

BARNSELY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2014

PART I

PRESENT:

G Beever	Governor
P Bird	Governor (Staff)
C Booth	Governor
N Bowen	Governor
H Cunningham	Governor (Student)
P Helm	Governor
R Pourali	Governor
J Thirkell	Governor (Chair)
G Vaughton	Governor
M Wesson	Governor (Staff)
H Worsley	Governor (Student)

IN ATTENDANCE:

A J Oaks	Clerk to the Governors
C Webb	Deputy Principal
D Harding	VP Quality and Adults
J Miccoli	VP Teaching, Learning & Student Support
P Singh	VP Comms and Recruitment
L Miah	Director of Finance

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

14.18 Apologies had been received from G McSkimming, A Eckford and M Taylor.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

14.19 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013

14.20 The Minutes of the meeting (Part I) were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

14.21 The Board received a list of actions arising from previous meetings. The Clerk reported that a Consultant would be providing a briefing on Equality and Diversity to the Board on 3 June, and that P Bird had successfully completed the online training module DISABLED GO. The Chair reported that the peer review meeting with York and Hull College would take place next month.

APPOINTMENT OF STAFF GOVERNOR

14.22 The Chair reported that following Staff governor elections that had taken place in January, Mia Wesson, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Officer had been duly elected by a significant majority, to serve as a staff member of the Board. Ms Wesson was welcomed to the Board and introductions were made.

RESOLVED 14.22 To appoint Ms Mia Wesson as a member of the Board for a term of office of four years.

GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 14.23 The Chair reported that Ms C Price had tendered her resignation from the Board on 6 February 2014. A letter had been sent to Ms Price thanking her for her contribution and service during her term of office. The Chair reported that an application for Board membership had been received from Mr Simon Brian from MKB Solicitors in the town. Mr Brian had been interviewed by the G&S Committee who had recommended he be appointed. She added that Mr Brian's skill set matched the criteria being sought for a Governor with a legal background, and his specialism in employment law addressed the gap that had arisen as a result of Ms Price's resignation. The recommendation was accepted.

RESOLVED 14.23 to appoint Mr Simon Brian as a member of the Board for term of office of four years.

- 14.24 The Committee had also considered and recommended the reappointment of Mr Gordon Beever for a second term of office. The Board were fully supportive of the recommendation.

RESOLVED 14.24 to appoint Mr Gordon Beever as a member of the Board for a second term of office of four years.

- 14.25 The Chair reported that a discussion had also taken place at G&S with regard to the protocol for link governor and OWL visits, and the evaluation of the feedback from the seminar, which was extremely positive. Further to a discussion on e-governance, the Clerk advised that she would be undertaking an exercise to calculate the costs of printing and copying Board and committee papers and seeking Governors views on the potential to circulate papers electronically. Governors were reminded of the repository through Skydrive which was accessible to all.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2014/15

- 14.26 The Board had agreed seven top strategic priorities at the Seminar in February which were presented for final consideration and approval. These were:-

1. Deliver significant improvement in value added through assessment, feedback and target setting.
2. An Outstanding Sixth Form College that is a first choice A level provider.
3. Develop outstanding learning inside and outside formal classrooms and workshops using ILT
4. Significantly improve English and maths
5. Growth in high level STEM and construction courses.
6. Respond to changes in apprenticeship funding and deliver significant growth.
7. Develop excellent careers and IAG services.

Governors volunteered to link with each of the strategic priorities with a view to monitoring and reporting to the Board through the regular cycle of business. The Principal emphasised that Priority 7 would have actions associated with it to improve IAG within the college and also the advice and guidance offered to secondary and primary school pupils. The Action plan would also include the development of work experience opportunities. In addition to the Action Plans that would underpin the top level priorities, SMT would continue to progress action plans related to Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity.

RESOLVED 14.26 To approve the Strategic Priorities for 2014/15.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIONS FROM SEMINAR

- 14.27 The VP T&L presented a report summarising recommendations for Governors to consider in respect of their engagement in teaching, learning and assessment which had arisen from the seminar. Six key areas which extended the link governor and OWLS visits in terms of governor engagement were discussed with regard to how each element could be facilitated.

