

MINUTES

**Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Minutes of the Board Meeting
held on Thursday 14th May 2026
at 18:00 at Southgate Campus**

Governors

Present:

Adam Goldstein, Chair
Neil Coker, CEO/Principal
Cait O’Riordan
Becky Willis
Phil Harding
Mark Taylor
Amy de Campos
James Edsberg (Teams)
Amy Cooper
Adam Morley (Teams)
Alex Middleton
Dominic Abbott (Teams)
Diane Moore
Thomas Streater

In attendance:

Tracey McIntosh, Deputy Principal
Simon Evans-Evans, COO
Sarah Surrey, CFO
Mandi Osoba, Chief People Officer
Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance
Kam Nandra, Deputy Principal

Item	Description	Action
1	Preliminary items 1) Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from Jenny Jarvis, Tara Jayaratne, Omid Meherizi and Fitwi Kebede. 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. The Chair highlighted that the meeting would provide an opportunity for extended strategic discussion, particularly in relation to transformation, reputation, and strategy execution. Governors welcomed the emphasis on deeper strategic engagement.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting 1) Minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2026 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 12th February 2026. 2) Matters arising and actions tracker The Director of Governance confirmed that progress against actions was reflected in the tracker and that outstanding matters would be addressed through the agenda.	
3	CEO's Report – Strategy Execution <u>3i. Name Change Working Group Outcomes</u> The CEO introduced a comprehensive update on the work undertaken by the Governors' Name Change Working Group, which had met on two occasions following the Board Development Day. It was emphasised that the format of these sessions — providing dedicated time, a smaller group setting, and focused facilitation — had enabled a depth of discussion and challenge not always achievable within the constraints of full Board meetings. The CEO reflected that this approach had been particularly effective in enabling governors to interrogate the strategic rationale for change, consider stakeholder perspectives, and assess reputational implications in the round. Governors agreed that this represented an example of effective governance practice in action. The Board was advised that, following this detailed consideration, the working group had concluded that the original proposal for a full organisational rename and rebrand — previously supported in principle — should no longer be pursued at this point in time. This decision reflected a combination of factors, including: the evolving strategic context of the College;	

