

BARNSELEY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 15 JULY 2014

PART I

PRESENT:

P Bird	Governor (Staff)
C Booth	Governor
N Bowen	Governor
S Brian	Governor
H Cunningham	Governor (Student)
A Eckford	Governor
P Helm	Governor
G McSkimming	Governor
R Pourali	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
T Johnson	VP Corporate Services
J Miccoli	VP Teaching, Learning & Student Support
L Miah	Director of Finance

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

14.122 Apologies had been received from G Beever, S Brian and G Vaughton.

The Chair welcomed the outgoing President of the Student Union, Francis Rhodes, to the meeting. A presentation was made to the Board highlighting the activities undertaken by the SU during 2013/14 together with the budget spend. Governors asked questions with regard to the planned activities for 2014/15 and of the anticipated spend. Ms Rhodes was thanked for the presentation and for attending. Ms Rhodes left the meeting.

The Board received a presentation from three of the College's Advanced Practitioners. The APs provided an overview of their role in respect to promoting creativity, upskilling, improving literacy and numeracy, raising aspirations and mentoring. A video highlighting the experience of one student teacher was shown, demonstrating the impact that mentoring had had on her own personal development. Following several questions from Governors with regard to the College's investment in the resource, the APs explained that they received remission to work on projects and also participated in the sharing of best practice both proactively to learn from each other and also in smaller groups to cascade to staff. The VP T&L informed Governors that the role was reviewed every two years to allow other staff the opportunity to take on such a role. Currently there were 23 APs and 10 ILT Stars. 15 had been promoted to management posts in the last year.

The Chair thanked the Advanced Practitioners for the presentation.

Steven Burkinshaw, incoming SU President, was welcomed to the meeting.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

14.123 The Chair reminded members of the requirement to declare any financial or personal interests in any agenda items. The Chair declared an interest in Item 8 relating to overseas

visits. N Bowen declared an interest in Item 16 appointment of Vice Chair. Members reserved the right to declare any interests should any arise during the course of the meeting.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2014

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

MATTERS ARISING

14.125 The Board received a list of actions arising from previous meetings which referred to items on the Agenda and future agenda items.

STUDENT UNION EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET

14.126 The Student Union had been granted £5000 for 2013/14. The Board received an overview of the budget spend, which totalled £4,342. The Student Union Committee had requested a budget of £5,000 for 2014/15 to cover officer development, promotion of the SU, events, equipment and societies. Governors raised questions and were agreed that there was a potential for an increase in expenditure this year due to the inclusion of HE students accessing the funds. Further to discussion, it was proposed to set a budget of £10,000 for 2014/15. The Chair requested a presentation be made to the Board in 12 months' time to demonstrate how the budget had been allocated.

RESOLVED 14.126 To approve a budget of £10,000 to the Student Union

M Taylor joined the meeting.

AUDIT COMMITTEE BUSINESS

14.127 The Chair of Audit referred to the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2014 which had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. The Committee had recommended the Board approve the Annual Internal Audit Strategy for 2014/15 to allow internal auditors to commence work in the autumn term. The Plan was considered relevant and appropriate for the coming year in terms of high risk areas.

RESOLVED 14.127 To approve the Annual Internal Audit Strategy for 2014/15

FINANCE AND RESOURCES BUSINESS

14.128 The Chair of F&R referred to the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2014 which had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. Summarising the business conducted, he confirmed that the Committee had exercised a high level of scrutiny over all matters. Members were content with the proposed amendments within the Financial Regulations, which had also been reviewed by the Audit Committee in the context of internal controls where several suggestions to ensure there was complete clarity had been accepted by management. The proposals had been incorporated into the final draft by the Director of Finance. Following recommendations by the Committee, it was:

RESOLVED 14.128.1 To approve the revised Financial Regulations

RESOLVED 14.128.2 To note that the Memoranda of Understanding in place between the College and its subsidiaries remained relevant and appropriate.

BUDGET AND THREE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

14.129 The Budget for 2014/15 and the three year financial plan had been considered in detail by the F&R Committee. The Committee had requested the Director of Finance present a

revised Plan to the Board indicating different scenarios, including one without the capital asset release from the sale of Honeywell and Carrington Avenue, and another indicating the impact on the financials should LIBOR increase to 3% or 5%. A revised Plan addressing these points was tabled to members.

