton and Chaquelle Booth. **2) Declarations of interests** Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have 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.	
2	**Minutes of the previous meeting**	

	1) Minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 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 19th December 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	**Curriculum Strategy Review** CEO introduced this item and indicated that this is an opportunity to focus all knowledge and skills in the room on a particular area. This is to ensure that governors have the right balance of discussions on both the transactional and the transformational. He described curriculum developments as being critical to the organisation. This agenda item is an attempt to make some space to debate and then for the board to direct the executive in a specific direction. CEO reminded that the colleges strategic plan very clearly states the intention to be 'a leading college in North London' and critically important to this is reputation. This is an opportunity to look at the significant changes which will lay the foundations for real growth. This discussion topic includes several elements including: • A review of curriculum strategy, with this being the right time to do this. • The marketing and the brand which is linked to curriculum developments. He reminded that a review of branding is part of the performance management targets set for both him and the Deputy Principal for this academic year. CEO expressed the view that the organisation has moved to clear campus brands and that the name 'Barnet and Southgate College' limits growth. He indicated that campus branding will ensure that the organisation maintains its locality and local presence and that the 'umbrella' college names need to better reflect geographical breadth and depth. CEO referred to the report circulated in advance which sets out the context and history for the 'Barnet and Southgate College' name. Today is an opportunity to test governor appetite for name change. He expressed a view that the college has moved on and that now is the time to be bold when preparing for the future. He acknowledged that this is not the first time that name change has been debated but that this review is now much more connected to the strategy for the future. He expressed the view that a change of name would present opportunities for BSC to work with other colleges. He indicated that the 'ask' today is to consider: • The appetite for change	

	• The approach to be taken to any change i.e. phased • Timescales He confirmed that the new Director of Marketing starts employment on the 7th April 2025 and that, if agreed, the proposal is to start using any new name in social media messages. Governors were invited to provide comments and observations on the proposals. Feedback included: • Yes, to proceeding with a name change as this shows the scale of ambition • At a future point greater clarity needed regarding implementation i.e. the how and the costs • We are no longer just serving the Barnet and Southgate areas with adult provision all over North London • There are significant apprenticeship opportunities, and the college does not want to be limited by location • Important to firm up the 'transition period' • Important to take into consideration the perspective of students Governors all agreed that they were very supportive of the proposal and again reiterated that this reflects the organisations ambition. Governors noted that the new marketing manager has experience of name change and rebranding and all agreed that it would be good to hear their lived experience. Challenge from the board was to really explore the student view of any names proposed and the branding to be considered. All agreed that this was an opportunity to better reflect the full geographical area of where the college delivers and what it does. Challenge from the board was to engage with key community groups. Board agreed that it was important to really be clear regarding the process for name change and establishing this early. One governor asked whether it would be possible to articulate the organisations learning philosophy in the name and not just focus on geography. One governor indicated that it is important to test how the name abbreviates to avoid any embarrassment. Governors agreed that including 'London' in the name will be attractive to an international market, if this is something that the organisation eventually wants to explore. Consensus view from governors was that a name change was appropriate now. Several elements were challenged including: • Pace will be crucial • Organisation and governors need to be clear about the what and the why • Important to retain all campus brands so that there is local presence • Test any name change with students • Think about a name that is 'snappy' and the tag lines to be used • Important to have a deadline to ensure focus	