	• a reassessment of the relative risks and benefits of a full rebrand; • a recognition that reputational improvement could be achieved through more targeted and proportionate interventions. The Board discussed this shift in position at length and expressed strong support for the approach taken. Governors emphasised that the decision demonstrated: • a willingness to revisit and refine earlier strategic assumptions in light of new evidence; • a disciplined and reflective approach to decision-making; • a mature understanding of the distinction between brand identity and underlying reputation. Notwithstanding the decision to step back from a full name change, the CEO made clear that the underlying strategic ambition — to strengthen the College’s reputation and positioning — remained unchanged. The Board therefore considered the revised focus of work, which would centre on: • strengthening brand clarity and positioning; • improving digital presence and accessibility (particularly through website redevelopment); • enhancing stakeholder perception, including learners, parents, employers and schools; • refreshing visual identity where appropriate; • strengthening narrative coherence across all channels. Governors probed the extent to which this revised approach would deliver measurable impact, particularly in relation to recruitment, and emphasised the importance of: • clear milestones and delivery plans; • defined success measures; • alignment with recruitment cycles and timelines. The Executive confirmed that: • work had already commenced at pace, including commissioning website redevelopment; • initial concepts and proposals would be brought forward within a short timeframe; • delivery would be tightly aligned to upcoming recruitment campaigns, with October identified as a key milestone for external launch. The Board also discussed governance oversight of this work and it was agreed that the proposed Transformation & Innovation Committee would be the appropriate forum to provide ongoing	
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	scrutiny, challenge and support, while ensuring sufficient reporting back to the full Board. <u>3ii. Strategy Proposition and Student Feedback</u> The Board then undertook an extended and detailed discussion of the strategic proposition, drawing on both: • feedback from the Governor strategy session; and • direct insight from recent structured engagement with students. Student Voice and Market Positioning Governors reflected on the student feedback received earlier in the day, recognising it as a particularly valuable and authentic insight into learner perceptions and priorities. It was noted that students consistently emphasised: • the importance of employability and progression as their primary concern; • the centrality of high-quality, consistent teaching; • the value of practical exposure to workplaces, employers, and career pathways; • the importance of a strong, visible digital and social media presence; • the role of personal recommendation and authentic student experience in influencing choice. A key theme emerging from the discussion was that students prioritised outcomes over branding, with several governors observing that: • the name of the College was less influential than perceived outcomes; • a clear and credible pathway to employment was the most compelling element of the offer; • authenticity and clarity of message were more important than breadth or complexity. Challenge on Careers and Employability Delivery The Board engaged in detailed challenge regarding the apparent disconnect between: • reported high levels of careers engagement (e.g. the majority of students receiving a careers interview); and • student perception that careers support was variable or lacked impact. Governors explored whether:	
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	• careers provision was overly transactional rather than developmental; • messaging about employability was not sufficiently visible or consistent; • practical exposure to work environments was insufficiently embedded across the curriculum. The Executive acknowledged this challenge and confirmed that: • careers provision is being strengthened, including employer engagement and curriculum integration; • a revised curriculum strategy would place greater emphasis on employability; • future digital developments (including the new website) would embed clear progression pathways for each course. However, the Board emphasised that: • evidence of delivery must be consistently experienced by learners; • practical, tangible engagement (e.g. placements, employer interaction) is critical; • simply providing information is not sufficient to influence perception. Strategic Messaging and Differentiation The Board then considered the emerging strategic messaging framework and the testing undertaken. It was noted that the proposition of “improving the future employability of learners” resonated strongly with students and governors alike. However, governors also recognised that: • this message is not, in itself, differentiated across the sector; • many institutions would plausibly make similar claims; • credibility depends on demonstrable delivery. Alternative messaging relating to “future industries” and longer-term career alignment was considered by the Board. Governors acknowledged that this had the potential to offer differentiation but highlighted: • the complexity of articulating “future industries” in a meaningful and credible way; • the need to ensure that messaging reflects actual curriculum capability and delivery; • the risk of over-promising against emerging or uncertain labour market trends. The Board agreed that:	
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	• a single clear headline message is required to ensure clarity and impact; • this should be supported by a small number of strong, evidence-based sub-messages; • further refinement is required to balance resonance, credibility, and differentiation. Strategic Alignment and Delivery Implications A significant element of the discussion focused on ensuring alignment between: • strategic messaging; • curriculum design and delivery; • workforce capability; • stakeholder expectations. Governors were clear that: • messaging must not outpace delivery capability; • strategic positioning must reflect the lived experience of learners; • transformation activity must prioritise areas that are both deliverable and impactful. The Board also explored the implications of curriculum reform policy, noting: • increasing national emphasis on technical specialisation and defined career pathways; • the tension this creates for learners who are uncertain about their future direction; • the importance of maintaining flexible, inclusive routes within the curriculum. Governors emphasised that the College should: • continue to support both defined career pathways and exploratory learning; • articulate clearly the value of this flexibility as part of its offer; • ensure that progression routes are visible, accessible and credible. Governors asked if there ways to 'rank' BSC courses/qualifications when compared to other colleges. Governors suggested that "BSC is a route into" would be an attractive message. Governors commented positively on exploring options to have a recruitment consultancy company on site (periodically) so that they can individually speak to students about job opportunities and career pathways. AGREED:	
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	- to endorse the decision not to proceed with a full organisational rename; - to support a targeted approach to brand and reputational development; - to prioritise employability as the core organising principle of the College's proposition, subject to further refinement; ACTIONS: - Executive to develop detailed, phased proposals for brand, website, and reputational activity * - Transformation & Innovation Committee to refine and test strategic messaging and priorities * - Executive to review consistency of employer engagement and work experience across curriculum areas * - Executive to ensure clearer articulation and visibility of learner progression pathways * <u>SOUTHGATE MASTERPLAN</u> CEO then provided a detailed update on progress made to date to develop the campus plan. He invited governors to comment upon the level of assurance provided in relation to pace, progress and the direction of travel. Governors were entirely supportive and endorsed continuation.	
4	CEOs Update <u>4i. March 2026 Development Day – Key Messages and Actions</u> The CEO provided an update on the outcomes of the Board Development Day, noting that it had generated a significant volume of insight, challenge, and reflection across a range of strategic areas. Governors reflected positively on the value of the session, particularly: - the opportunity for deeper strategic discussion outside formal Board constraints; - the structured facilitation, which supported focused and productive dialogue; - the clarity of emerging themes and priorities. The Board emphasised the importance of ensuring that the outputs of the Development Day are translated into: - clear actions; - defined priorities; - measurable outcomes; Governors sought assurance that momentum would be maintained and that learning would not be lost.	

