



## Barnsley College Corporation Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 11 December 2025

**Time:** 13:00-14:30

**Location:** Microsoft Teams

### Attendance (Governors)

	<b>Role</b>
Marie Lang (ML)	Independent Governor – Chair
David Akeroyd (DA)	Principal & CEO
Carol Cooper-Smith (CCS)	Independent Governor – Vice Chair
George Graham (GG)	Independent Governor – Vice Chair
Leon Etherington (LE)	Independent Governor
Donavan Hutchinson (DH)	Independent Governor
Jo Mallows (JM)	Independent Governor
Gavin Day (GD)	Independent Governor
Carrie Sudbury (CS)	Independent Governor
Matt Mills (MM)	Independent Governor
Tracy Johnson (TJ)	Independent Governor
Samantha Dixon (SD)	Independent Governor
Kayleigh Bell (KB)	Staff Governor
Leo Hibberd (LH)	Student Governor

### In Attendance

Sue Hutchinson (SH)	Menzies
Annalee Hurley (AH)	Menzies
Hayley Allsopp (HA)	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Student Experience
Jean-Paul Lawrence (JPL)	Vice Principal – Partnerships and Growth
Gavin Batty (GB)	Deputy CEO
Tony Johnson (TJo)	Vice Principal - Corporate Services
Laila Lawton (LL)	Chief Financial Officer
Jessica Melling (JMe)	Director of Governance

### Apologies

	<b>Role</b>
Sue Slassor (SS)	Vice principal - Quality
Carley Speechley (CSp)	Independent Governor
Kalam Neale (KN)	Independent Governor
Steven Burkinshaw (SB)	Staff Governor
Megan Orrow (MO)	Student Governor

<b>Procedural Matters</b>	
<b>1. Quoracy</b> It was confirmed the meeting was quorate.	
<b>2. Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from SS, CS, KN, SB and MO.  ML welcomed SH and AH to the meeting.	
<b>3. Declarations of Interest</b> No interests were declared.	
<b>4. Register of Interest</b> The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the register of interest.	
<b>5. Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 and 11 November 2025</b> It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 and 11 November 2025 as true and accurate records of the meetings.	
<b>6. Matters Arising</b> There were no matters arising.	
<b>7. Rolling Action List</b> The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the rolling action list.	
<b>8. Assurance Based Governance</b> It was noted that the documentation has been updated in line with all meetings that have taken place to date in the current academic year and based on the agendas for the December 2025 meetings.  The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the assurance based governance report.	
<b>9. Notification of Items of Any Other Business</b> It was noted that no other business requests have been received.	
<b>10. Going Concern Assessment</b> LL talked to the going concern assessments noting these had been shared with the Audit and Risk Committee.  The following conclusions were highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The College group is assessed as a going concern</li> <li>• Think Barnsley Ltd and Barnsley College Development Company are assessed as going concerns</li> <li>• Independent Training Services Ltd and Smartstyle were not assessed as a going concern in their own right and will rely on a letter of financial support from Barnsley College.</li> </ul> It was noted that Department for Education (DfE) approval had been obtained for the letters of financial support.  It was highlighted that letters of financial support have been provided in the past, and whilst they are needed for this financial year, there is the expectation that ITS will repay the value in FY26. It was noted that the requirement for a letter of financial support is not expected for ITS beyond this year, however Smartstyle is likely to continue to need the letter of	

<p>financial support for a number of years. It was noted that a case is being submitted to the DfE to write the debt off for Smartstyle.</p> <p>The Governors noted the thorough assessment. It was confirmed that this had been discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee and therefore assurance is provided that appropriate oversight and management action is being taken.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve College Group as a going concern.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve that the College to issue letters of financial support to ITS and Smartstyle for a period of 12 months to December 2026.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to note that the report provides Governors with assurance against objective 1.4.</p>	
<p><b>11. Audit Findings Report &amp; Financial Statements including management judgements, audit findings and letters of representation</b></p> <p>LL drew attention to the updated documentation shared with the Board, and highlighted the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One significant change has been made to the annual report and accounts to include a post balance sheet event relating to the Northern College merger.</li> <li>• The letters of representation have been reviewed and are recommended for approval.</li> <li>• An additional management point has been added to the management letter, recommending a reserves policy for ITS. It was noted this would not be actioned due to the status of ITS and it operating within the college financial processes. However consideration would be given to the matter during the college policy review process.</li> </ul> <p>LL extended her thanks to SH, AH and the team for a thorough and robust audit. SH and AH thanks LL and the team for a positive and collaborative audit process.</p> <p>SH and AH noted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are awaiting final combined authority reconciliation to complete sign off of the accounts.</li> <li>• The auditors will send an email confirming there have been no additional changes on the day of signing.</li> <li>• Docusign will be used to complete the signing process.</li> <li>• They are expecting to sign unmodified audit opinions.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the timing of the financial statement signature needs to be considered due to discussion on the Board's intention to proceed to merger.</p> <p>The inclusion of commentary on the treatment of the pension scheme was questioned. It was clarified that this is because the pension balance has</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> LL to consider the timing of the financial statement signatures.</p>

