MINUTES

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Minutes of the Board Meeting
held on Monday 13th May 2024
at 18:00 at Southgate Campus

Governors Present:

Adam Goldstein, Chair
Neil Coker, CEO & Principal
Alex Middleton
Diane Moore
Cait O'Riordan
Jenny Jarvis
Sue Baker
Mark Taylor
Thomas Streater
Adam Morley
Tuley Rashid-Grant
Dominic Abbott
Simran Vyas Macias

In attendance:

Tracey McIntosh, Executive Director of Commercial Partnerships
Michael Norton, interim CFO
Victoria Cornwell Lyon, Interim Vice-Principal
Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance

Item	Description	Action
1	**Preliminary items** **1) Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received from Elita Eliades, Chalene Scott, Hannah Sheath and Daniel Yilmaz. **2) Declarations of interests** Jenny Jarvis declared an interest in relation to the proposal to appoint her as the Vice Chair of the Board and Simran Vyas Macias made a declaration in terms of the proposal to extend her current term of office as a student governor. **3) Quorum** Director of Governance provided confirmation that the meeting was quorate.	

	Before commencing discussions on planned agenda items Director of Governance provided an update on the structure of the packs provided for this meeting i.e. A, B and C. She explained that pack A is the 'must reads' with pack B being supplementary/additional information which sits alongside the executive summaries and the committee summary reports. Pack C is confidential papers only. She reminded that the board has agreed to the establishment of a working group to review board papers and provision of the same in more detail. The first meeting of this group is scheduled in June 2024.	
2	**Minutes of the previous meetings** 1) Minutes of the meetings held on 19th February and 18th March 2024. The minutes were reviewed, and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions. AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 19th February and 18th March 2024 as presented. 2) Matters arising and actions tracker There were no matters arising and board were happy to note the content of the action progress report provided.	
3	**Strategic Plan 2024-2030 – Progress Update** CEO presented his report and confirmed that the draft document has been compiled following the 18th March strategy review day and provided assurance that all feedback from governors has been collated. He drew governors' attention to the strategic pillars proposed and invited feedback on the 'look and feel'. In summary there are eight key pillars proposed and a statement of intent. Next step is to develop the success measures. This will be done within the organisation. Questions and challenge from governors included: • Is the quality of teaching and learning explicit enough. CEO acknowledged that this was not the case and confirmed that it would be strengthened in the statement of intent. A suggestion was to refer to 'exceptional learning experiences through high quality teaching and learning'. • Include something around: - resilience - growth mindset - agency CEO confirmed the intention to develop a one-line summary of 'purpose'. • Are eight strategic pillars too many as they need to be memorable? • Some areas of duplication and these could be removed. • Strategic plan should focus on what the college must deliver e.g. student experience, reputation and purposeful	

	partnerships and then sitting alongside or underneath these are the 'enablers'. There is also a need to refer to finances, staffing, reputation etc. • Look for the opportunity to merge some of the pillars or aspects of the pillars. • Talk more about lifelong learning rather than just the now in terms of student experience • Important for environmental and sustainability to be included within them • Be clear about what we want to say to the outside world i.e. what do we want to portray • Look at intended outcomes and reporting. This may influence the number of pillars. • Next stage for governors is the scheduling of reports and discussions, both at committee and board level. What is important is the flow of information. CEO advised that, at the last leadership day five purpose statements were created and these will be part of the internal consultation process. Challenge from the board was to be really clear what is required from consultation. Ensure it is manageable and achieves what is required. Suggestion was to keep it simple. CEO confirmed that governors will be involved in consultation. CEO then referred governors to the timetable provided which sets out plans to complete. Governors all agreed that it was important to be clear about the segments and how they connect. They asked the CEO to try and eventually get to a one-page document that everyone can connect with and remember. AGREED to: A) Note the content of the update provided B) Agree the proposed strategic pillars as the foundations of the new 2030 Vision Strategic Plan, taking on board feedback today. C) Agree the proposed statement of intent.	
4	**CEO and Principals report** 1) <u>2023/24 KPI progress</u> CEO drew attention to the report circulated and key matters highlighted were: • Report provides headline bullet points • Quality of student outcomes is improving • Report allows triangulation and connectivity • Attendance jumps out as an issue and continues to be a challenge. Assurance was given that it is always a focus. CEO confirmed that the QTSE Committee look at attendance as part of all deep dives undertaken. Progress has been made to try and understand why there are attendance challenges. It is not always the same reasons for each student. There is more to unpick	