	The CEO confirmed that: • outputs from the Development Day have been incorporated into ongoing strategic work; • further detail on specific actions and progress will be presented in subsequent reports; • alignment with the Transformation & Innovation Committee will ensure continuity. <u>4ii. Transformation & Innovation Committee – Establishment</u> The Board considered in detail the proposal to establish a Transformation & Innovation Committee, recognising its significance within the overall governance framework. The CEO outlined the purpose of the Committee as: • providing focused oversight of strategic transformation priorities; • enabling detailed, iterative discussion outside full Board meetings; • supporting both challenge and development of strategic initiatives; • ensuring alignment across key areas including curriculum, reputation, estates and innovation. Governors discussed the proposed Terms of Reference and reflected on: • the breadth of the proposed remit; • the interdependencies with other committees (particularly Finance, QTSE and People); • the need to avoid duplication while enabling focused attention on strategic priorities. A number of governors emphasised that: • transformation activity sits at the heart of the College’s strategy; • it is essential that the full Board retains sufficient visibility and opportunity for discussion; • the Committee should complement, rather than replace, Board-level strategic engagement. The Chair reinforced that: • the Committee is intended to deepen and accelerate work, not to remove it from Board oversight; • Board agendas will continue to allocate time for strategic discussion;	
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	• effective communication between the Committee and the Board will be critical. Governors welcomed the updates to be provided during planned board meetings but also indicated that they would be happy to receive progress notes via email circulation. Governors agreed that it is important to allow sufficient time at meetings to discuss the TIC outputs. The Board also discussed membership, noting that: • the proposed initial membership, drawn from the Name Change Working Group, provided continuity and momentum; • there should be flexibility to adjust membership over time; • governors should be given the opportunity to express interest in participation. It was further noted that: • committee structures would be reviewed through the Search & Governance Committee; • governors would be invited to indicate preferences for committee membership; • final decisions would need to balance individual preference with organisational need. The CEO provided further updates covering: <u>Annual Strategic Conversation</u> The Board was advised that the Annual Strategic Conversation with the Department for Education had been highly positive. External feedback recognised: • strong strategic leadership and governance; • clarity of direction and delivery; • improving performance and outcomes; • strong partnerships and external engagement. Governors welcomed this feedback and emphasised the importance of continuing to build on this positive external perception. CEO confirmed that the formal letter from DfE following the meeting had now been received and he confirmed that this would be included in the papers for the next meeting. <u>Policy Framework</u> The Board noted progress in reviewing and strengthening the College's policy framework, including: • improved tracking and oversight of policies; • clearer identification of those requiring Board approval; • development of a structured system for monitoring review cycles and compliance requirements.	
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	Governors welcomed this work as an important enhancement to governance assurance. It was suggested that an annual compliance/assurance report be presented to the Audit & Risk Committee. AGREED: - to note the outcomes of the Development Day and support ongoing implementation; - to approve the establishment of the Transformation & Innovation Committee and to approve the Terms of Reference as presented. ACTIONS: - Executive to provide a structured update on Development Day actions and progress (CEO) - Governors to indicate committee preferences (All Governors) - Search & Governance Committee to review committee structures and membership	* * *
5	Reports from Committees The Board received a comprehensive suite of committee reports, noting that the Committee Chair summary reports were providing a clear and effective synthesis of key discussions, challenges, and assurances emerging from each committee. Governors agreed that this had materially improved visibility and coherence for those not directly involved in committee work. Governors were invited to consider both: - the assurance provided through committee scrutiny; and - any strategic implications or areas requiring further Board-level focus. <u>Search and Governance Committee</u> The Board received an update on recent Search and Governance Committee activity, which had focused on core governance effectiveness, forward planning, and board composition. External Governance Review: The Committee had considered the approach to the next external governance review, noting the requirement to complete this within the prescribed cycle. It was reported that initial scoping conversations had taken place with potential providers, and that the Committee was actively considering: - the most appropriate timing of the review (with a preference for Spring Term to allow for leadership transition embedding);	