<p>moved from liability to asset. The inclusion of the statement in the letter of representation serves to provide assurance that the Board are satisfied with the treatment of the asset.</p> <p>The Board <b>REOLVED</b> to approve the financial statements for the College and its subsidiaries subject to the discussion on the Northern College merger.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the letters of representation to the auditors.</p> <p>AH and SH left the meeting at 13:24</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> that the report provides assurance against objective 1.4.</p>	
<p><b>12. Financial Health and Dashboard</b></p> <p>LL took the report as read. The Governors noted the positive financial health and <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the report and approve the assurance it provides against objective 1.4.</p> <p>LL left the meeting at 13:26.</p>	
<p><b>13. Annual Report of the Audit Committee</b></p> <p>MM noted the significance of the report and assurance it provides of the discussions at the Audit and Risk Committee meetings, work with the internal auditors, and Board assurance throughout the year.</p> <p>MM extended his thanks to GG for the work done during his tenure as committee chair.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the Annual Report of the Audit Committee and noted the substantive assurance received by MM.</p>	
<p><b>14. Strategic Seminar Programme</b></p> <p>GB noted that the agenda shared with the Board had been amended to incorporate feedback shared at the November Board meeting. Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A workshop exploring the Skills White Paper and Curriculum Assessment Review, and what this means for colleges.</li> <li>• An update session on the new revised FES inspection framework/toolkit and key changes for consideration.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that a welcome pack will be shared in advance of the days, containing objectives and pre-reading. To support clarity ML will also highlight the objectives at the start of the sessions.</p> <p>The Board highlighted the importance of student voice and explored ways to ensure there is a feedback loop between the discussions at the seminar and the action taken since the day. The need to balance expectations on the immediacy of change was noted. The benefit of the session last year was noted.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> GB to explore ways to ensure feedback on action taken in response to student feedback at the seminar is shared. Process to start with feedback from 2026 being shared in 2027.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> HA to discuss capturing pre-event feedback on areas</p>

