

## BARNSELEY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2015

#### PART I

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##### PRESENT:

P Bird	Governor (staff)	G McSkimming	Governor
N Bowen	Governor (Vice Chair)	C Partridge	Governor
S Brian	Governor	S Perryman	Governor (Chair)
E Holmes	Governor (FE student)	R Pourali	Governor
P Jagger MBE	Governor (Vice Chair)	D Shepherd	Governor
R Kent	Governor (HE Student)	S Turton	Governor
B Mansford	Governor	M Wesson	Governor (staff)

##### IN ATTENDANCE:

A J Oaks	Clerk to the Board	P Briscoe	AP Access to Learning
D Harding	VP Quality & Adults	T Johnson	VP Corporate Services
L Miah	Director of Finance	P Skelland	Director of Estates

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##### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

15.298 Apologies for absence were received from G Beever, R Dewar, R Eccleston and C Webb.

##### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

15.299 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.

##### MINUTES

##### Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2015

15.300 The Minutes of the meeting (Part I) held on 20 October 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

##### MATTERS ARISING

15.301 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 self evaluation process for 2014/15 it was agreed that the Board should meet in the New Year to evaluate the outcomes of the process and identify areas for improvement, linking this to the Code of Good Governance to measure the Board's effectiveness.

15.302 It was confirmed that the majority of Governors had undertaken the Prevent duty training over the last two months, and that further sessions would be arranged in the New Year for those who had been unable to attend.

##### MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

15.303 The Chair referred to the recent appointments to the Board and requested the Board ratify membership of Committees. The Clerk asked the Board to note that B Mansford had expressed a desire to join the Quality and Standards Committee rather than the F&R Committee, which required ratification.

- RESOLVED 15.303.1** to appoint S Perryman to the G&S Committee and to the Remuneration Committee
- RESOLVED 15.303.2** to appoint P Jagger to the F&R Committee, G&S Committee and Remuneration Committee
- RESOLVED 15.303.3** to appoint B Mansford to the Quality and Standards Committee.

#### **SUBSIDIARY BCDC DIRECTOR**

15.304 The VP Finance informed the Board that following the resignation of A Fairest, member of SMT, there was a vacancy for a Director. The Directors of BCDC included one Governor, Robert Dewar, and the Principal. Further to the proposal, it was

**RESOLVED 15.304** To appoint P Skelland, Director of Estates as Director of BCDC.

#### **AUDIT COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

- 15.305 The Chair of Audit, C Partridge, referred to the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2015 and briefly summarised the business that had been conducted. The Committee had discussed risk management in some detail and the development of the Board Assurance Framework, which was work in progress. The Committee had also considered internal audit reports and had raised some concerns with regard to the opinion over ISO27001 in respect of backups, training and data security. Members had requested additional assurance from management be presented to the next meeting in March 2016.
- 15.306 The Committee had considered the Audit findings and financial statements jointly with the F&R Committee. The main items had been the report on Going Concern and management letter, which identified no significant concerns. Much work had been undertaken in respect of fixed assets and depreciation.
- 15.307 The Committee had subsequently considered the Annual Report of the Committee to the Board and Accounting Officer, which was positive and provided a sound opinion on the College's assurance framework. The Chair of Audit was comfortable with the statement provided within the report confirming the College's audit arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes were adequate to ensure the College's economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Following a comment from the Chair of the Board regarding the approach to internal audit reviews, the Chair of Audit advised the Board that going forwards she would like to see a more risk focused approach to internal audit, and would expect to receive reports with moderate assurance and recommendations for improvement in these key areas.

#### **FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

- 15.308 G McSkimming referred to the Minutes of the F&R committee 1 December and to consideration of the Financial Statements. An operating surplus of £3.2m was reported at the year end. All Development Plan targets had been met, with the exception of tuition fees and international. Total expenditure was reported to be £2,429k better than budget with staff costs 7% below budget, achieving savings of £1,786k. EBITDA was 6.7% better than budget. Several key judgements had been made by college management within the financial statements which included the accounts being prepared on a going concern basis. A full assessment supporting the continuation of the college for the next 12 month period had been considered and noted by the Audit Committee. The OML Heating and ventilation case presented some significant financial implications which had been considered in detail and acknowledged by members.
- 15.309 An outturn of £1,089 was reported for BCDC, and the Board of Directors had approved the Financial Statements at its meeting on 1 December 2015. Think Barnsley Limited recorded a £428 profit for the year. Whilst forecasts for the next five years indicated profit generation c£30k, due to current liabilities, a bad debt provision of £75k had been included in the College's accounts. In this respect the College was requested to provide a Letter of Support

to Think Barnsley Ltd. The Board of Directors had approved the Financial Statements on 1 December 2015.

