MINUTES

Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Minutes of the Board Meeting
held on Thursday 24th October 2024
at 18:00 at Southgate Campus

Governors Present:	Adam Goldstein, Chair Neil Coker, CEO/Principal Alex Middleton Diane Moore Sue Baker Mark Taylor Thomas Streater Adam Morley Dominic Abbott Elita Eliades Simran Vyas Macias Phil Harding Tara Jayaratne Tulay Rashid-Grant Chalene Scott Becky Willis Chaquelle Boothe
In attendance:	Tracey McIntosh, Deputy Principal Victoria Cornwell-Lyon, Deputy Principal Simon Evans-Evans, COO Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance

Item	Description	Action
1	**Preliminary items** **1) Apologies for absence** Apologies for absence were received from Cait O'Riordon, Hannah Sheath and Jenny Jarvis. Becky Willis, Simon Evans-Evans and Chaquelle Boothe were welcomed to their first meeting. **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.	
2	**Minutes of the previous meeting** **1) Minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 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 16th July 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	**Student Governor update** Student governors provided a verbal update with key matters highlighted including: • Freshers fayre – this was described as a success with a lot more student engagement. - Activities were more exciting, including games and giveaways. - Lots of eternal organisations represented which was very welcome. - Mental health support was clearly highlighted as available and there were several ESOL students who were interested to take this up • There has been a super car event, with Farrari attending on campus. This was a great hands-on experience which was very well received. • Black history month competitions have started with lots of engagement. • Newer students very interested in the wide range of enrichment activities available. • Some students have requested that the college consider making lockers available and a written proposal from A Level students has been provided in relation to this. One student governor confirmed that, having participated in the freshers fayre herself since 2021, there have been great improvements, particularly in relation to 'college spirit'. One governor asked whether anything was done differently this year to promote the events. Student governors confirmed that printed materials were created and then circulated which were described as very helpful. These were a driving force in improving levels of interest. QR codes were provided on all of the materials, and these pushed the events to the next level. One governor asked whether there has been a college 'you said we did' response to the three governor 'meet the student sessions' held in 2023/24. Deputy Principal confirmed that work is being done on this and an	

	outcomes report will be provided back to all governors, and student governors specifically so that they can feed back to other students (Deputy Principal (VCL), December 2024). AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
4	**Elm Road** Project Director presented a detailed report and outlined the approvals required for the sale agreement and lease. Key matters highlighted were: • Special Property Strategy Steering Group meeting took place on 12th October to discuss key documentation, with lots of opportunities for Q&A. • CEO and governors acknowledged the tremendous amount of work required to get to this point. • History and context provided/reminded. • Assurance can be taken from the Property Strategy Steering Group who had an opportunity to scrutinise in detail and then make the recommendation to board that the sale and lease documentation be approved, signed and sealed. • Lease is a protective measure for both parties. • Bank position has been clarified, with their expectation being a repayment of 60% from the proceeds of sale. One governor asked whether there are any potential negatives to the proposal. Staff indicated that they are only around the construction activities which will eventually take place and the need to monitor this. College will need to make sure that there is good communication in place. One governor asked whether there are any potential negatives regarding the residential units once built. Staff indicated that there were unlikely to be any as Gavacan have committed to only developing the nine dwellings approved by the local authority. CEO confirmed that the college is aware of potential 'creep' at the point of construction, however college has the carpark which will act as a divide/barrier. It was confirmed that Gavacan have a good reputation and have already done several successful developments in the area, which lends confidence to proceeding with them. In terms of paying back funds to the bank, governors asked whether various options have been considered. CEO confirmed that they have and that a detailed paper was presented to the Finance Committee on this. CEO confirmed that modelling has taken place and that this includes various potentials for break clause cost. Challenge from staff governors was, at the point of construction everyone will need to be mindful of any potential negative impact on teaching and learning and specifically exams, assessments etc. CEO provided assurance that this will be built into the communications with Gavacan, and that the college will work with them to mitigate disruption. All agreed that an effective relationship with them is critically important. All acknowledged	