	in relation to the quality of teaching and learning and any potential impact this has on attendance. A new attendance strategy was introduced for this year however, the Interim Vice Principal has identified the fact that it is not yet well embedded. QTSE is conducting an attendance deep dive at the next meeting and a review of the strategy will be a part of this. Belief is that this is more a cultural than a compliance piece, with implementation of the strategy having got lost over time. There now needs to be a focus on expectations, implementation and monitoring. Challenge from one governor was to look more at recent national research on poor attendance and then develop college plans on what is known. Important for the future is the increased level of school avoidance which is being reported which will hit the FE sector next year and beyond. Challenge from the board was to start to plan for this now. Suggestion was the need for a more coherent picture for staff to work to. Assurance was given that curriculum managers know their students on an individual basis. Board noted that there is a clear correlation between the 'at risk' students and attendance. It was confirmed that at QTSE committee there is discussion about milestones and the need to use these effectively to predict. Challenge from one governor was to look more at the experimental and to also talk to students and ask them what might work e.g. compressed hours in the week rather than a timetable over five days. CEO confirmed that he would approach the AOC to see what sector data they have gathered. Governors suggested that there is a need to look internally too, and one example given was the impact of staff absence on attendance. This was a point made at the 'meet the students' session earlier in the day. College also needs to look at technology and consider whether there is anything which is a barrier to be addressed. National data should also be available on the impact of hybrid working and preparing the college and students for this. One governor noted that the prediction is for a larger financial deficit than planned and asked whether it is a risk. Data provided on the report was described as a 'moment in time'. Assurance was given that there is a lot of 'bottom up' work now taking place to bring things into line. There is now more certainty regarding the Multiply funding line and the college is not expecting any clawback. All governors agreed that it was really pleasing to see the improved A Level position. 2) <u>2023/24 Accountability Agreement – Progress Update</u> CEO presented the report and reminded that discussions at the March strategy day had touched on this. He explained that the Accountability Agreement is a mechanism to record how the college will respond to local skill needs. This agreement is monitored at each meeting during the year. The report presented today closes off the 2023/24 Accountability Agreement and the	

	curriculum map shows that the college is doing well. Agenda item later in the meeting (5(i)) very much links to this. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided. 3) <u>2024/25 Accountability Agreement – Proposed Content</u> CEO reminded that the deadline for finalisation and publication is the 28th June 2024. Given the timing of the next meeting, board were happy to approve the final version by written resolution. CEO provided assurance that governors will have an opportunity to review before the deadline. CEO reminded that the ESFA will test the college on whether the targets and objectives are being achieved, this will be in both the annual and termly conversations. In addition, Ofsted will also specifically test on skills. CEO indicated that he did not consider either of these to be risk areas. Having reviewed the information provided, board were happy to agree the proposed headline content of the colleges 2024/25 Accountability Agreement. 4) <u>Headline 9 Areas of Achievement</u> CEO presented his report and confirmed that these continue to be a focus in the quality review meetings. This is very much at executive level, rather than curriculum management level as they have their own improvement plans. Report shows that the college is making some positive movements. Interim Vice Principal was invited to benchmark where she believes the college is when compared to organisations she has worked for. Feedback provided included: • Culture is a great strength of the organisation. All staff are student focused and committed. This is reflected in student attitudes and behaviours. • College will make progress on achievement this year • Next year's focus will be on progress and high grades CEO advised that, whilst the organisation is not satisfied with outcomes, the college is not as far off the national picture when data tables are considered for other colleges recently graded as good by Ofsted. All agreed that it was important for the college to be fully ready and prepared for the next inspection. CEO reminded that the current year 2's do carry some attendance and retention issues which will have a negative impact but that the current year 1's are much stronger. Board was advised that QTSE will be looking at the work of the Learner Excellence Group at their next meeting which is part of Ofsted preparation. Challenge from the board was that they, and the organisation, need a very clear statement to be able to share regarding outcomes, achievement and attainment. CEO confirmed that the senior team are currently working on inspection position statements and that these will be shared via QTSE once finalised.	

