

BARNSELEY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2016 PART I

PRESENT:

P Bird	Governor (staff)	B Mansford	Governor
N Bowen	Governor (Vice Chair)	G McSkimming	Governor
S Brian	Governor	C Partridge	Governor
R Dewar	Governor	S Perryman	Governor (Chair)
E Holmes	Governor (FE student)	R Pourali	Governor
P Jagger MBE	Governor (Vice Chair)	C Webb	Governor (Principal)
R Kent	Governor (HE Student)		

IN ATTENDANCE:

A J Oaks	Clerk to the Board
D Harding	VP Curriculum
P Briscoe	VP Quality

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

16.01 Apologies for absence were received from G Beever, R Eccleston, D Shepherd, S Turton and M Wesson.

The Chair informed the Board that it was Peter Bird's final meeting as a member of the Board, having served four years in office. Peter was thanked for his commitment and support to the Board during his term of office, and responded by stating that it had been an interesting and informative experience which had given him a fuller understanding of governance.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

16.02 The Chair reminded members of the requirement to declare any financial or personal interests in any agenda items. Members reserved the right to declare any interests should any arise during the course of the meeting. A standing declaration from C Partridge (KPMG) was noted. P Jagger declared an interest in Agenda Part II, in relation to his role in the ABR process as Chair of Thomas Rotherham College.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015

16.03 The Minutes of the meeting (Part I) held on 15 December 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

16.04 The Board received a list of actions arising from previous meetings which were summarised by the Clerk in terms of follow up. With regard to the BAF, the Board would receive this in May as the Audit Committee were not meeting until 7 April. In relation to exploratory opportunities with the Shoaibi Group (minute 15.311 refers), the Principal reported that no further action had been taken and that the appetite for any partnership work would be reviewed once business planning had been completed and when the Deputy Principal was in post. The remaining action points were to be addressed at future Board meetings or through agenda items.

- 16.05 With regard to Prevent training for Governors, the Clerk confirmed that all governors had undertaken training, the majority having undertaken the WRAP training. Governors were encouraged to undertake the ETF training module for Board members which three governors and the Clerk had undertaken, which was aimed directly at governors' legal duties in respect of Prevent. The Clerk agreed to send the link for this to those who had not yet undertaken it.

SELF ASSESSMENT - GOVERNANCE

- 16.06 The Board received a report summarising the governance self evaluation process at the end of 2014/15. The Board had participated in several surveys including performance of the Chair and 1-1s, the process resulting in the Board identifying its strengths and areas for improvement. The areas for improvement had been annotated in the Governance improvement action plan (GIAP) which would be monitored by the G&S Committee and Clerk with a view to progressing the actions.
- 16.07 Referring to the GIAP, the Clerk stated that some progress had been made in the development of a data dashboard, which the Q&S committee had seen. It was hoped to develop this further over time to include corporate data. B Mansford referred to the improvement action of identifying governor mentors for new Governors, commenting that he would find this particularly supportive. The Clerk undertook to take this forward as soon as possible. Following consideration, the Board were content with the strengths identified and approved the improvement plan as presented.

RESOLVED 16.08 to approve the Governance Improvement Action Plan for 2015/16.

FEES POLICY

- 16.09 The Board received the annual Fees Policies for approval. In terms of the FE Fees, the VP Curriculum explained that the only significant change from the previous policy related to adult learners over 19 enrolling for a L3 qualification when they already held a full L3 qualification. From 2016/17 these learners would be required to pay a full fee. Learners aged 14-16, 16-18 and Apprentices 16-18 would not pay fees. Governors raised questions with regard to the implications for learners and whether this would impact on fee collection. The VP referred to the Policy which set out the fee structure, remission and criteria for discounts and reduced fees. Whilst it was recognised that taking out a loan and paying full fees may be a barrier to some learners, the impact would not be significant on the college other than Access provision.
- 16.10 Following an observation about qualification levels by B Mansford, the VP Curriculum agreed to provide an explanation of the Level 1 – 7 qualification equivalents.
- 16.11 The HE Policy set out proposed fees at the same level as the previous year, with part time students paying a proportionate fee in terms of units of programme rather than the duration of the course. Following a question from C Partridge regarding how this compared to other colleges in the sector, the VP reported the majority of colleges offering HE courses would charge fees at a similar level, and that management believed the policy represented value for money. Further to consideration, it was:

RESOLVED 16.12 to approve the FE Fees Policy and the HE Fees Policy for 2016/17.

