



## Barnsley College Corporation Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 12 March 2026  
**Time:** 12:00-13:00  
**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
Jo Mallows (JM)	Independent Governor
Gavin Day (GD)	Independent Governor
Carrie Sudbury (CS)	Independent Governor
Matt Mills (MM)	Independent Governor
Tracey Johnson (TJ)	Independent Governor
Samantha Dixon (SD)	Independent Governor
Sue Horner (SH)	Independent Governor
Kayleigh Bell (KB)	Staff Governor
Steven Burkinshaw (SB)	Staff Governor

### In Attendance

	<b>Role</b>
Michael Wood (MW)	AoC
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>
Carley Speechley (CSp)	Independent Governor
Kalam Neale (KN)	Independent Governor
George Graham (GG)	Independent Governor – Vice Chair
Leon Etherington (LE)	Independent Governor

### Absence

	<b>Role</b>
Megan Orrow (MO)	Student Governor
Leo Hibberd (LH)	Student Governor

### Mentions

	<b>Role</b>
Nic Tomlinson (NT)	Rockborn Consultants
Lee Kirton (LK)	Northern College Principal
Nicola Adams (NA)	ITS/Smartstyle Trustee

<b>Procedural Matters</b>	
<p><b>1. Quoracy</b> ML welcomed Governors to the meeting. ML congratulated SH on her appointment to the Board and welcomed her. ML welcomed MW to the meeting, explaining his attendance is to support the ongoing External Board evaluation.</p> <p>It was confirmed the meeting was quorate.</p>	
<p><b>2. Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from CS, KN, LE and GG.</p>	
<p><b>3. Declarations of Interest</b> No interests were declared.</p>	
<p><b>4. Register of Interest</b> The Board <b>NOTED</b> the register of interest.</p>	
<p><b>5. Minutes of the Meetings held on 11 and 16 December 2025 and 5 February 2026</b> JMe noted two minor corrections on the 16 December Part 1 minutes, explaining these would be made prior to publication.</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>APPROVE</b> the minutes of the meetings held on 11 and 16 December 2025 and 5 February 2026 as a true and accurate record of the discussions, subject to the minor changes highlighted being made.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> JMe to update 16/12/2025 Part 1 minutes prior to publication.</p>
<p><b>6. Matters Arising</b> There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p><b>7. Rolling Action List</b> It was noted that all actions were complete or progressing in line with their due date. Where actions had not yet been started, this was due to the timeline for completion.</p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the rolling action list.</p>	
<p><b>8. Assurance Based Governance</b> JMe explained that the document provided to the Board is updated in line with the agendas at each meeting. It was noted that an update to the document would be made ahead of the next meeting to include the assurance against objective 4.3 provided by the external audit in December and the whistleblowing policy in March provide.</p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the assurance-based governance report.</p>	
<p><b>9. Notification of Items of Any Other Business</b> It was noted that no other business requests have been received.</p>	
<p><b>10. Financial Approvals</b> LL talked to the financial approvals paper, highlighting the requests of the paper.</p>	

<p>LL explained that the DfE have agreed that underspend on the Northern College grant can be spent against Barnsley College, meaning there will be no return of funding to the DfE.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>APPROVE</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The award of the vehicles tender for a 3-year period at £205k.</li> <li>• The appointment of the demolition contractor to carry out the annex demolition works at Northern College, including the departure from the standard procurement process</li> <li>• The transactions contained within the report and appendix, including departures from standard procurement process.</li> <li>• That the report provides Governors with assurance against objective 1.4 – the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the Corporation and safeguarding their assets.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>11. Management Accounts</b></p> <p>LL talked to the management accounts shared with the Board, noting that they are the first set of management accounts that have a reforecast following P3 performance review. It was clarified that the management accounts do not include Northern College figures.</p> <p>LL highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EBITDA has increased and is expected to be above budget, primarily due to the release of unallocated costs.</li> <li>• It is likely the College will receive an in-year increase in funding for 16-19 which is not included in the forecast. In light of recent government funding announcements it was noted that this may not be as high as originally expected.</li> <li>• Apprenticeship carry-in income was higher than profiled, and therefore has been reforecast.</li> <li>• Capital grant release includes the £1.8m OfS grant for Church Street phase 2.</li> </ul> <p>ML thanked LL for the paper noting the positive financial position of the College.</p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the update and <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>APPROVE</b> that the report provides Governors with assurance against objective 1.4.</p>	
<p><b>12. Capital Update</b></p> <p>LL noted that the paper shared with the Governors is for information only. No questions were raised by the Governors on the paper.</p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the update.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Subcontracting Performance</b></li> </ul> <p>JPL talked to the sub-contracting performance paper, highlighting the following:</p>	

- The level of subcontracting is considerably below the 10% level at which point the funding bodies would be concerned. The College subcontracting is not to be considered as a high-level risk.
- A variation to the T3 Training and Development Ltd contract value is requested. This is mainly due to two additional cohorts of apprentices on the Modern Methods of Construction Apprenticeship programme. The positive student recruitment performance was noted.
- The proposed change will result in an increase to overall contract value, however the forecast year end position is still under budget.

