

BARNESLEY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 APRIL 2016

PRESENT:	S Perryman (Chair)	Governor
	N Bowen (Vice Chair)	Governor
	P Jagger	Governor
	R Pourali	Governor
	D Shepherd	Governor
	C W Webb	Principal

IN ATTENDANCE: A J Oaks (Clerk to the Board)

Prior to the start of formal business the Committee received a briefing from the Head of HR on Safer Recruitment. The Committee were impressed with the extent to which the College ensured all its staff were recruited appropriately and in line with safeguarding regulations.

As a result of the briefing, the Clerk advised the Committee that she would review the Application form for new Governors. The question as to whether references should be taken up would be put to the Board for consideration.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

16.01 There were no apologies.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

16.02 Members were reminded of the requirement to declare any interests. P Jagger declared an interest as Chair of Thomas Rotherham College which would be noted at all meetings.

MINUTES

16.03 The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2015 were agreed as a true and accurate record by those who had been present. The Minutes were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

16.04 The Committee received a list of actions arising from previous meetings, the majority of which formed Agenda items. With regard to 15.65, e-governance, the Clerk reported that she was currently exploring various e-governance solutions. The Head of IT had agreed to make a demonstration to governors in coming weeks relating to a simple solution that could be operated from College with no expense other than the purchase of ipads or laptops for all Board members. The Clerk advised that Governors would be invited to attend the demonstration in the next few weeks.

POLICY ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

16.05 The Committee received a draft Policy on Conflicts of Interest which was recommended for Board approval. The Clerk explained that previously no such policy existed, the only references to compliance with conflicts of interest being that included within the Code of Conduct for Board Members and the annual updating of the Register of Interest. Whilst the Board were open and transparent with regard to declaring interests at meetings, the intention was to reinforce and protect the integrity of the Board's decision making processes and reputation, and implementing such a policy was good practice.

16.06 Further to questions from the Chair, the Clerk clarified that Governors would continue to be asked to declare their pecuniary interests annually as before, and that the Policy reinforced

Governors' statutory duties under Clause 10 of the Instrument. Further to consideration, it was:

RESOLVED 16.07 to recommend approval of the Policy on Conflicts of Interest.

CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR ENGLISH COLLEGES

- 16.08 The Committee received a report which summarised the Core Values and Ten Principal responsibilities within the Code, which had been adopted by the Board for the financial year 2015/16. The Clerk reminded members that the Board had agreed to use the Code as a self assessment tool to measure its effectiveness at the end of the academic year and that in order to map compliance against the Code, she had produced a summary document which highlighted the statements underpinning each of the 10 principals together with actions that may be taken by the College to strengthen compliance. The mapping process had been thorough, and involved meetings with SLT members.
- 16.09 The Chair was keen to ensure the Board retained a strategic handle on compliance with the Code to ensure it could demonstrate the value to be added by measuring effectiveness against it. The Clerk commented that she had attempted to identify alternative methods of self evaluation by Boards that were more dynamic and innovative, however there were no examples in the sector other than paper based surveys and processes similar to those previously adopted. Following a suggestion by the Clerk, members agreed that a process whereby all Board members could participate in a group session to evaluate the Board's effectiveness using the Code as a basis would be preferable to a number of surveys. The Clerk commented that the 1-1 reviews between the Chair and individual Governors was firmly embedded and that this would inform the self evaluation session.
- 16.10 The Committee noted the points for action and briefly discussed some examples. N Bowen stated that he anticipated receiving more succinct and critical reports to Q&S Committee going forward and had already indicated to SMT what he wished to see in respect of Teaching and Learning, which was more of the areas that required further work and less around areas where there were no concerns. D Shepherd commented that a similar discussion had taken place at the Audit Committee whereby Governors questioned the value of internal audit reviews in areas that were regularly demonstrating strong controls and few issues. The Principal believed that the reporting format to F&R Committee was pitched at the right level in terms of scrutiny, and commented that an effective way for Governors to evaluate their performance was through engagement with learners.
- 16.11 In respect of partnership work and engagement with employers, the Committee fully expected relevant information to be forthcoming now that the Deputy Principal was in post. Discussion took place with regard to the diversity of the Board and the need to make strong efforts to improve the gender balance in future recruitment campaigns.

RESOLVED 16.12 To recommend that the Board participate in a self-evaluation session in early autumn using the Code as a basis.