<p>Discussion explored the different ways of splitting students to facilitate effective discussion, with recommendation of a split by provision type. It was recognised that the group splits have the potential to focus discussion and help students feel more comfortable in sharing their feedback. The distinct difference of the sixth form was noted.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the strategic seminar agenda and the assurance it provides was noted.</p>	<p>of concern with the student services team.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> HA to determine how to proportion students for discussion groups.</p>
<p><b>15. Balanced Scorecard Q1</b> GB talked to the Q1 Balanced Scorecard, highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most objectives are on track for year-end achievement.</li> <li>• There is 1 goal and 8 performance measure targets that are rated as amber, where additional focus is required</li> <li>• There is 1 performance measure target which is currently rated red. This is the Curriculum Pillar – T Level and Foundation Year student recruitment, which due to the main 16-18 recruitment period having taken place, this is likely to remain red for the rest of the year.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the appendices provide justification for the RAG ratings allocated.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the Q1 Balanced Scorecard and approved that the report provides adequate levels of assurance.</p>	
<p><b>16. Review of Board and Committee Effectiveness</b> DA highlighted that that the review of Board and Committee effectiveness paper had been shared and agreed for recommendation to the Board for approval by the Governance and Search Committee, in line with new regulation requirements.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the Review of Board and Committee Effectiveness.</p> <p>CCS talked to the External Board Review process and timeline, noting that further update would be provided in the new year. The Board were asked to engage thoroughly with the process.</p> <p>KB left the meeting at 13:48.</p> <p>It was clarified that during the External Board Review, DA will collect feedback from the Leadership and Management Team and will share this feedback with the reviewer.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> JM to share details of external Board review with governors once confirmed.</p>
<p><b>17. Board Assurance Framework (BAF) Q1</b> TJo drew attention to the first iteration of the Board Assurance Framework for 25-26, highlighting the following points:</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> TJo to report to Board after completion of testing to provide</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk moderation has been undertaken, with digital transformation continuing to be a medium risk, apprenticeships quality and income being decreased to a low risk and GCSE English and maths performance being decreased to a low risk</li> <li>• The BCUC Phase 2 re-development project is approaching completion and will likely be removed from the BAF in Q2.</li> <li>• The disaster recovery system is fully implemented, embedded and operational. It was noted that testing will now take place to ensure there is the assurance of effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion explored the Ofsted initial teacher education potential inspection and what is included within this. It was noted that this is linked to the new initial teacher education toolkit and is expected between January and July 2026. When an inspection occurs, it will be led by GB and the team.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the Board Assurance Framework and noted the assurance it provides against objective 4.1.</p>	<p>assurance on effectiveness</p>
<p><b>18. Barnsley College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)</b></p> <p>DA noted that amendments had been made to the SAR and QIP based on Governor feedback.</p> <p>The following key points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions are in place to address key areas for organisational improvement.</li> <li>• The College has made a conscious decision to move away from Ofsted being a prevalent driving factor for its activities and to use terminology for its ambitions and aspirations which are unrelated to Ofsted terminology.</li> </ul> <p>ML highlighted the ambition to move teaching and learning to consistently “exceptional”. It was noted that Governor awareness of action being taken to drive this was desired.</p> <p>Discussion explored what the strategies of exam wrapper and VESPA are. It was noted that they are both approaches to support students with exam preparation and reflection on performance.</p> <p>The Board noted that the thorough, varied and consistent, however caution was noted regarding consistency. It was highlighted that action briefings have taken place with Heads of Department.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the Barnsley College Self-Assessment Report (2024-25) and Quality Improvement Plan (2025-26).</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> GB to report to the Board on actions in place to move teaching and learning to consistently “exceptional”.</p>

<p><b>19. ITS Self Assessment Report and QIP</b></p> <p>It was noted that the ITS Self Assessment Report has been approved by the ITS Board. It was noted that the ITS SAR and QIP needs approval of the Barnsley College Board of Governors.</p> <p>It was noted that the ITS QIP had not been provided with the papers and would be circulated following the meeting.</p> <p>It was questioned if the 17.5% withdrawal measure requiring improvement is captured within the ITS or the College QIP. It was noted that this should be contained within the ITS QIP.</p> <p>CS noted that the ITS Board were satisfied with the ITS SAR.</p> <p>Discussion explored the difference in SAR scores for the College compared to ITS. It was noted that ITS and the College should not be treated as a direct comparison as they are different in their delivery and will be judged against different apprenticeship standards. It was noted that part of the judgement is informed by the confidence levels around consistency, which are lower in ITS than the College. It was noted that consistency of exceptional student experience and consistency of exceptional outcomes as a result of this are the only area where consistency is prescribed, to reduce the likelihood of loss of innovation and creativity.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the QIP will contain actions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past Planned End Date apprentices.</li> <li>• Achievement rates on a small number of apprenticeship standards.</li> <li>• Consistent employer involvement in reviews and planning of off-the-job training.</li> <li>• Some apprentices electing not to undertake English and Maths qualifications which may later affect career progression.</li> </ul> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the ITS Self Assessment Report.</p> <p>It was noted the ITS Quality Improvement Plan would be circulated for approval.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> GB to send JM ITS QIP for circulation.</p>
<p><b>20. HE Annual Monitoring Report</b></p> <p>GB talked to the HE Annual Monitoring Report, noting that it is a positive report showcasing the HE delivery in relation to existing campuses, not in Church Street.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the report.</p>	
<p><b>21. Good News Stories</b></p> <p>SD congratulated the team on the work shared through the good news stories.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> JM to feedback to SD on the work since the news story relating</p>

<p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the good news stories.</p>	<p>to the NHS waiting time Westminster proposal.</p>
<p><b>22. Any Other Business</b>  It was noted that due to ongoing work, additional papers for the Board meeting on 16 December would be circulated in due course.</p> <p>TJ left the meeting at 14:26.</p> <p>The meeting was closed at 14:31.</p>	