	• Consider a small sub-committee that interacts with management on behalf of the board if this is needed. • Do we know the strength of the BSC brand. How will any name change effect students, alumni etc. • Change the name once and get it right so that it has longevity • Be clear in relation to the costs and the budget For clarity CEO confirmed that what will be changing is the 'umbrella' name and not the campus names. He expressed the view that students at Collingdale and other students who do not study at Barnet and Southgate do struggle with identity. Challenge from the board was that a refresh of the brand is not just a name change and that what they would like to see more about is the vision and strategy regarding the positioning i.e. how will the organisation connect with partners and the community. Student Governor present expressed a view that students are currently united by their courses and not the college name. She expressed the view that the organisation needs more college wide activities to give a better sense of identity and an example given was culture days. This would provide a real opportunity to bring everything together and move away from being either campus or course focused. All agreed that it is important for students to engage with the brand and be proud of the college. Challenge from the board was to establish a student focus group to give feedback on logo, merchandise etc. All agreed that this was an opportunity to improve internal cohesion and would also provide an opportunity to reach out more and examples given were to the NHS, industry etc. All agreed that a name can make a difference and that the strapline that sits underneath the name is critically important. Challenge from the board was to be clear on unity as well as any campus-based approach. Request from governors was to take any lessons learned from the new marketing manager. In terms of next steps, it was agreed: a) Further feedback to be provided at the March 2025 development day b) Small task and finish group to be established if there is governor appetite to participate, however this is not mandatory. <u>Curriculum focus for September 2025</u> CEO referred to the detailed report with key matters highlighted including: • An opportunity to reflect on what are the organisations priorities • More investment and resources required to support curriculum development e.g. being able to co-create with industry/employers. • The environment – college is continuing work on the Southgate master plan at pace • Relationship with Middlesex University is strengthening	

	• Capacity and resources are being committed to further the people agenda and the organisations commitment to this. It may involve the recruitment of an Executive Director for HR and People Development. One governor asked whether any element of the strategy is at risk. CEO indicated that the organisation must progress the key enablers and that this is a matter of pace and investment. Challenge from the board was to be clear regarding the costs associated with strategy implementation. Governors agreed that they would need to know the scale of investment needed before it is possible to prioritise. Challenge from the board was for management to provide technical investment costs i.e. systems and processes. What is already underway, planned and/or needed. Governors indicated that it would be helpful to see the industry/employer work RAG rated. Challenge from the board was to always think about the 'people piece' when looking at strategy implementation. Governors agreed that they would want to know what elements of the strategy the biggest impact will have as this may identify what needs to be accelerated. Request from governors was to carve out time on the 20th March 2025 to discuss again (CEO, March 2025). AGREED: a) To note the content of the reports provided b) Discuss curriculum strategy and curriculum priorities again when costs associated with investment have been estimated c) Support full rebranding exercise with an update to be provided to governors on 20th March.	*
4	**2023/24 Yearend** Interim CFO presented this item which included several documents for consideration, these were: • External audit report and management letter • Letter of representation • Internal audit annual report • Audit committees annual report • Going concern report • Financial statements • Minutes of the joint Audit and Finance Committee meeting held on 4th February 2025 Key matters highlighted were: • Yearend is essentially a breakeven position which is a significant improvement on the budget forecast for the year • A lot of positive movements in terms of the numbers • Final EBITDA position avoids bank covenant breach • Reports provided have all been considered by relevant committees • External auditors, MacIntyre Hudson have been very helpful throughout the process	

	- Result is a testament to a lot of hard work - External audit report highlights that there is a body of work to do to improve internal operating processes and this will need a discreet piece of work - No issues regarding going concern - True and fair unqualified opinion - Regularity note regarding the historic failure to complete reconciliation controls Governors having considered all the materials, either at Committee or in advance of this meeting, were content to note the content of reports provided and approve where recommended. AGREED: to approve - Letter of Representation 2023/24 Annual Accounts and Financial Statements - That the board is satisfied that the college will continue to be a going concern for the next 12 months.	
5	**CEO's Report** CEO confirmed that his report includes several elements and that he would welcome specific feedback on the format of the report now developed. Key matters highlighted were: - The content of the final Ofsted report which has now been received and published. - College had a very successful Studio launch yesterday and the intention is to publicise as much as possible about that - Studio launch was an opportunity to strengthen the relationship with Lord Levy and, as such, was an important and significant event. - Learners were excellent and the college is incredibly proud of them. CEO took the opportunity to thank Adam Morley for his significant contribution and thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped to arrange the event and participated, with the students being singled out as exceptional. 2030 Strategy has now been published. It is something already within the organisation and is being actively talked about. Campus led discussions have all now started with this being an effective way of involving everybody. <u>Board development day</u> CEO acknowledged that there is a huge amount of knowledge and experience on the board and that it is important to maximise this. 20th March will be an opportunity for the leadership team i.e. the executive and governors to better understand each other. Plan is to complete personality profiling which will support board dynamic discussions. At some point in the day there will be input from the FE Commissioner team, with a focus on what does the future look like for excellence in governance. Day will be an opportunity to really clarify 'what next' so that the organisation can achieve its ambitions.	