	that it is in their best interests to maintain good relationships with their neighbours. Challenge from the board was to look at forward planning and it was acknowledged that the college will learn a lot from this project which can then be used in the future. Finance committee Chair asked if ESFA approval is required to retain sale proceeds. Staff confirmed that approval is not required and that ESFA are aware of college plans. Board acknowledged that this project brings neighbours just a little bit closer but that, as the project planned is only nine homes it will not significantly impact upon the college, specifically the access routes. One staff governor confirmed that there were very good relationships between the college and the police in the area and that they are likely to help if required to manage the relationship. CEO confirmed that progress updates will continue to be provided via PSSG. He personally thanked James Russell for his hard work in getting to this point in time. Director of Governance referred to an email from Fusion confirming that: • The lease remains unchanged from the version circulated to PSSG. • In relation to the contract for sale, clause 12.6.3 of the TP1 has been amended since the documents were circulated for PSSG to clarify that Gavacan have rights to lay utilities under the access road as well as to upgrade it. The weight restriction for vehicles using the road has also been removed on the basis that Gavacan are taking the freehold and the maintenance obligations. AGREED: to a) Approve the content, signing and sealing of the lease, and b) Approve the content of the contract for sale and move the project to the next phase.	
5	**2024-2030 strategic plan** CEO presented the proposed final draft circulated in advance of the meeting. Key matters highlighted were: • Governors have been very actively involved in the development of the strategy • Strategic pillars have been agreed by the board • There has been deep and broad consultation with staff • There has also been external input • Peer analysis has taken place • It includes a lot of work by the leadership team • A lot of stakeholder views obtained • Significant engagement has taken place • A collaborative, well informed and well researched piece of work • Twelve guiding principles were circulated to staff for consultation. Of these, there are three which are clear ‘front runners’.	

- Next step is to consult on just these three so as to reach an informed view on just one
- This is an important document for the organisation
- Visually it will be updated professionally
- This strategy gets the college to 'day zero' and then the work starts to embed and ensure it is kept alive
- Through the strategy the college will deliver its ambition
- It is a high-level strategic document for public consumption. Underneath this will be the deliverable measures i.e. KPIs, annual expectations and success metrics.

CEO proposed that the board provide delegated authority to him to make any final further changes outside the meeting following governor comments today and any further input received by email. Board was happy to support this approach.

During discussion there were several points of question and challenge, including:

- How will the college be able to tell the story, both internally and externally in one year. CEO confirmed that his report to governors will include an update on the pillars. This will be provided at each board meeting and will then be shared with staff. Team is also developing a 'annual report' so that successes can be celebrated. It is believed that, through these mechanisms, the college can tell the required story.
- In relation to the score card, will there be reds, ambers and greens all the way up to 2030 or is the college aiming for all elements to be green. CEO expressed a view that getting to greens needs to be the colleges ambition. Score cards will be available at campus level and there is a need to embed this within the organisation. CEO expressed the view that various elements will go 'up and down' as the journey progresses to achieve the aims.

One governor made the observation that the strategy created is an excellent piece of work, with in depth consultation and involvement clearly evident. Executive leadership and accountability very clearly shows how it will be embedded. Challenge was whether the CEO should be responsible for four of the responsibilities identified or whether, instead, there should be more spread across the senior team. CEO advised that good practice from other colleges has been shared and incorporated within the document and that this has helped to really capture how the elements fit together.

- In relation to attainment, one governor asked whether there is anything in relation to 2024 outcomes that the college/governors need to be mindful of. CEO confirmed that he has tried to avoid an Ofsted focus/view as this is simply one measure. The nine AFI's will be the key drivers to improving attainment. College will be able measure all elements of critical success factors. Challenge from the board was to create a one-page summary to be provided to local authorities, politicians, DfE etc. so that they have