DRAFT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS – OUTCOMES OF AREA BASED REVIEW PROCESS

- 16.13 The Committee received a report which provided an overview of the procedure the Board would need to follow should there be an opportunity for potential merger with another College arising from the ABR process and initial recommendations which were due to made at the Steering group meeting scheduled for 28 April 2016. The paper, produced by the Clerk, outlined the governance aspects only, and did not cover the extent to which the Board would need to review the Mission, vision, values, curriculum, financial and quality aspects that would sit alongside the discussions.
- 16.14 The Chair informed members that he and the Principal had met with KPMG earlier in the day and had a very helpful meeting in respect of the due diligence processes that would be required in a potential merger. He added that the Clerk's paper had been very helpful in

describing the process for Governors. Discussion took place as to the appropriateness of the next steps, given the recent meeting with members of the Governing Body from Doncaster College that had taken place on 7 April 2016 and anticipated visit to Doncaster.

- 16.15 The Clerk's paper set out the statutory requirements relating to mergers, an outline project plan and terms of reference for a Merger Project Board. The Chair referred to the process and sought to establish some approximate timescales to take matters forward given the timelines involved for Due Diligence and appointing a Project Manager. The Principal emphasised the need for the Board to make informed, considered decisions regarding forthcoming recommendations which were expected to outline a Barnsley/Doncaster solution. With the Steering Group meeting on 28 April and ABR Working Group meeting on 3 May 2016, the Chair remarked that the Board meeting on 17 May would be very important in terms of the opportunities available to the College. The Chair requested the Clerk and Principal produce a further report for the Board in May setting out the next steps in the process.

RESOLVED 16.16 That the Principal and Clerk present a report to the Board on 17 May setting out a draft timetable to take matters forward based on expected recommendations by the Joint Area Regional Development Unit

STAFF GOVERNOR APPOINTMENT PROCESS

- 16.17 The Clerk reminded the Committee of the current staff governor vacancy created following Peter Bird's retirement from the Board at the end of March. The Clerk explained that historically staff governors had been elected by their constituent group with no distinction being made between academic and non-academic staff. Election processes had in the past generated a healthy interest in the role. However since the introduction of the Education Act and changes that may be made to the constitution, it was possible for staff governors to be appointed directly by the Board rather than through an election process. The Clerk explained that given the need to appoint a new staff governor it was pertinent to bring this to the Committee's attention. Should the Committee feel it worthy of consideration at Board, staff at the College would need to be consulted.
- 16.18 Following some discussion the Committee believed the election was a democratic process that historically held the confidence of staff who firmly believed they were electing the most appropriate person for the role. It was therefore agreed to retain the current appointment process by election, and to promote the staff governor vacancy as soon as possible.

The report was noted and received.

ATTENDANCE AT MID YEAR

- 16.19 A report on attendance at the mid-year point was provided. Governors noted the data which, while not representative of the whole year, indicated a healthy level of attendance. The Clerk undertook to send out a revised analysis showing attendance for each Governor both at Board and at Committees.

The Report was received.

OUTCOME OF MOCK INSPECTION – LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- 16.20 The Chair wished to place on record how pleased he was with the result of the mock inspection process which had given management and governors a clear steer on where improvements were required. Had this been a real Ofsted he believed the outcome would have been strong. He added that the group had been extremely well briefed and the interview with the inspector had been a very positive process. Following a brief discussion it was agreed that the individual reports would be shared with Board members.

ATTENDANCE AT FUTURE EVENTS

- 16.21 The Clerk reminded the Committee of forthcoming events that Governors may wish to attend, particularly the AoC Annual Conference held in November. The Vice Chair commented that he found it extremely useful to his role and would encourage other Governors to attend all or part of it. The Clerk undertook to bring this to the attention of governors.
- 16.22 The Clerk advised that no Board members were able to attend the Governance Summit arranged by the AoC and being held at Askham Bryan College on 12 April 2016. The next Governor Council network meeting would take place in the Autumn term.

EVALUATION OF GOVERNORS' STRATEGIC SEMINAR

- 16.23 The Committee received an analysis of the Strategic Seminar evaluation. 17 returns had been made which were all positive. The aspects governors found most useful and least useful were noted by members. The analysis had been circulated to the Board previously. The Chair said that he found the comments constructive and useful in terms of future planning.

GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- 16.24 The Governance Improvement Action Plan was received for information. The Clerk undertook to circulate the GIAP to the Board on a regular basis by way of monitoring actions.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____