Arrangements would be coordinated between the VP T&L and the Clerk. The extended programme would include Governors observing departmental learner forums, Student Union meetings, sitting in a lesson that was being graded through the formal observation process, taking part in no notice walkthroughs, open evenings, Governors as speakers, and Governors inviting learners to shadow them at their workplace. Governors agreed that the arrangement would benefit all Governors but particularly those with less teaching experience. Following a question from the Chair regarding governors attending a graded observation, the VP T&L and the Principal did not believe this would be a concern to staff. However she added that all teaching staff would be informed of the new arrangements. Staff Governor P Bird commented that in terms of his own teaching delivery in the classroom, he would have no concerns with a Governor attending a lesson in which he was being observed and welcomed the initiative.

- 14.28 The Chair referred to the existing protocol for Governors visiting college. It was agreed that there should be consistency and clarity of purpose for both Governors and staff participating in the new arrangements. Discussion took place with regard to the formal feedback, which was provided to the Principal and Chair, and how this could be disseminated to Managers. The Clerk undertook to make the necessary amendments to the protocol and feedback form in order that arrangements could be taken forward.

RESOLVED 14.28 to approve the extended Governor link arrangements and revised protocols for learner/governor engagement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING LEARNER SURVEY RESULTS

- 14.29 The Board received a report summarising activities being undertaken to improve teaching, learning and assessment across the college. The report was comprehensive and gave assurance to Governors of the continuous drive for improvement within the College. A mid-year update on graded lesson observations indicated 95% good or better teaching through internal observations, and 93% good or better through external observation. Governors recognised the positive and continued improvements.

The Report was noted and received.

LEARNER INDUCTION SURVEY

- 14.30 The Board received a report summarising the results of the learner induction survey which had been benchmarked against c485,889 learners from 108 providers in the sector. High level data indicated that the college remained in the top quartile for teaching and learning and wellbeing and quality assurance and that it was significantly ahead of benchmarks in all areas. The departmental results showed a wide variation, particularly in the Sixth Form, which was noted by Governors who sought information as to the action being taken to resolve the issues. The VP Comms and Recruitment commented that the College was hoping to obtain a benchmark for Sixth Form Colleges in the sector from QDP, which would allow the College to make comparisons and identify any variances. Governors looked forward to receiving the results of the 'On Programme' survey at the next meeting.

The Report was noted and received.

RETENTION

- 14.30 The Principal presented a report highlighting retention rates at February 2014. By comparison with the same period in the previous year retention rates had improved and there were no concerns.

The report was noted and received.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- 14.31 The Board received the Minutes of the F&R Committee meeting held on 4 February 2014. The Chair made reference to the College's level of subcontracting at £2.3m, which, due to it being considered an area of high risk by funding bodies, required Board approval. Full consideration of the risks associated with the level of subcontracting had been given by the F&R Committee.

RESOLVED 14.31 to approve the total value of subcontracting at £2.3m.

- 14.32 The Principal referred to Minute 14.11 HNB and ALS which highlighted the College's intention to issue an internal policy statement with regard to HNB students. The F&R Committee had been fully supportive of the College's intention to refuse to enrol Wakefield students with disabilities or learning difficulties where the LA disagreed with the College's assessment that concluded the student had High Needs. The Committee's recommendation to endorse the following policy statement was put to the Board:

'Where there is significant discrepancy between Barnsley College and Local Authority assessments of High Needs, students will not be enrolled until an agreement on High Needs status and payment for support has been reached'.

- 14.33 The Principal drew attention to the enrolment of 14- 16 year olds directly. It had been proposed prudent, given the increasingly competitive environment in which Colleges were operating, to clarify the College's position with regard to this group of learners and for an agreed policy statement to be presented to the Barnsley Challenge Board prior to being adopted by the College.

The F&R Committee had supported the College's statement of intent and recommended it to the Board.

Given the College's wish to support the strategic education strategy within Barnsley it was felt appropriate to clarify the College's commitment to working in partnership with local schools. It was proposed to put forward the following statement to the Barnsley Challenge Board:

"Barnsley College is committed to working in partnership with local schools to develop their vocational curriculum. We will therefore support long term delivery of vocational courses in local schools through providing teachers and other support at or below the cost to the college. The aim of providing this support will be to establish clear and effective progression to post 16 courses at Barnsley College.

*Barnsley College will **not** seek to directly enrol 14 to 16 year olds into college - other than Elective Home Educated (EHE) students or similar exceptions agreed in advance with local schools and through the Barnsley Challenge Board. We will also **not** seek to sponsor or establish a local UTC or similar that would compete with local schools. Any potential college proposals that would affect the 14 to 16 education landscape in Barnsley will be discussed at the earliest stage at the Barnsley Challenge Board".*

RESOLVED 14.33.1 To support the College's internal policy statement regarding HNB learners

RESOLVED 14.33.2 To approve the proposed statement to be presented to the Barnsley Challenge Board.