	a short and succinct way of understanding the colleges strategy. • In relation to guiding principles, one governor observed that there were 'a lot' and asked whether it is possible to condense. CEO confirmed that, part of the consultation process that has already taken place involved merging and shortening some elements. He confirmed that no single person needs to be able to recite these and that they do not need to memorised. He provided assurance that they will be very visible within the organisation. He confirmed that all feedback provided has been reflected on and changes made where appropriate e.g. the use of 'equity' rather than 'equality'. He acknowledged that the college needs to adapt what it does to ensure equity. Governors were reminded that two internal committees have been established and that their views can be taken before final publication, these are the Welfare and Wellbeing Committee and EDI Committee. CEO expressed confidence in the inclusive and collaborative approach taken. Governors agreed that this was reassuring and that the document was clearly ambitious with some very specific aims. CEO then referred governors to the format of the executive summary trialled for this meeting. He indicated that the aim is to be clear what is required from the board at any meeting. The template summary now aligns with the strategic pillars. Governors provided positive feedback on the new template and the way that papers for meetings are now divided into four distinct packs. All agreed that they were now much more accessible. CEO then invited governors to participate in campus led meetings/discussions. He explained that there will be 4 campus meetings scheduled, with 1 per term planned, so 16 in the year. CEO expressed a view that it would be very powerful to have governor representation at each of these. Governors requested that CEO provide an update at the December meeting explaining how the strategy will be embedded at that, at that point in time, governor representation at the campus led discussions would be revisited (CEO, December 2024). AGREED to: a) In principle approve the 2024-2030 strategic plan as presented, and b) Delegate authority to the CEO to make final adjustments following board discussions and final consultation.	
6	**KPI Report** CEO introduced this item and confirmed that it includes both 2023/24 yearend against targets and 2024/25 proposals. Key matters highlighted were: a) <u>2023/2024</u> - Finances as expected	

	- Real challenges regarding attendance which have been reported all throughout the year - There are still post pandemic ripples which are being seen and - There is more that the college can do to improve b) 2024/25 proposals - Team have done a lot of work to get to this point - There is a difference between 'key' and 'performance' indicators. There are a wide range of indicators to be monitored by specific groups and committees. In relation to attendance, one governor asked whether the board needs to be closer to this to draw on experience. CEO provided assurance that regular deep dives are conducted by QTSE who have a focus on attendance. He expressed a view that a real challenge is student motivation and engagement. College believes it is doing everything it can, but all new ideas are welcome. One student governor indicated that she is seeing different levels of enthusiasm at different campuses. Students are expressing a view that college is becoming more and more strict regarding attendance expectations i.e. higher expectations set. She expressed a view that there are different ways to motivate, and an example given was that in the Arts department it is the facilities and materials available etc. She suggested further consideration of attendance incentives and gave the media department as an example. Deputy Principal confirmed that the college is changing its approach to rewards slightly, i.e it will not always be the highest attenders who receive a reward as college needs to focus on those who have improved their attendance position. Governors all acknowledged that what works for one group of students will not necessarily work for another. Deputy Principal confirmed that the college has a revised attendance strategy and that some of the implementation actions will differ and be adapted. Challenge from the board was to look at attendance statistics in much more granular detail i.e. attendance levels from level 1 to level 2 and then level 3. Suggestion was to look at individual students who have progressed through these levels to see if any trends can be seen. Suggestion, which was agreed, was that a board deep dive on attendance be scheduled at the next meeting with 30 minutes allowed (Deputy Principal (VCL), December 2024). One governor asked whether there is a research opportunity in relation to the challenges of attendance. It was noted that the AOC have recently issued a data report, however this is not research based with students involved. Deputy Principal confirmed that there will be focus groups in place this year. These will be at each campus and will be teacher led. Challenge from governors was to look at benchmarking data wherever it is available. Challenge from one governor was that attendance targets set for 2024/25 look ambitious and therefore questioned whether they	