	• the scope and depth of the review; • the opportunity to move beyond a purely compliance-based approach to a more targeted and strategically focused review. Governors discussed the importance of ensuring that the review: • provides meaningful insight and challenge; • reflects the current phase of organisational development; • focuses on areas of greatest strategic importance, including Board impact and effectiveness. The Board supported the Committee's direction of travel and emphasised that the review should add tangible value rather than replicate previous approaches. Board Skills and Composition The Board was advised that work is underway to refresh the Board Skills Matrix, which will: • identify any emerging gaps in expertise; • support succession planning; • inform future recruitment activity. This work will be closely aligned with the review of committee memberships, ensuring that: • each committee has an appropriate balance of skills and experience; • governors are effectively deployed in areas where they can add most value; • emerging strategic priorities are supported by appropriate expertise. Governors were invited to express preferences for committee membership, with the understanding that final decisions would balance individual requests with organisational need. Declarations of Interest and External Roles The Committee had also reviewed the approach to managing governors' external roles and interests. It was noted that: • a comprehensive register of interests is maintained and updated annually; • further work is underway to consolidate and present this information to provide greater transparency and insight into the Board's collective networks and expertise. Governors discussed the importance of: • ensuring clarity and transparency in declarations;	
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	• using insight into external connections constructively, particularly in relation to partnerships and stakeholder engagement; • maintaining robust assurance for audit purposes. The Board reflected that the Committee's work is increasingly focused on strengthening governance effectiveness through: • proactive planning rather than compliance-driven activity; • alignment with strategic priorities; • continuous improvement of Board composition and performance. AGREED: • to note the update and assurance provided. ACTIONS: • Director of Governance to bring forward options and recommendations for the external governance review (Director of Governance) * • Search and Governance Committee to complete review of Board skills and committee membership * <u>PSSG</u> The Board received the Chair's summary and noted progress on estate strategy and funding opportunities. <u>CTEC / GLA Funding Bid</u> The Board considered the proposed bid to the Greater London Authority (GLA) for capital funding. The Board APPROVED: • Submission of a bid to secure £1 million funding from the Construction Skills Capital Fund (GLA) • Use of funds to refurbish and retrofit the first floor of W Block at the Southgate campus • Development of: - o Three workshops ○ One classroom ○ Installation of a lift The Board noted the funding would: • Enable delivery of plumbing, electrical and retrofit provision • Significantly enhance construction skills capacity The Board further APPROVED:	
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	• £700,000 match funding from Condition Capital Fund (CCF) allocation. • £200,000 match funding from the public sector decarbonisation project The Board confirmed that: • This constituted formal Governor approval for the purposes of the CTEC bid <u>People and Culture Committee</u> The Board received a detailed update on workforce-related matters, noting that the Committee's work has increasingly been underpinned by improved data quality and visibility. Workforce Data and Insight It was reported that significant progress has been made in developing a more robust and comprehensive people data set, enabling: • clearer understanding of workforce composition; • improved insight into turnover, stability, and recruitment patterns; • a stronger evidence base for decision-making. Governors welcomed this progress and recognised that improved data is critical to strengthening strategic workforce planning. Workforce Strategy and Planning The Committee had begun to consider the implications of this improved insight for the development of a more coherent workforce strategy, particularly in light of the College's transformation ambitions. Discussion focused on: • recruitment challenges in key areas; • workforce sustainability and succession planning; • the need to align workforce capability with future curriculum and strategic priorities. Governors emphasised that workforce planning will be a critical enabler of transformation, and that: • future workforce requirements must be considered alongside strategic messaging and curriculum development; • there is a need to move from reactive recruitment to more proactive planning. People and OD Improvement Activity The Committee had reviewed the People and Organisational Development elements of the College Improvement Plan, noting that:	
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	• progress is being made in key areas; • prioritisation remains essential given capacity constraints; • further work is required to ensure focus on the most impactful activities. Governors welcomed the candid assessment of capacity and prioritisation and emphasised the importance of: • clear sequencing of activity; • alignment with organisational strategy; • avoiding dilution of effort across too many initiatives. Leadership and Talent Development The Committee also considered leadership capacity and the development of a leadership framework, recognising that: • leadership capability is central to delivering organisational change; • investment in leadership development will be essential to support transformation. The Board agreed that workforce strategy is now a critical strategic priority, given its interdependencies with: • curriculum transformation; • student experience; • financial sustainability. AGREED: • to note the update and assurance provided. ACTION: • Executive to bring forward a draft workforce strategy aligned to organisational priorities (Executive / Chief People Officer) <u>Finance Committee</u> The Board received a detailed financial update, noting that the College continues to demonstrate overall financial resilience, albeit within a challenging funding environment. In-Year Financial Position It was reported that: • the College is currently on track to achieve a small in-year surplus; • performance is broadly in line with expectations; • targeted interventions have supported delivery against budget. Governors welcomed this position but acknowledged the complexity and volatility of the funding environment. Governors noted the committee request for clarity around bank covenants, which is to be provided at the next meeting.	*