Headline 9

CEO referred to the detail provided and invited feedback. Comments and observations from governors were:

- In relation to the 'now' be clear what levers have had to be pulled to get the organisation to where it is now and what needs to be retained to move forward. An example given was the partnership with Middlesex University. Governors indicated that it is important to know what needs to be protected at all costs.
- In relation to the 'future' what are the risks and the plans in place to navigate them. Sitting alongside this is the risk appetite in achieving the 9.
- How do the pillars connect and how will they be delivered. What are the risks in terms of interconnection.
- In relation to the 9 proposed, how many are the same as in 2023/24? What are the risks and are they deliverable?

CEO confirmed that some of the 9 have come across from 2023/24 but are slightly different and an example given was in relation to achievement. Last year a focus was A Levels, however this is not considered to be such a significant risk this year. He provided assurance that the 9 are not new activities proposed, with the organisation already working on them. CEO expressed the view that the targets proposed are incredibly stretching and that anything that moves the organisation from good to outstanding will be a real significant step forward. He confirmed that the 9 are still very much centred on achievement and progress, with those areas not yet good seeking to be good and those that are good pushing to them being outstanding.

One governor particularly referred to item 3 of the 9 and commented that as there are large student numbers involved it is really significant to achieve this. Whilst acknowledging it is aspirational; this says a lot about the character of the college i.e. a critical focus on Level 1.

Governors indicated that at the 20th March event they would welcome a really clear picture in relation to what the government is doing and/or will do and how this fits in to BSC growth opportunities. Governors indicated that they would also welcome a better understanding of:

- Risk approach to what can be achieved
- The costs
- Progression/growth path i.e. what works

One governor asked whether there is clarity in terms of what needs to be done to get to outstanding. CEO provided assurance that there is clarity and that he has confidence that all are included within the headline 9. Challenge from one governor was to ensure that there are sufficient and tangible outcomes from the event on 20th March so that these can then feed in to resource/financial planning. CEO expressed a view that the organisation must achieve the 9 if the college wants to be a regional provider.

	One governor asked how the 9 are translated into operational discussions. CEO confirmed that this is in several ways including: • Weekly notifications/reports to managers where any student has less than 80% progress for assignments as this is a red flag. • Constant discussions regarding progress, mark book data, projections etc. • In relation to ESOL, the organisation is driving the achievements with more regular reviews conducted and not waiting until the end of the year. CEO expressed the view that there is a need to get rid of 'some of the noise' so that managers can focus as they want to on core business. To support this a current review is underway to look at what is not necessary so that managers have the time that they need. All acknowledged that Level 1 provision and developing this is critically important. AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.	
6	**2024/25 KPI Progress** CEO presented the data report and all acknowledged that there were no surprises. In relation to finance KPIs, team will be doing some significant reforecasting in February however the expectation is that the RAG rating will still be green. Governors asked whether they are a yearend forecast or actual. Interim CFO confirmed that they are forecasts. Team have not yet reforecast for 2024/25 however expectation is that whilst the numbers may change the RAG ratings will not. Request from the board was to look at improving how actuals are reported. All acknowledged that there is still a lot of work to be done in relation to improving attendance which includes month by month changes. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
7	**Report from the QTSE Committee** Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed minutes of the meeting which took place on 13th January 2025 with key matters highlighted including: • Deep dives took place in relation to maths and English and ESOL • Really strong focus on improving progress and achievement • Really clear success measures in place • Committee recognises that a lot is happening within the organisation	
8	**Report from the People Committee**	

	Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed minutes of the meeting which took place on 20th January 2025. Key matters highlighted were: • Committee considered a lot of reports spanning several subjects, all of these are outlined in the Chairs summary report provided. • People Committee has a lot to discuss on the agenda • Reports this time provided a lot of context but more has been requested in relation to the 'so what' which is felt to be missing. • In relation to strategies, committee wants to focus on the success measures and how they link. • There have been some challenges in relation to the HR system provider. Organisation is behind time for implementation and therefore a difficult conversation has had to be had. Cintra have taken away concerns shared and are reviewing their approach. Question and challenge from one governor was when it will be possible to see the dial start to shift in terms of the people work i.e. when will governors see an impact. Committee Chair expressed a view that the organisation needs to improve its development of success measures and tracking these before impact can be assessed. There is a need to get the basics right before the future focus piece can start. CEO confirmed that the organisation can evidence a lot of work that has been done in relation to staff engagement and staff satisfaction, with some of the indicators being very good in relation to these. Key now is what takes it to the next level and connecting the pieces. Challenge from the board was to put all the pieces together and be clear regarding the dependencies.	
9	**Report from the Finance Committee** Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2025 with key matters highlighted including: • Committee recognised the effort required to conclude the 2023/24 yearend. This will put the organisation in a better place for 2024/25. Committee has been given assurance regarding the change in controls to avoid similar failures in the future. • Completing 2023/24 has led to being behind slightly in relation to 2024/25 reforecasting, however the management accounts show a positive trend. • A lot of work is happening in relation to embedding the lessons learned and examples given were VAT advice being sought, pensions reporting and clarity in relation to opening balances. • Staffing is a risk. Specifically, the recruitment of a permanent CFO and the fact that the finance team are all new to post/roles.	

	Boards attention was specifically drawn to the proposed subcontracting variations. All agreed that they were self-explanatory and align with the college strategy. AGREED: to approve the subcontracting variations as proposed.	
10	**Report from the Audit & Risk Committee** Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2025 with key matters highlighted including: • Health and Safety Annual Report – committee is encouraged by the proposed move to reporting on KPIs via a dashboard rather than just reporting on activity. Adam Morley has agreed to be the Health and Safety link governor. • In relation to the annual internal audit report, it is clear that there were challenges in providing evidence during the follow up audit testing. To try and address this committee has asked ELT to have a robust focus to bring everything up to date. • Recruitment of a new CFO and a new finance team, whilst an opportunity is also a risk	
11	**AOB** There were several elements discussed under AOB. 1) Topic for the May 2025 meet the student session Suggestions were • Adult essential skills • Retention where there are challenges and examples given were Art, media and foundation learning • Focus on those who have 'moved in to work' 2) Academic staff governor appointment Director of Governance set out the process to identify those interested in the position. As at the closing date only one expression of interest had been received and therefore the recommendation is that James Duckworth be appointed unopposed. AGREED: to appoint James Duckworth as Staff Governor (Academic) from 13th February 2025 to 13th February 2029. 3) CFO recruitment CEO confirmed that an assessment centre day is scheduled for tomorrow. Initially there were 4 candidates scheduled however one withdrew when he saw the plan for the assessment centre day and one has withdrawn today with glandular fever which means that there are two candidates to interview. Board agreed that, if	

	the panel feels that they can put forward an appointment recommendation this can be done via written resolution, with a separate meeting on Teams arranged if required for Q&A. 4) Ofsted report CEO particularly referred to the finding of 'highly effective governance' and he thanked all governors for their contribution to this. 5) Request from another college to lobby the DfE/HMT in relation to the MPM approvals process, specifically the time taken in relation to +£150k salary for Principal/CEO. Board agreed that they were happy for the organisation to participate in an approach to try and improve the systems. One governor asked what the current position is in relation to Edmonton Green and whether there is anything that can be done to improve the offer. CEO confirmed that the organisation is committed to retaining provision in Edmonton Green but that the college may need to do things differently and one example given was operating out of the library. It was agreed that a full report on Edmonton Green options would be presented to the next meeting of the Finance Committee (Interim CFO/COO, 3rd April 2025).	*
12	**Confidential minutes of the board meeting held on 19th December 2024** Minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions. AGREED: to approve the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2024. Meeting closed at 8.10pm.	