It was further agreed that any proposed changes to the policy statement would be agreed by the Barnsley College Board of Governors and discussed at the Barnsley Challenge Board.

COLLEGE FEES POLICIES

- 14.34 The Board received the FE and HE Fees Policies for approval, which included consideration of international students. The VP Quality and Adults provided an overview of the FE Fees policy which had limited amendments compared to 2012/13. The Policy stated that learners earning less than £20,000 could claim a reduction of 50% of fees subject to evidence of income and was a local decision the College wished to determine.

For all college staff, SFA courses were free, subject to rules on attendance. AS/A2 subjects would be charged at £500 per subject to adult learners. Governors noted that national changes in eligibility for fee remission would impact on the number of students studying ESOL at the college. Governors expressed concern at the potential reduction in numbers and the impact this would have on ethnic minority groups in Barnsley. Following a question from R Pourali regarding ESOL provision elsewhere in the borough, it was believed possible some provision was offered by BMBC however this was uncertain.

RESOLVED 14.34 to approve the FE Fees Policy for 2014/15

- 14.35 The HE and International Policy was the first to be introduced by the College and reflected national guidance and operation of the Student Loans Company. An overview was provided of the proposed fees, together with details of the payment process. Governors were informed that the overall reduction in funding would continue to impact on the number of subsidised courses and places available for adults. Annual fees for HNC/HND and other undergraduate programmes was proposed at £5,950. Course fees for non EU international students would be set or negotiated on a course by course basis.

RESOLVED 14.35 To approve the HE and International Fees Policy for 2014/15.

SAFEGUARDING SCHEME

- 14.36 The Board received a paper summarising changes made to the College's Safeguarding Scheme for approval, as a result of enrolment of 14 - 16 year olds, which included students who were previously Elective Home Educated. Specific changes had also been made to the Safeguarding procedures and information pack, both of which had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting to inform debate. Details were provided of the safeguarding arrangements for 14-16 year olds to provide assurance of mitigation of risk. Governors commented that the Policy was thorough and enhanced the safeguarding arrangements already in place.

RESOLVED 14.36 To approve the Safeguarding Scheme, Safeguarding procedures and Information pack.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 14.37 R Pourali congratulated the College on the success of Womens International day. The event had provided her with an opportunity to engage and contribute which had been welcomed. Thanks were conveyed particularly to J Miccoli who had presented awards. J Miccoli thanked R Pourali for her support at the event, and for attendance as link governor to the E&D Committee meetings. Governors noted the Curriculum reports were excellent and provided much evidence of the diversity of learner and their activities. Governors would continue to be alerted to future E&D events.

STUDENT UNION CONSTITUTION

- 14.38 The Board received a report and draft Constitution for the Barnsley College Student Union, which had been circulated for consideration and approval. The VP Communications and Recruitment explained that the inclusion of an increased number of HE students had influenced the formalising of a Constitution for 2014/15. In line with the Education Act 1994 and based on a revised model produced by the NUS, which included Sabbatical officers and applied to FE and HE, the Constitution had been produced with advice and guidance from the Clerk and Head of Student Services and reflected the needs of the Student Union at the College. Governors had approved a budget of £5,000 to the SU for 2013/14 which had boosted morale and given learners the drive and ambition to promote the SU's activities. It was agreed that formalising the structure would further strengthen the student voice. A report summarising how the budget had been spent would be presented to the Board in July 2014.
- 14.39 The Clerk advised that in line with the formalised Constitution, the Board would be required to set a budget for the Student Union each year and in accordance with the Instrument and

Articles, the Board would receive audited financial accounts of the Barnsley College Student Union each year.

RESOLVED 14.40 **To approve the Constitution of the Barnsley College Student Union.**

STUDENT SUPPORT FUND AND POLICY FOR 2014/15

14.41 The VP Comms and Recruitment presented a report updating it on uptake and impact of the Student Support Funds (SSF) for 2013/14 and proposing the Policies for 2014/15. The policy was first agreed by the Board in 2011/12 following the withdrawal of the EMA and had been very successful in supporting learners with financial hardship. Figures indicating the level of support for each element compared to 2012/13 were acknowledged.