	One governor asked whether the college could complete more observations as part of preparation. CEO confirmed that this is possible but that the organisation does not want to move to judgemental processes instead of the developmental ones that currently exist. One governor asked what has made the difference in terms of the improvement changes seen for A Levels. It was explained that this is a constant focus on it over the last 3 years. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
5	**Report from the Executive Director of Commercial Partnerships** 1) <u>Curriculum Strategy Delivery – growth targets and key enablers</u> Governors' attention was drawn to the report provided and it was explained that this follows on from the curriculum reviews undertaken. Information provided includes the curriculum policy changes and provides clarity on the links to the Accountability Agreement. Key matters highlighted included: • Expectation of 16-18 growth • Plans to grow HE • Confidence regarding AEB delivery • New provision planned • Exciting plans with Middlesex University with potentially more for the future • Lifelong learning entitlement opportunities Question from one governor was what the college is not delivering and/or is finding challenging. Executive Director indicated that there were several aspects including: • Sustainability/Green Skills • Apprenticeship provision which remains a challenge • HE • Level 4 She expressed the view that the college needs to focus on not just what is new but instead also really focus on doing more of what already exists. CEO advised that the college has engaged with Bolton University at a senior level following the earlier meeting discussions. His view is that any risks have been reduced following these conversations. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided. 2) <u>2024/25 Enrolment Targets (16-18)</u> Board was happy to note the information provided and were pleased to see the plans which underpin the growth strategy. 3) <u>Subcontracting proposal with Juventus Football Academy</u>	

	Executive Director drew governors' attention to the report and key matters highlighted were: • College is confident of the success of this proposed partnership • BSC will be the first provider with this partner for 16-18 provision. It is a new offer for them, and the college is well placed to show them how to deliver well. • It is believed that the partnership can grow. Proposal is to start with 18 learners which means a slow start which will mitigate risk. • This is a very good PR opportunity • No exclusivity restrictions in relation to the other contract that the college has with Tottenham Football Club. • Geographically the students are on different campuses. AGREED: a) To note the content of the report provided b) Approve the subcontracting proposal with Juventus Football Academy as presented.	
6	**Lead Governor Report – Sustainability** The Vice Chair confirmed that she has met with the CEO to look at how the college is implementing the climate action plan discussed at the start of the year. She indicated that, whilst few reports had come to the board, there has however been a lot that has happened. This includes elements of the estate and Hillside plan. Intention for sustainability is to have a single point of contact on the executive for this, it will be the COO. Improvements have been made on several aspects, including: • Auto lighting and heating • Energy use • T Level block which will be developed to be net zero • Ground source heat plans • Mothballed areas of the estates Still more to do in relation to: • Curriculum • Politics/policy • Internal focus and staffing • Lifecycle within the college It was agreed that the new COO, to be appointed, would provide a stocktake report and plan at the December 2024 board meeting (COO, December 2024). One governor present made reference to excellent sustainability considerations in the Sky supply chain policy he has seen, and he agreed to share a copy for college consideration. Governors acknowledged that there had been a negative impact this year because of staff changes and responsibilities, and agreed that this needs greater focus for next academic year.	

	One governor asked whether there is curriculum growth with a focus on sustainability. Staff advised that this is primarily through the mayoral academies, however BSC is not seeing the anticipated student numbers coming through. Unfortunately, there currently appears to be a lack of student and employer demand/interest. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
7	**Report from the Property Strategy Steering Group** Committee Chair referred to the summary note provided, and the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • Members of the PSSG had the opportunity for a site tour today which was very useful. There is clearly lots happening. • A real focus on improving the student experience • Position has changed regarding Tudor Hall since the March meeting, with the building now being determined to be 'an asset of community value'. This means that Barnet museum have 6 months within to raise cash and make a bid. There will be no impact on value but there will be a delay in the colleges ability to progress. Risk is that the current interested purchaser will fall away. Belief is that the 6-month period is fixed. College has made it clear that the funds are required to reinvest to improve the student experience. • Work on R Block has now started and this will be 'transformational' • Wood Street 'studio' development has also started and will be a fabulous facility for students. It was agreed that governors would be invited to the June open days (Exec Admin, May 2024). Question and challenge from one governor was whether or not any AI considerations have been included to future proof college delivery and skills required when looking at where investment will be made. During discussion governors felt that, whilst there may be elements that AI can do, it is likely that there is a workforce that will still be required to support creative industries. One governor advised that there is currently regulatory work underway to protect copyright use etc. In his view AI will not be a challenge to human creativity. Whilst virtual production does happen it is still not felt to be the best quality. AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.	
8	**Report from the QTSE committee** Committee Chair referred governors to the assurance report (heatmap) and the minutes of the meetings held on 26th March and 18th April 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • Committee intends to focus on attendance and Ofsted at the next meeting	