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	Key Financial Risks Discussion focused particularly on: • high needs income variability and uncertainty; • clawback risks in relation to specific funding streams (e.g. T Levels); • ongoing pressure on income streams outside direct College control. The Executive provided assurance that: • active management and mitigation actions are in place; • forecasting is being refined to reflect emerging information; • planning for 2026/27 incorporates these risks. Governors challenged the extent to which these risks could be mitigated and emphasised the importance of: • maintaining strong financial oversight; • ensuring realistic assumptions within financial planning; • building resilience into future budgets. Forward Financial Planning The Committee had reviewed key assumptions underpinning the development of the 2026/27 budget, including: • student number projections; • funding rates and policy changes; • cost pressures and workforce implications. Governors noted the importance of aligning financial planning with strategic priorities, particularly in relation to transformation and growth. Cash Flow and Financial Resilience The Committee had undertaken detailed scrutiny of cash flow projections, noting: • sufficient levels of liquidity; • continued compliance with financial covenants; • the importance of maintaining headroom given uncertainty in funding streams. The Board recognised that while the College remains in a stable position, the external environment presents increasing challenges, requiring: • continued vigilance; • strong financial discipline; • alignment between strategy and financial delivery. AGREED:	
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	• to note the financial position and assurance provided. • to approve the 2026/27 Fees Policy as presented. <u>Audit and Risk Committee</u> The Board received an update on audit activity and risk management arrangements. Risk Management and Assurance The Committee had reviewed the College's risk framework, noting: • progress in strengthening risk management processes; • improved clarity in risk identification and categorisation; • the need to embed risk awareness more consistently across the organisation. Governors emphasised the importance of: • ensuring that risk reporting supports meaningful Board oversight; • linking risk discussion clearly to strategic priorities; • maintaining focus on emerging risks in a changing external environment. Policy Compliance and Controls The Committee noted progress in strengthening policy oversight, including: • improved tracking of policy updates and review cycles; • clearer identification of policies requiring Board approval; • enhanced assurance processes. Governors welcomed this work as a significant improvement in governance controls. Audit Activity The Board noted ongoing internal audit activity and the assurances provided, including: • satisfactory progress in implementing recommendations; • continued strengthening of governance and control frameworks. The Board agreed that continued focus on: • embedding risk management culture; • strengthening assurance processes; • maintaining robust internal control will be critical to supporting organisational resilience. Committee Chair advised that a tender exercise is underway to appoint internal auditors. Two presentations/interviews are scheduled and an update on these will be provided at the next meeting.	
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	AGREED: • to note the update and assurance provided. • To approve the External Audit Planning Memorandum • To approve the updated Risk Management and Assurance Policy <u>Quality, Teaching, Student Experience (QTSE) Committee</u> The Board received an update on quality and student experience. Learner Outcomes and Quality It was reported that: • learner outcomes continue to improve; • reporting is increasingly transparent and data-driven; • challenge within the Committee is robust and constructive. Governors welcomed the positive trajectory and emphasised the importance of sustaining momentum. Strategic Quality Priorities The Committee had focused on: • strengthening teaching quality; • improving consistency across curriculum areas; • enhancing student experience and progression outcomes. Governors noted that: • alignment between quality priorities and strategic messaging (particularly employability) will be essential; • the student feedback discussed earlier reinforces the importance of consistent delivery. The Board emphasised that: • quality of teaching remains the foundational driver of outcomes and reputation; • consistency of learner experience across provision is critical; • further assurance is required to ensure that improvements are embedded at all levels. Safeguarding lead governor advised that, as part of her role, she is planning sampling of the Single Central Register (SCR) maintained by the college. Governors discussed safeguarding generally and, following the meeting with students earlier in the day, it was suggested to arrange a female only group to have a discussion around safety. Suggestion from the board was to link the work being done on the LEF (Learning Excellence Framework) to the remit of TIC. Deputy Principal took the opportunity to update governors on apprenticeship outcomes. She advised that:	
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	• Current position is now 90.4%, and • Best case is 96% • This should be compared with prior year position of 74% Governors asked what had made the difference and led to these improvements. Staff advise that it is relentless support provided to get students through their courses. AGREED: to note the update and assurance provided Overall Board Reflection on Committee Assurance The Board concluded that: • committee structures are providing robust and effective oversight across key areas; • reporting has improved, supporting clearer understanding and assurance; • there is strong alignment between committee activity and strategic priorities. However, governors emphasised the importance of ensuring that: • key strategic themes are sufficiently drawn together at Board level; • cross-cutting issues (e.g. workforce, employability, transformation) are considered holistically; • committees continue to evolve to support the College's next phase of development.	
6	AOB There were no items for discussion at this meeting. Director of Governance drew governors attention to the Student Governor report (May 2026) circulated by email earlier in the week. All agreed that it was a useful overview of activity taking place.	
7	Date and Time of Next Meeting This was noted as: Thursday 16 July 2026 at 6pm – Board Meeting (Staff and students left the meeting at 8pm) Meeting closed at 8.30pm	
8	Confidential Items It was agreed that confidential discussions would be recorded separately.	