- 14.130 The Director of Finance reported that the budget for 2014/15 had been revised as noted at F&R, with variances highlighted in the report. The revised budget reduced the surplus at the year end by £133,000, with all targets and covenants being met. The Director of Finance took Governors through the alternative scenarios that had been produced, explaining the impact of each on banking covenants and key financial targets. It was noted that with LIBOR at 5% the operating surplus would be significantly reduced and interest costs would increase, impacting on covenants with lenders. In addition the EBITDA target would be breached in the last two years of the plan by a very small margin.
- 14.131 Governors considered the implications of the College not realising the capital asset release from Carrington Avenue and Honeywell. The Principal commented that the Board was in a position to release further capital from sale of assets held in reserve, which included Belle Vue and Eastgate, should this become necessary. The Chair agreed, and following further discussion it was agreed to review the options available in relation to asset release at the next F&R Committee meeting in the autumn. Further to discussion the Board were content to approve the revised budget and financial plan as presented for 2014/15 to 2016/17. The Chair of F&R thanked the Director of Finance for remodelling the figures which had enabled Governors to make an informed decision.

RESOLVED 14.131 To approve the Budget for 2014/15 the Three year financial plan for submission to the SFA including an annual capital budget of £1.2m for 2014/15 and subcontracting of £2,026k in 2014/15.

R Pourali left the meeting.

OVERSEAS VISIT AUTHORISATION

- 14.132 The Board received a report from the Deputy Principal requesting authorisation for the Chair of the Board to attend a number of meetings in China between 12 – 19 September 2014. These included the official opening of the A Level centres in Nanjing, Beijing and Tianjin, meetings with officials from the Local Ministry of Education and senior managers from each of the schools, and a visit to Dangdong Eastern Liaoning University to agree and sign a Sino-Barnsley vocational partnership agreement. Discussions would also be held with regard to new national educational policies for vocational training in China.
- 14.133 Full details of the costs to be incurred were provided for Governors' information. Further to discussion regarding the length of the journey and the need to commence work immediately on arrival, it was agreed that the Chair and Deputy Principal should travel business class on the outgoing journey.

RESOLVED 14.133 That the Chair of Governors be authorised to travel overseas on behalf of the Board and the College.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014/15

- 14.134 The Board received the Development Plan for 2014/15 which reflected the revised budget and three year financial plan presented earlier to the meeting. The Plan set out the College's strategic priorities agreed and approved by the Board in March, together with quality and effectiveness targets. As agreed in May, Governors would take a lead on monitoring the objectives by meeting with SMT leads in the autumn term and reporting to the Board. The Principal advised that the targets within the Development plan would be incorporated into the Master Target file which would be made available to Governors in due course. The Chair requested the Principal and senior management review the approach to presenting data to the Board for monitoring purposes and proposed a dashboard scorecard

be produced to allow Governors to monitor key targets going forward and allow trends to be identified.

- RESOLVED 14.134** **to approve the Development Plan for 2014/15**
RESOLVED 14.135 **That the senior management team shall present data for monitoring purposes via a data dashboard at future meetings**

PLANNING OF COLLEGE INSPECTION

- 14.136 The Board received a proposal to commission a full inspection during 2014/15 that would align with the Ofsted process and provide a clear indication of the College's current performance against the new Ofsted framework. Whilst guidance indicated that outstanding Colleges would be inspected less frequently than the usual four year cycle, the Principal was keen to ensure senior staff and Governors were fully aware of the position.
- 14.137 Further to discussion it was agreed that the commissioning of an inspection be undertaken by the Board, supported by the VP Quality working with selected Board members and the Clerk, to identify suitable consultants. A three week period during the year when the inspection would take place would be agreed by the Board. Final details relating to areas to be inspected and actual date would not be revealed to the College. The process of notification of inspection, areas to be inspected, reporting and feedback would be aligned to the current Ofsted regime.
- 14.138 Consultancy fees in the region of £30,000 were proposed, which would allow for around 8 to 9 curriculum areas to be inspected. The costs had been factored into the budget for 2014/15. He added that by using consultants the College would receive informed and constructive feedback, particularly with regard to learner observation. For those Governors who had not been involved in inspection previously the Principal explained the feedback process, which would also be aligned with the Ofsted practice. G McSkimming, N Bowen and M Taylor volunteered to work with the Clerk and the VP Quality and Development to lead on the arrangements.