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

- 16.13 The Board received an update to the Single Equality Scheme (SES) and associated action plan for approval. The SES set out how the College would meet and exceed its legislative responsibilities in this area of work. Updates reflected changes in roles and responsibilities of key staff, current strategic priorities, the increase in the number of protected characteristics, and the college's monitoring of the performance of these groups. The VP Quality explained that since 2012 there had been no further legislative changes in respect of the Equality Act and Equality duty and therefore the Scheme once approved, would be effective for three years.

- 16.14 R Pourali commented that the SES was extremely comprehensive and demonstrated the college's commitment to addressing equality and diversity beyond legal requirements. C Partridge observed Governors responsibilities were set out within the Scheme, to which R Pourali as the link governor for E&D was able to provide assurance to the Board of the rigour of the college's approach to equality and diversity as a result of link visits, and her involvement with the E&D Steering group, which included a thorough review of the Action Plan, and the SES. Thus she was fully assured the Board were discharging its duties effectively in this regard. The Chair reiterated these comments, stating that the Action plan was helpful and provided much reassurance to the Board.

RESOLVED 16.15 To approve the Single Equality Scheme for 2015-2018

B Mansford left the meeting.

WELLSPRING ACADEMY TRUST UPDATE

- 16.16 The Chair informed the Board that the CEO of Wellspring Academy Trust was unable to present his report in person as an Ofsted inspection was taking place at one of the Trust's schools. The report set out the current position with regard to the Trust, including news that an Academy Order had been signed which would result in a £45m multi-site new build SEMH Special Academy in Leeds becoming part of the Wellspring group. Two further primary schools in Grimsby had also agreed to join the Trust at the end of the summer term.
- 16.17 The Vice Chair, N Bowen commented that from a slow start the Trust had gained significant momentum in the last 12 months and now had a particular niche, and whilst not aligning to the original strategy the College had envisaged, it was clear the Trust was becoming a major player in the wider area outside Barnsley, which the College as sponsor could be proud of in terms of enhancing its own reputation. P Jagger, who had been a Member of the Trust for a short time, agreed that whilst the Trust had moved forward in a different direction it appeared to have found a niche. In response to Governors questions regarding the relationship with the College, the Principal, declaring his interest as a Director of the Trust, confirmed that the College did not support the Trust financially and that as sponsor the association was solely reputational. Since the Trust had adopted new Articles of Association in 2015, the power of the College Board to appoint Trustees to the Wellspring Board had reduced from thirteen to six. Currently three Trustees were sponsor appointees.
- 16.18 Further to discussion and suggestions made by N Bowen, it was agreed to review the College's sponsorship with the Trust and to explore the options discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

RESOLVED 16.19 That a report be brought back to the Board in July with proposals for consideration.

OUTCOMES OF COLLEGE REVIEW

- 16.20 The VP Quality provided a summary of the outcome of the mock inspection undertaken 7 – 10 March 2016 and thanked Governors for their contribution and support during the process. A paper was tabled highlighting key strengths and areas for improvement in each of the key judgement areas. It was reported that the process had been challenging, informative and positive, resulting in a number of clear areas for improvement. Whilst the inspectors had been unable to discuss outcomes in terms of grades, the College had been able to identify where it believed it would be positioned.

B Mansford returned to the meeting.