- 15.310 GM spoke of the discussion that had taken place at Committee level regarding to the proposal to explore opportunities with the Shoaibi Group in Saudi, explaining that whilst they had understood the need for the college to seek additional sources of revenue, members shared reservations with regard to the risks associated with a new venture. The Chair invited Governors to comment and share their views regarding the proposal. Further to discussion it was agreed to accept the recommendation to explore the opportunity further and undertake the appropriate Due Diligence, with the proviso of keeping the Board informed at all stages, including in between formal meetings of Board and / or F&R.
- 15.311 The Chair of the Board congratulated the College on the quality of the systems and processes in place which had resulted in such a positive outcome and was content to sign off the Financial Statements.

**RESOLVED 15.311.1** that the Annual Report of the Committee to the Board and Accounting Officer be approved for submission to the SFA together with the Financial Statements.

**RESOLVED 15.311.2** To approve the Financial statements for the College and its subsidiaries for year ended 31 July 2015

**RESOLVED 15.311.3** That the Chair and Principal be authorised to sign the Financial Statements and Letter of Representation for submission to the SFA by 31 December 2015

**RESOLVED 15.311.4** that the Chair be authorised to sign a Letter of Support for Think Barnsley Limited.

**RESOLVED 15.311.5** To approve the proposal to explore opportunities with the Shoaibi Group in KSA subject to the outcome of Due Diligence.

## **QUALITY AND STANDARDS BUSINESS**

- 15.312 The Chair of Q&S, N Bowen presented the Minutes of the Q&S Committee meeting held on 2 December 2015. The Committee had been extremely pleased with the performance at the end of the year in AS, A2, HE and English and Maths. With regard to English and Maths, the Committee was content with the management actions and new strategies being implemented to bring about improvements. The Chair added that since her appointment as Principal of the SFC, Liz Leek had made a significant impact on the performance outcomes.

A recommendation had been made by the Committee to approve the 2014/15 SAR. The main area of focus for the College and the Board remained English and Maths, and the Chair believed it was important moving forwards to align the focus with self-assessment under the new CiF. In respect of achievements overall, the Chair of Q&S believed staff should be congratulated on the successes and achievements of 2014/15.

## **COLLEGE SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT**

- 15.313 The Committee received a report summarising the outcomes of the self-assessment process for 2014/15. The VP Q&A explained that the College had self-assessed itself against the old CiF for 2014/15, and would be taking areas for further development into consideration under the new CiF for 2015/16. All areas were judged as Outstanding. The VP Q&S stated that in preparation for the next inspection, work would be undertaken to form judgements against each of the key headings under the new CiF.
- 15.314 Whilst the greatest challenge was to improve English and Maths, management would continue to grade itself against Overall Effectiveness, Outcomes for Learners, Quality of T&L and assessment, and Effectiveness of Leadership and Management. The VP added that there was a much greater emphasis on governance under the new framework therefore it

was important that managers and Governors were fully informed and understanding of the College's strengths and areas for improvement in order to prepare for the next inspection. The Chair welcomed the VPs comments and acknowledged the challenge presented by the English and Maths position, suggesting that it would be worthy of further discussion at the strategic seminar. The Chair of Q&S emphasised that this area would remain a key focus for the Committee.