- RESOLVED 14.138.1** **To approve the commissioning of consultants to carry out an inspection during 2014/15 at a maximum cost of £30,000**
- RESOLVED 14.138.2** **To approve that the approach be aligned with Ofsted practices.**
- RESOLVED 14.138.3** **That the VP Quality & Development, Governors and the Clerk commence arrangements at the earliest opportunity.**

SKILLS BANK - SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLE

- 14.139 The Board received an additional paper from the Principal proposing the College enters into a formal partnership with the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Colleges to establish a company limited by guarantee (an SPV) to manage the Skills Bank on behalf of the SCR Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- 14.140 Earlier in the month, it had been stated that there would be a £320m cash boost for the SCR creating over 28,000 jobs and training for 40,000 people. The training element of the growth deal was purported to enable the creation of a £130m Skills Bank, providing training for 40,000 which would include between 5,000 and 7,000 apprentices. Further information was provided, including the source of the funding and details of the proposal which had been discussed at the recent meeting of the SCR. In terms of financial implications, these were low, as it was intended that each partner College would appoint one Director to the Company, their time and expertise being required to produce the bid. Whilst the advantages of being closely engaged rather than bidding as an external contractor were recognised, it was acknowledged that there was no guarantee the Company would secure

the contract. The Board recognised the need to move quickly on this opportunity and had no hesitation in approving the proposal

RESOLVED 14.140 To approve the College's involvement in establishing an SPV.

REVISED LSF POLICY

14.141 The Board received a proposal to amend its 16-18 LSF policy which had been approved at its meeting in March 2014. The rationale for the change was the success of the Free School meals campaign, led by the AoC, which had led to the Government reversing its stance on the funding issue, which Colleges had applauded. From September free school meals would be made available to all eligible 16-18 year olds in FE funded institutions. The EFA had allocated £251,168 to the College which allowed for more spend from the LSF on food and for more of the original 16-18 EFA LSF allocation to be spent on travel. It was anticipated that the cost of the policy would be entirely met with the external allocation from the EFA and that College funds were not required to supplement the Policy.

14.142 The Policy changes included the eligibility thresholds for household earnings being increased to £35,000 in respect of travel and £20,000 in respect of food. In addition it was intended to introduce a laptop loan scheme.

RESOLVED 14.142 to approve the revised 16-18 Learner Support Fund Policy.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS PLAN

14.143 The Board received a fully costed three year business plan for international. The College proposed to separate the International strategy into two strands: International and International A levels, the latter having responsibility for all aspects of overseas A Level provision. The international department would have responsibility for other activities including recruitment and the development of vocational and HE programmes overseas.

14.144 A business model had been provided for the three planned new Centres, which assumed a £57k deficit in the first year of opening, break even by second and returning a surplus from year 3 onwards of around £195k in 2016/17. Income, staffing and non-pay costs for the International department's activities over the next three years were highlighted, moving from a current year deficit of £121k to a surplus of £225k in 2016/17. The greatest risk recognised by Governors was the financial support required from the College for the international strategy. In response to questions raised by Governors regarding the intended plan, the Deputy Principal explained that the strategy allowed for satellite centres to be developed further in several countries, as indicated in the previous report presented by the International Director in May, as the College was already working in partnership with Universities in the UK who were withdrawing from the international market. The College was taking up the long term partnership work and seeking validation to deliver the courses currently being delivered by the Universities.

14.145 Noting the major risks, the Chair of F&R observed that with no profit realised from the strategy yet, it would be prudent for the Board to monitor cumulative investment in international provision and review the position at an appropriate time during the life of the business plan. The Deputy Principal was confident the Plan was robust and that it would also provide the opportunity for students to travel overseas to Barnsley UCB. The Board were content to accept the business model, subject to oversight and close monitoring going forwards. The Deputy Principal agreed to circulate full details of the International strategy for Governors' information.

The Report was noted and received.

REPORT ON RETENTION

14.146 The Board received a report highlighting retention at June 2014 compared to June 2013 and 2012/13 national benchmarks. The data placed the College in the top 5% decile in all areas

except for Adult Long level 3 courses which were just outside of the top 5% but still significantly ahead of national benchmark. The VP Quality and Adults commented that management were aware of, and were actively addressing, the position.