	• Two meetings have occurred between this and the last board meeting as there has been a lot of content to cover. Committee looks at a lot of layers and does revisit. • Exciting innovation developments but probably more that the college can do • Deep dive completed in relation to HE with a focus on the breadth of the curriculum • Lots of focus on at risk learners • Really in-depth report on quality assurance processes. Committee was able to see a whole map/framework which was very reassuring • Deep dives will continue to focus on the areas for improvement • Committee really feels as if there has been a step change Challenge from the board was that it is really important to link committee challenge to deep dives and then subsequent improvements, given that at next inspection it will be key to be able to provide some examples. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
9	**Report from the Search and Governance Committee** Committee Chair drew governors' attention to the summary note and also the minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2024. Governors were provided with an outline of decisions required and the debate relating to each which could be seen in the minutes. All agreed that robust processes had been followed in terms of the proposals being made and they were happy to support. AGREED: to a) Approve the extension of the current term of office of student governor Simran Vyas Macias to 31st July 2025 b) Note the timescale required to replace student governor Daniel Yilmaz who concludes his term of office this year. Closing date for applications is 14th June with interviews to take place in week commencing 24th June. c) Approve the appointment of Jenny Jarvis as the Vice Chair of the Board d) Approve the reappoint of Jenny Jarvis for a second term of office from 28th January 2025 to 28th January 2029 e) Approve the appointment of Phil Harding as a governor from 1st July 2024 to 1st July 2028 f) Approve the appointment of Rebecca Willis (current People Committee co-optee) as a governor from 1st September 2024 to 1st September 2028 g) Approve the amalgamation of Search and Governance and Remuneration and Appraisal Committees for next academic year h) Approve the establishment of two further link/lead governors in the areas of Skills and SEND/High Needs.	
10	**Report from the Audit and Risk Committee**	

	Committee Chair referred the board to the summary note and the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • Committee are finding it very beneficial to have the interim CFO's fresh input • An IT/data/cyber focus at the next meeting • A good review of the risk register with the intention to review the scores, processes etc in future meetings • Committee will take a view on a risk appetite statement • Review of the Whistleblowing Policy was a useful segway in to speaking about culture Committee Chair then provided an update on the external audit tenders considered. Panel agreed to receive two presentations, the first from Macintyre Hudson and the second from Bishop Flemming. Macintyre Hudson have provided external audit services to the college for 10 years already. Unfortunately, they did not perform as well as expected with Bishop Flemming presenting a fresh perspective, a good presence and commitment. Panel considered carefully the options because of the potential risks of further change within the organisation. One element factored in was the appointment of a new CFO in the autumn term, however this is balanced out by the fact that the contract start will be 2024/25 not 2023/24 and therefore there will be a good handover period. This will be the way for the new CFO to build relationships. Recommendation of the panel is the appointment of Bishop Flemming. Committee also considered the current Whistleblowing Policy and were of the view that the content did not require change at this point in time, however there was an identified need to make sure that the terms of reference setting out roles and responsibilities for both the Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee are clear. These will be reviewed by each committee at the end of this academic year. AGREED to: a) Approve the continuation of the current Whistleblowing Policy unchanged b) Approve the appointment of Bishop Flemming as external auditors, with the contract starting for the 2024/25 academic year.	
11	**Report from the Finance Committee** Committee Chair drew governors' attention to the summary note and also the minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2024. Key matters highlighted were: • Committee had hoped to find a new chair identified by now but unfortunately this is not the case. Chair explained the interview process and position. Intention is to go out for a second round of recruitment.	

	- New format of management accounts now introduced which is helpful - Committee had an opportunity for a first look at the 2024/25 budget, however there is much more work to do before committee is able to make any recommendation. - Interim CFO and Executive Director have done a lot of work since then and assurance has been provided regarding curriculum planning and staffing requirements. Staff are confident that, with the work done already, the budget can now be updated. ELT are meeting on this tomorrow. One governor asked whether board would receive a 3 year outlook at the next meeting. CFO advised that the CFR deadline submission is 31st July. This will be the actual to April 2024 +2 years. The 2 years will show the trend. Challenge from the board was that they would want to see a plan which shows how the college is intending to get to a position of no longer forecasting deficit or reducing the deficit. Governors will need clear narrative regarding the positioning of the 2024/25 budget. AGREED to: a) Note the content of the period 8 Management Accounts b) Endorse the committee's decision to approve a small subcontractor variation c) Approve the 2024/25 Fees Policy d) Note the content of the ESFA letter dated 22nd April 2024.	
12	**AOB** As a matter of additional business Mark Taylor provided an update on the recent West London Colleges shared governance event held on 1st May 2024. He confirmed that there was potential for greater collaboration and shared activities. Also considered was the potential for a HE strategic alliance. CEO provided an update on college activities currently planned, these are: - Igloo launch on 22nd May 2024 at 1.30pm - Open days on 12th June, 19th June and 26th June each between 3.30pm and 6.30pm. - Art and Design festival 5th – 27th June and on-site art exhibition 20th June at 6pm.	
13	**Confidential items** It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis. Executive Director, CFO and interim Vice Principal left the meeting at 8.10pm. Meeting closed at 8.30pm.	