- 15.315 In terms of working together to bring about improvements in E&M, C Partridge proposed that she and M Wesson work alongside management and the Q&S Committee in their role as strategic leads for this area. Following an observation by G McSkimming that the Minutes did not reflect the number of learners going Russell Group Universities, the Chair of Q&S said this would be considered by Q&S at a future meeting. Governors raised some specific questions about the detail of the self-assessment process which the VP responded to.
- 15.316 The Chair of the Board remarked that under the new CiF he believed there was a need for the Board to ask itself some challenging and critical questions regarding its performance, whilst being mindful of the importance of being supportive of management and recognising the different perspective placed on the college in terms of its future development and opportunities. He added that it would be helpful to bring about transparency in all governance matters. The Chair of Audit reiterated the comments, with encouragement to management for measures to be implemented to bring about improvements where necessary with the support of the Board. In response, the VP explained how the format of the Performance Review meetings had changed to reflect both the new inspection framework and the increased emphasis on Maths and English, looking in more detail at key data, for example punctuality, attendance in functional skills and GCSE and recurring absences, which gave a level of confidence to Governors. B Mansford acknowledged and commended the work being undertaken by the College to improve results for this cohort of learners and for the Barnsley community. The VP Access to Learning welcomed Governors' support, adding that he would provide more detailed reports to the Q&S Committee going forwards to enable governors to identify trends in key data. A meeting had been scheduled in January between the Chair of Q&S, the Clerk and the VP to discuss the business of the committee for the remainder of the year.
- 15.317 Further questions were raised by Governors in relation to capacity of teaching staff in Maths and English and particularly the required specialisms in this area, which the VP responded to providing assurance to the Board of the strength amongst subject leaders and Advanced Practitioners. C Partridge commented favourably on the positive progress.

**RESOLVED 15.317 To approve the College Self-Assessment Report 2014/15.**

## **COLLEGE PAY AWARD**

- 15.318 The Board had received a proposal from management regarding a consolidated pay award. The VP Corporate Services spoke of the AoC's national recommendation for a pay freeze across the sector which was a direct result of financial pressures and reduced external funding. The College had made provision of £120k within the budget for a pay award. Since the report had been circulated, management had reviewed the position and wished to issue an amended proposal. The revised proposal was to make a payment of £200, pro-rated by FTE, for employees on Barnsley College contracts of employment and pay points below SMT level. The cost to the College was £155k, £35k above the budget.
- 15.319 In response to a question from S Brian, the VP advised members of recent negotiations with the Trade Unions and of their stance on the national pay recommendations, adding that neither UCU nor UNISON were aware of the proposal put to the Board today. The Board were supportive of the revised proposal particularly in the context of the ABR which, due to its outstanding performance, had placed the College in an exceptionally good position in the region. The Chair commented that he was delighted to be part of an organisation performing so well and was extremely pleased to be able to reward staff in this way. He asked that thanks be conveyed to all staff, including SMT, for the work undertaken and

progress made during the year. In response to a question from C Partridge regarding communicating the news to staff, the VP said it was likely staff would be informed at the staff seminar on 18 December.

**RESOLVED 15.319 To approve a payment of £200, pro-rated by FTE, for employees on Barnsley College contracts of employment and pay points, below SMT level.**

#### **EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES AGAINST 2013/14 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

15.320 The Principal's report summarising performance against high level strategic objectives and quality targets within the 2014/15 Development Plan was presented by the VP Q&A. Governors were taken through the report, with the VP highlighting key areas of focus which included the continuing upward trend in the quality of Apprenticeship recruitment. This was attributed to strong employer engagement and a roll on roll off provision offered in all curriculum areas. Employer surveys highlighted the improvement in quality which was very satisfying. Governors asked several questions with regard to the employer engagement team and curriculum delivery, remarking on the positive and effective approach the team demonstrated engaging with a wide range of agencies including the Council and the Chamber of Commerce. S Turton commented that she had evidenced the breadth of partnership work through the link visit undertaken with G Beever recently, and had been very impressed with the level of effort from the team to develop partnerships with employers. The Chair stated that the College was very well placed in terms of its performance in Apprenticeships and that this was excellent and encouraging news in the context of the Government's agenda. In terms of capitalising on it, the VP Q&A spoke of work being developed to bring together various associated initiatives in the next 12 months.

15.321 The VP referred Governors to the FE effectiveness targets, stating that targets set in July 2014 had been challenging. While some had not been achieved he believed the College remained in a strong position in the context of the area based review. The college had gained a good reputation as an outstanding institution proving it was able to deliver year on year. Governors commented on ambitious targets and recognised the opportunity for the Board to determine its goals and objectives for 2016/17, being mindful to ensure targets were realistic and achievable. In this regard the Board looked forward to debating the targets for next year at the forthcoming seminar. Following a comment by GM regarding the Economic Impact survey that had been received in autumn 2014, DS proposed the Board may be interested in a survey recently commissioned by the LA which he was happy to share with a view to identifying any gaps.

The Report was noted and received.