The Report was received.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

14.147 The Principal's report highlighting recent events and activities that had taken place in College was noted and received. Noting the Chair's interest in Wellspring Academy Trust, a brief update was provided to members with regard to conversions and sponsorship. A dialogue continued with Heads of Schools in Leeds and Bradford family of Schools with a view to them converting. The application for the Free school in Barnsley had been successful and was being progressed. A slight delay in active conversions was expected as a result of the Government's cabinet shuffle announced earlier in the day, when a new Secretary of State for Education had been named. The Chair of Governors announced that she would be standing down as CEO of the WAT at the end of August 2014. It was proposed to appoint the Clerk to the Governors as professional Clerk and Company Secretary to the WAT from September 2014. Ms Oaks would be leaving her position as Clerk to the Corporation at Thomas Rotherham College in order to take up the position.

The report was noted and received.

GOVERNANCE

Instrument and Articles of Government

14.148 The Clerk reported that since the I&A had been amended in 2013, the provisions of Clause 13 (written resolution) had been effected on four occasions. Details were provided. Governors agreed that the provision had been of great benefit in executing urgent and important business in between meetings.

Self assessment arrangements for 2013/14

14.149 An event would take place on 8 October 2014 to review the analysis of the self assessment surveys.

Governance Improvement Plan

14.150 The Chair reported that one of the improvement actions to help maintain the College's Ofsted outstanding status and excellence in governance was to participate in peer review with other outstanding colleges. An initial meeting had taken place with the Chairs and Clerks from Hull and York Colleges, which would be followed up by the Clerks to review different structures with a view to improving and learning from one another. As a result of the initial meeting, the Chair proposed that all Board members join senior management for a meal in Zest following the self-assessment event on 8 October.

14.151 The Chair referred to the Governance improvement action plan for the current year which highlighted an area where further work was required to streamline agendas and facilitate strategic debate. It was hoped that the event on 8 October together with the peer review process would help to identify actions to address this aspect of the Board's business over the coming year.

GOVERNOR/LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

14.152 Governors provided verbal feedback following recent visits to the College to meet with strategic leads and monitor progress against current priorities. P Helm, N Bowen, G McSkimming, M Taylor all provided positive feedback, confirming that their understanding of the challenges facing the college had grown considerably. G Beever had also attended a meeting and had provided positive written feedback to the Clerk.

14.153 P Helm had attended a learner forum which had been excellent and had also attended the BGA Conference in June at the College. He commented that it was comforting to learn that other Governors have similar concerns to the Board, particularly being ready for Ofsted.

Examples of a data dashboard had been circulated at the event, which was considered a good exemplar. This would be forwarded to the Clerk for information.

N Bowen withdrew from the meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF SECOND VICE CHAIR TO BOARD

14.154 Following a request for nominations, Nick Bowen had been nominated for election as the Board's second Vice Chair. Discussion took place with regard to N Bowen's nomination and of any perceived conflicts of interest that may arise. Due to the close working relationship between the Schools and College in Barnsley, Governors believed there were sufficient safeguards in place. The Board voted unanimously to appoint N Bowen as Vice Chair.

RESOLVED 14.154 to appoint N Bowen as Vice Chair of the Board for a period of three years.

N Bowen was invited back to the meeting

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

14.155 Further to the Equality and Diversity training which had been delivered to Governors in June by external consultant Trevor Gordon, the VP T&L had produced an updated annual report which demonstrated that the retention gaps identified in 2012/13 had closed significantly. In addition, a finalised and accurate gap analysis had been produced which demonstrated clear progress in closing gaps. An update of training undertaken by staff on E&D was also provided.

SAFEGUARDING

14.156 The VP T&L briefed Governors with regard to staff training in safeguarding and of recent incidents of safeguarding within the College. Robust systems continued to be maintained, which had been acknowledged by South Yorkshire Police who had approached the College with a view to using its policy and procedures as an exemplar of good practice.

APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT GOVERNOR

14.157 The Chair asked Governors to note that this was Holly Worsley's final meeting as Student Governor as she was leaving the College. Holly was thanked for her contribution and attendance at Governing Body meetings and wished well for the future. Steven Burkinshaw, as the new SU President under the new Constitution, was automatically elected to become a Student Governor.

RESOLVED 14.157 To appoint Mr Steven Burkinshaw as a student member of the Board.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

14.158 The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 21 October 2014 at 4.00 pm in the UCB

Signed J ThirkellChair

Date ____ 21 October 2014