	are achievable. Deputy Principal confirmed that it is important for the college to be ambitious and to be able to evidence this. She explained that the targets set impact upon the RAG ratings which then lead to interventions, with a view that interventions need to be much earlier than has historically been the case. Whilst acknowledging this, governors observed that it is possible to have intervention triggers set separately. All agreed that the correlation between attendance and attainment is very clear to see and therefore college needs to be ambitious regarding attendance targets. Deputy Principal indicated that there is also a correlation between attendance and lifetime earnings and that this needs to be shared more widely/systematically with students. Suggestion from governors, which was accepted, was that the 'meet the student' session planned in December 2024 have attendance as the topic i.e. why do/don't students attend. One governor asked whether achievement should be a KPI. CEO confirmed that it is possible to provide a termly report on achievement, with the term 1 position available in February 2025. It was agreed to ask the QTSE Committee to consider and discuss what is to be reported and when (QTSE, 2024). AGREED to: a) Note the content of the 2023/24 year end update against targets, and b) Approve in principle the 2024/25 KPIs proposed.	
7	**CEO's report** Board was happy to note the content of the information provided.	
8	**Skills Report (Standing Item)** Deputy Principal drew governors' attention to her detailed report and explained that it summarises what the college has been doing to meet skills needs and that this will be a key element at next inspection. College is confident regarding the position and is currently collating evidence to support the position statement. Deputy Principal confirmed that meeting skills needs required a change to the curriculum and meaningful engagement, both locally and regionally. Team have mapped the colleges curriculum offer (3,000 courses) to the priorities and there is confidence that all that the college does maps except for sports provision, however college knows why it offers sport which is in high demand and highly regarded. College has also been able to map its apprenticeship offer and compare it with what others do as this clearly shows a collaborative approach. All agreed that briefing managers on the wide range of employer engagement is critical. Deputy Principal expressed confidence that the college will be able to collate the evidence required to show a 'strong' position, part of this involves identifying 47 employers who are prepared to speak to Ofsted	

	when they inspect. Governors were advised that industry forums have also taken place for priority areas and that this has allowed a position paper to be created. One governor asked what the level of confidence is regarding design of the curriculum with stakeholders. Deputy Principal confirmed that staff are currently working on collating evidence to show engagement that has led to an impact. Governors asked whether employer engagement needs to be strong across all areas. Deputy Principal confirmed that it does. Lead governor for skills then provided feedback, including: • He has had very good conversations with the Deputy Principal which gives him confidence. • College's focus is on engagement, contribution and impact with a particular focus on how the curriculum has changed and developed. • Governors shouldn't feel that they need to be subject experts to make a contribution. One governor asked whether the college would need to evidence the impact of industry forums. Deputy Principal advised that this wasn't the case, and that evidence will come from employers. Governors asked whether curriculum managers are clear what evidence is required. Deputy Principal confirmed that they do. One governor asked how the college analyses the position where there are courses with insufficient student interest. Deputy Principal confirmed that each is reviewed and that, for many, they are T Levels. She expressed the view that the Level 3 curriculum reforms have not been helpful. Governors' attention was drawn to the under recruitment for access provision and it was explained that further analysis is required, as the reasons for under recruitment are not fully known or anticipated. For some students they simply didn't have the entry requirements needed. Competition with HE is also a factor. Deputy Principal confirmed that the intention to do a re-launch. In relation to HTQs it was explained that some students did not progress with the college and chose to go to university instead. AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
9	**2024 Headline Outcomes** Deputy Principal provided a slide presentation with key matters highlighted including: • This is a high-level report • Data collection contributing to this closed last Thursday • Outcomes report will sit alongside the SAR and will be shared with governors. 1) <u>Headline Rates (including maths and English GCSE resits)</u> • Data compared with national averages and RAG ratings relate to this • Up to 3% below national average is an 'amber'	

- Greater than 3% below national average is a 'red'
- At or above national average is 'green'
- In terms of an Ofsted inspection, achievement rates are only important if they are poor and, if they are, Ofsted will want to investigate them.
- RAG ratings for 16-18, 19+ and all ages are amber overall
- Retention does impact upon achievement
- 42-day census point is the starting point for retention
- Achievement = retention x pass rates

One governor asked what the trend is year on year. Deputy Principal indicated that the more detailed report to be developed will give a 3-year trend plus the 18/19 position i.e. pre-covid.

2) <u>Headline rates (excluding maths and English)</u>
- These are the colleges main programmes
- Overall RAG rating for 16-18, 19+ and all ages is amber
- Taking out the maths and English position has not led to a significant decline in the percentage, which is positive

3) <u>Achievement rates by level and age</u>
- Level 3 overall and 16-18 position is below national averages, however position is improved on prior year. Trajectory is important. Retention from year 1 to year 2 is a challenge. There has been a disproportionate impact of A Level results/retention on 'all' Level 3 position because of the number of enrolments. Intention is for the college to offer fewer two-year linear programmes and instead students will obtain a qualification/achievement in year 1 and will then progress to a higher level in year 2.