14.42 The College was currently forecasting a spend of £160k at the end of the current year for 16-18 SSF in addition to the £691k received from EFA, £99k over budget. Governors were therefore requested to approve an overall budget of £800k for 2014/15, estimated to be in the region of £108k greater than the EFA allocation. Governors noted the positive impact of the Policy, particularly the evidence that learners supported through the SSF had high retention and achievement rates and continued to show high levels of satisfaction with access to funding and the college. Further to consideration, it was

RESOLVED 14.42.1 **to approve the projected overspend of £99k in 2013/14**
RESOLVED 14.42.2 **to approve the 16-18 SSF Policy for 2014/15**
RESOLVED 14.42.3 **to approve the 16-18 SSF budget for 2014/15 at £800k requiring an additional subsidy of £108k over and above the EFA allocation.**

R Pourali left the meeting.

NEW FINANCE SOFTWARE

14.43 The Board received proposals for a new finance system which required Board approval due to the level of expenditure. The Director of Finance presented the report, summarising the issues with the current finance system which was now outdated, and included the withdrawal of support over the coming months. With a view to implementing a new system on 1 August 2014, tenders had been issued to 5 suppliers through the Crescent Purchasing Consortium, for a 7 year period, which was in excess of the 5 year period for retendering stipulated in Financial Regulations. The Director of Finance explained that she believed given the level of the investment the period before retendering should be extended in this instance to ensure value for money was obtained. The variation to the Financial Regulations was accepted by the Board in this instance.

14.44 Following receipt of tenders, the cost of the new finance system would be in the region £175k. The Director of Finance advised that a presentation of the software was being arranged in the next few weeks with a view to the college awarding the contract in April 2014. Governors asked various detailed and technical questions and were satisfied that the proposed finance system met the College's requirements.

RESOLVED 14.44 **To approve the purchase of a new finance system at a maximum cost of £176k**
RESOLVED 14.44.2 **To approve a variation to the Financial Regulations to allow the Contract to be awarded for seven years from 1 August 2014.**
RESOLVED 14.44.3 **To authorise the Chair of Governors to sign the Contract once the preferred supplier is selected.**

UPDATE TO THREE YEAR PLAN

14.45 The Director of Finance presented an update to the 3 year Financial Plan which had been revised to exclude the income related to the UCB transfer in August 2013. The Plan had been considered in detail by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 4

February 2014. No concerns had been raised. The Director of Finance presented an update to the 3 year Financial Plan which had been revised to exclude the income related to the UCB transfer in August 2013. The Plan had been considered by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2014 and had not raised any concerns. The main variances were the expected reduction in EFA funding of £662k, and a cut in the adult budget from the SFA. Overall the current forecast indicated a funding cut of £364k less than the 3 Year Financial Plan submitted to the Board and subsequently the SFA in July 2013. HE income had increased and an increase in project income was anticipated. The resulting plan indicated an operating deficit in 2015/16. Governors asked several questions in relation to the action being taken by SMT to mitigate the increased risk. The Director of Finance was confident that cash generation remained strong and was sufficient to cover planned capital and debt servicing costs. Further to discussion, it was

RESOLVED 14.45 To approve the revised 3 year financial plan.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- 14.46 The Principal's report summarised events and items of interest. Further information was available in the Curriculum Report produced for Governors periodically. Governors received updates on various activities including iTrust CIC, HE and Barnsley Apprenticeship Pledge, College management meetings and the SMT Away day. The Principal had met with Matthew Hancock in February together with Dan Jarvis MP and Angela Smith MP to discuss the Barnsley Apprenticeship Pledge and apprenticeships. The Minister had been very interested in the College's success in this area.
- 14.47 International development continued at a pace, with further requests for training and development packages being received from Nigeria and an enquiry for Mine Engineering courses from Mongolia. In January the Deputy Principal had made a further visit to China to assess the progress of the Barnsley College/ Sinocampus project at Jinling High School. Activities that had taken place there were summarised in the report for information. The Deputy Principal had also visited other schools interested in the delivery of A Levels. A full update on A Level Centres would be presented to the Board in the summer.

FEEDBACK FROM LINK VISITS AND OWLS

- 14.48 Governors who had attended link visits and OWLS in January and February provided verbal feedback to the Board on their experiences. P Helm had visited the Sixth Form College and G Beever the Travel and Tourism department. Both Governors commented positively on the visits, stating that they had been a worthwhile experience in supporting their understanding of teaching, learning and assessment. P Helm added that he found the challenge by staff to be excellent, and their approach very consistent.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 14.49 The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13 May 2014 at 4.00 pm.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair wished to raise an item of business that was confidential. Staff Governors, Student governors and members of staff withdrew from the meeting.

Signed _____ Date _____