#### **ANNUAL REPORT – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

15.322 The Board received the Annual E&D report summarising all activities and training undertaken by the College during 2014/15 to provide assurance of compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Report identified the work undertaken by the college to continue to close performance gaps and how equality and diversity had been celebrated within each of the departments. R Pourali, link governor for E&D congratulated the College on its engagement with the community and was keen to see more about the areas the college currently excelled in, and of the actions being taken to address gaps. Student Governor E Holmes informed the Board of the activities undertaken by the Student Union in respect of celebrating equality and diversity which were extensive and impressed Board members. The VP commented that he would be pleased to include more data and information in future reports, however he had been keen to keep the report succinct.

The Report was noted and received.

#### **UPDATE ON ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

15.323 As requested by the Board at the last meeting, the VP Corporate Services provided an update on the management actions being taken to address the issues identified within the Construction department earlier in the year. The update was comprehensive and provided a

much greater level of confidence to the Board in terms of moving forwards. The VP assured the Board that monitoring of the area and unannounced spot checks would continue to be undertaken in line with the Action plan. He added that the external visit to test the department against industry standards had been rescheduled to 6 January 2016.

- 15.324 In response to a question from B Mansford regarding the extent to which the College could benchmark itself in terms of accident statistics, the VP stated that he had obtained some data from the AoC, however it was difficult to make direct comparisons because the GFE Colleges varied in size and provision. Based on the data obtained, accident rates amongst staff were 5.6% compared to the College's 2.3%, and amongst students was 1.8%, compared to the College's 0.92%, which was positive. To put the issues in the Construction department into context and provide additional assurance, the VP commented that other high risk areas within the college were of little concern to management and that he now had a very high level of confidence in the implementation of the action plan.
- 15.325 The Chair was delighted with the robustness of the action plan and greatly encouraged by the VP's responses which showed the actions were paying dividends. Further questions were raised by Governors regarding the detail provided by the VP in respect of student exclusions in Construction. S Turton and P Jagger had undertaken a link visit to Art and Design on 11 December as leads for Health and Safety and had arranged to visit Construction in January. P Jagger commented on the work undertaken to address the issues identified, saying that he had been reassured by his recent link visit, and was particularly pleased with the excellent relationship that existed between the Head of H&S and staff within the departments who worked co-operatively to improve standards. The VP reiterated his comments and spoke very highly of the Head of H&S. In response to a question from the Chair of Audit regarding possible links between poor student attendance in areas where issues had been identified, the VP spoke of the rigour of performance review meetings at which H&S matters were discussed, confirming that issues on attendance were monitored.

The Report was noted and received.

#### **INVESTORS IN PEOPLE AWARD**

- 15.326 Following reassessment in the summer the College had received confirmation of the IIP Standard for a further three years. The full report had been provided to Board members on the governors' intranet. Further to the summary provided by the VP CS the Chair stated that he was delighted to see the recognition of the Standard and would welcome the College moving forwards as a high performing organisation to achieve the Gold Standard in due course.

The Report was noted and received.

#### **REPORT FROM CEO OF WELLSRING ACADEMY TRUST**

- 15.327 The Report from the CEO of Wellspring Academy Trust was noted and received. The Clerk asked the Board to note the resignation of Vice Principal J Miccoli as a Trustee.

#### **PROGRAMME FOR THE STRATEGIC SEMINAR**

- 15.328 The Board received the final Programme for the Strategic seminar 29/30 January 2015. Two external speakers had been secured to provide the national and local context to inform the event and appropriate time had been set aside to discuss the outcome of the Area Based Review process. The Board was content with the content of the programme.

#### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

- 15.329 The Principal's report was noted and received.

## **GOVERNOR/ LEARNER ENGAGEMENT**

15.330 The Chair invited Governors who had undertaken link visits and engaged with learners to provide verbal feedback to the Board. G McSkimming had undertaken a strategic lead visit to STEM with a further visit arranged to monitor the action plan on growth prior to the seminar. D Shepherd and N Bowen had arranged a series of meetings with the new Principal of the SFC and the management team with a view to improving the link between the department and the Board. DS commented that the open evening at the new building on 8 December had been excellent to showcase the facilities for learners and that the building created a visible presence in the town that was extremely positive.

## **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

15.331 The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 15 March 2016 at 4.00 pm in the new Sixth Form College, with a short tour of the building from 3pm for Board members.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 2016