4) <u>Maths and English achievement by age – FS and GCSE</u>
- ¾ of provision is GCSE
- GCSE outcomes are relatively strong, however functional skills outcomes at all ages are a concern and, because of this, college is looking to move students in year to GCSE's. One governor noted that the 2021/22 position seemed higher and they therefore asked whether there are any post pandemic interventions used here that the college can learn from e.g. responding to digital proverty. Staff expressed a view that 2021/22 was impacted by CAGs and TAGs which means that grades were inflated.

5) <u>High grade GCSE by age</u> – this is 4+ and above. College has a good and strong position. One governor asked whether students are taught in sets. It was explained that, whilst students are streamed they are not labelled as being in sets.

6) <u>High grade technical qualification data for 16-18</u>
- Merit and distinction percentage for all is positive and strong
- This shows a level of pedagogical skill and ambition

	7) <u>High grade technical qualification data for 19+</u> - this is even stronger 8) <u>Progression to university</u> • Data provided does not really mean much in isolation without wider destinations data being available • 'Other' destinations include apprenticeships and work • It is hard to collate student destination data, given that student response rates are very low It was agreed to circulate a copy of the slides to governors outside the meeting (Director of Governance, November 2024). AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.	
10	**Sustainability report** Given time constraints it was agreed to defer this to the next meeting (COO, December 2024).	
11	**Report from committees** 1) <u>PSSG</u> - Board happy to note the content of the Chairs summary report and 9th September 2024 meeting minutes - In relation to Tudor Hall, CEO confirmed that he has a meeting scheduled with Barnet Museum tomorrow and they believe that they may be able to match the purchase offer already made. - Committee considered the frequency of conditions surveys to be completed. Proposal is that this be between 5-7 years. Board was happy to approve this frequency as proposed. 2) <u>Audit & Risk</u> - Board was happy to note the content of the Committee Chairs summary and 18th September 2024 meeting minutes - College is currently going through the process of the final 2023/24 audit. CEO highlighted that there may be additional audit costs given some complexities. He described the audit process as challenging and that this is attributed to changes in personnel. 3) <u>People Committee</u> - Board was happy to note the content of the Chairs summary report and 30th September 2024 meeting minutes. Committee Chair indicated that she was able to meet with the CEO earlier today and has looked at forward planning. Committee will look at the format of reports going forward so that there is greater focus. Request from committee is a move away from reporting on actions with the focus instead being on problems and solutions. 4) <u>QTSE</u>	

	- Board was happy to note the content of the Committee Chairs assurance report and 7th October 2024 meeting minutes. - Governors' attention was particularly drawn to the safeguarding report where there is confidence that the college is institutionally strong. Lots of hard work taking place with an impact on the community. One example given was forced marriage prevention. College has received assurance from an external review and the next stage is to develop an action plan in relation to this. Overall opinion was 'effective'. Lead governor and DSL talk about trends when they meet. College is dealing with some serious cases on a day-to-day basis. - Governors' attention was drawn to the updated safeguarding policy which is recommended by QTSE for approval. AGREED to: a) Note the content of the update provided, and b) Approve the updated Safeguarding Policy as presented. 5) <u>Finance Committee</u> - Governors were happy to note the content of the Chairs Summary note and 17th October 2024 minutes. Committee Chair highlighted the recommendation to approve the Reserves Policy as presented. - Governors were advised that the CFO is reviewing potential breach of bank covenants and is in negotiation with the bank in relation to this. - 2024/25 is tracking slightly more positive than budget - Planned enrolment update to the next finance committee meeting, however position is currently tracking positively AGREED to: a) Note the content of the update provided, and b) Approve the Reserves Policy as presented.	
12	**AOB** There was none for this meeting.	
13	**Confidential items** It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis. Staff and students left the meeting at 8.20pm. Meeting closed at 8.30pm.	