- 16.21 The VP spoke of the extremely positive and complimentary comments made by the inspector regarding the College's safeguarding and prevent procedures and of the work undertaken with all staff through Project Connect. The Principal stated that the areas for development were mainly in teaching and learning, where there had been some inconsistencies identified, particularly where staff were fairly new to the college. Further

details were provided for Governors' information. Given T&L was a limiting grade in an Ofsted inspection, the College would now draft appropriate action plans to address the concerns around the areas for development. The Principal believed the process had been extremely useful from a developmental perspective and had given the College the impetus to bring about the necessary improvements to achieve its world class status.

- 16.22 From a governance perspective, the Chair stated that governors would now need to reflect on the level of challenge required in teaching and learning. Governors raised some questions around this, given their links to the strategic priority areas of teaching and learning and English and maths, emphasising the need to monitor action plans more closely. N Bowen spoke of how Ofsted had raised the bar in terms of performance and that the Q&S Committee would ensure it was focusing on the areas for development going forwards, particularly maths and English.
- 16.23 In terms of taking the College forward and ensuring Governors discharged their duties effectively, Governors linked with the new strategic priorities for 2016/17 acknowledged their responsibility for reviewing the new action plans, which would take place in June, prior to approval of the Strategic Development Plan presented to the Board in July.
- 16.24 The Chair thanked the VP Quality, VP Curriculum, the Principal and the senior teams for the hard work and effort in preparing for the review and managing the process, the report of which reflected the exceptional performance of the college.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

- 16.25 The Principal's report provided a general update on activities. The Principal highlighted two key events, the College's success in achieving the Apprenticeships 4 England Award and the Student of the Year awards, the ceremony for which was held at the Houses of Parliament and attended by student Bradley Carr together with staff from the College. The Board's congratulations to all were noted.

GOVERNOR/LEARNER ACTIVITY FEEDBACK

- 16.26 Governors who had undertaken link visits in recent weeks provided verbal feedback. R Dewar had observed a Business Planning round 1 meeting in Sports and Public Services and commented on the rigour of the process, stating that it was challenging but supportive, with HoDs being given clear expectations of future planning for round 2.
- 16.27 P Jagger had observed an Estates department PR meeting which had been intense and demonstrated rigour, and also a link visit to the Business dept where he had met a variety of staff. He was impressed with the confidence amongst staff and of their understanding of how their department interacted with the wider college.
- 16.28 N Bowen had undertaken an OWL in the SFC and had been extremely impressed with the quality of teaching, learning and the learner experience. The rigour and intensity of the work undertaken by the class had been impressive and a significant improvement over his visit in 2015. All learners were clearly enjoying their learning experience in the new building.
- 16.29 C Partridge had undertaken an OWL in double maths which had been excellent, particularly the exam techniques being shared.
- 16.30 G McSkimming had undertaken an OWL and link visit in STEM (HND motor sport) and discussed opportunities for broadening the college's Computer Science offer and for maths specialists to upskill other members of staff which had been shared with the Principal in the formal written feedback. In terms of comments regarding progression to HE, P Bird said that plans were in place to talk to A level students about the opportunities in engineering to progress to HE, particularly in Motor sport.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

16.31 The Board received the Minutes of the Q&S Committee following its meeting held on 1 March 2016. N Bowen informed the Board that whilst progress and particularly improvement in ALPs was positive, the Committee would be focusing its challenge on areas where improvements were required in order to drive up standards, particularly in maths and English. The data dashboard provided scope for incorporating further data in time and would be a useful tool for monitoring performance. Following a comment from C Partridge regarding the need for the whole Board to take ownership of the data dashboard, the Principal undertook to ensure the Board received a demonstration and a user guide at the next meeting. N Bowen commented that he believed the Committee had gained strength since its establishment and was operating much more effectively.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

16.32 The Board received the Minutes of the F&R Committee following its meeting on 2 February 2016. R Dewar briefly summarised business conducted, and confirmed there were no recommendations within Part I for Board approval.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

16.33 The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 17 May 2016, Chaired by P Jagger in S Perryman's absence.

Signed: Paul Jagger – Vice Chair

Date 17 May 2016