The Board **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE**:

- The proposed variation to the T3 Training and Development Ltd contract for 2025-2026.
- That the report provides Governors with assurance against objective 2.5.

### **13. Deep Dives**

ML talked to the purpose of Deep Dives and the assurance that they provide to Governors. ML highlighted the following points:

- Three deep dives will take place this academic year.
- Proposals regarding group composition and timelines were provided in the paper
- Deep Dive areas are aligned to areas identified in the Quality Improvement Plan.

GD noted a potential conflict of interest for his role on the HE Deep Dive. A discussion explored the scope of the Deep Dive and if Governors felt that there would be a conflict. It was agreed that the HE Deep Dive would focus on the growth of the HE provision and maximising it's potential, not the effectiveness and efficiency of the current delivery and therefore there was not deemed to be a conflict, however GD was advised that should a conflict arise during discussions then he shall remove himself. JM offered their support to the HE deep dive group, to increase numbers in the event of a conflict of interest requiring GD's removal.

ML presented the proposed third area for Deep Dive to the Board, highlighting the following points:

- There is no longer the need for a 14-16 deep dive, following the assurance provided through the recent Link Governor visit.
- It is critical that the Board knows who the customers of Barnsley College are (students / learners) and how our services are meeting their needs and the local needs.
- The deep dive will explore student demographics, student voice and staff voice.
- Discovery sessions will include engagement with students about their experiences at the College and if their needs are being met.

- Discovery sessions will include engagement with staff to understand the current curriculum, their anticipated changes to continue to meet student needs, and the rationale for this.
- The insight gained during this deep dive will support the Board to make informed decisions regarding future strategic development.
- The Deep Dive group will split into smaller groups and visit the following sites:
  - Wigfield Farm
  - Old Mill Lane
  - Honeywell
  - SciTech
  - Clean Energy Training Centre

It was noted that additional Governors may volunteer to sit on the Knowing our Students Deep Dive to support with efficient completion of the Deep Dive, in line with timelines for Local Needs Duty Review. SH and ML volunteered to sit on the deep dive.

MM noted that discussion at the Audit and Risk Committee had raised 2 potential areas for future Deep Dive scrutiny. They were the SEND reform and AI based transformation. It was noted that JM will be doing a follow up Link Governor visit with the team responsible for SEND in light of the white paper. The report from this will be shared with the Board.

The value which the Knowing our Students Deep Dive will provide for the Annual Accountability Statement and Local Needs Duty Review was noted. In light of this, the proposed timeline was brought forwards, to allow for presentation of results to the Board in May.

It was clarified that in the context of the third Deep Dive, “customers” refers to our students. This will support the College in ensuring that future strategy development is data led.

DA noted the importance of ensuring the appropriate level of detail is shared with the Board through the Deep Dive, and that it does not result in the Board moving towards an operational oversight, not strategic oversight position.

The Board **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the deep dive proposals.

ML also highlighted the plans to create a post-merger implementation task and finish group. DA shared the following updates related to this:

- He has visited Northern College since the merger and in general progress has been smooth to this point.
- DA will work with NT to design a post-merger integration plan and timeline.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The task and finish group will monitor delivery of the post-merger integration plan.</li> <li>• The Board creative session in April will explore the post-merger integration plan.</li> <li>• The task and finish group would consist of SH, SD, JM and GG.</li> </ul> <p>The Board supported the establishment of the task and finish group.</p> <p>SH noted the desire for the task and finish group to look at plans for expanding the student population at Northern College. DA noted that LK would be invited to present to the group on future plans, in which expansion will be covered. It was noted that LK will now be required to engage with the College's business planning and performance review process.</p> <p>DA noted that notification has been received through the actuaries that the USS pension fund was in surplus as at the 28 February 2026, and there would be no Section 75 debt, subject to final calculations.</p> <p>The importance of getting dates in Governors diaries was highlighted.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> JMe to diarise Deep Dives.</p>
<p><b>14. Regulatory update</b></p> <p>JMe highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Remuneration Committee had a constructive discussion regarding the SPH remuneration code.</li> <li>• The Committee felt reassured that the minor changes would not result in significant work being needed by the College to ensure compliance.</li> <li>• The College will be responding to the consultation and will be making suggestions regarding the importance of additional assurance on compliance given that the code is voluntary.</li> </ul> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the regulatory update paper.</p>	
<p><b>15. Board Calendar</b></p> <p>JMe noted that the Board calendar had been drafted to reflect the same structure as this year. It was highlighted that dates, if approved, will be put into calendars. A schedule of work will be shared at the next Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>APPROVE</b> the Board calendar for 2026-2027 and the assurance it provides against the objectives.</p>	
<p><b>16. Whistleblowing Policy</b></p> <p>TJo explained that the Whistleblowing Policy and procedures has been updated following recent legislative changes including the Employment Rights Act (2025). He highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revised policy strengthens protections, with sexual harassment being explicitly listed as a qualifying disclosure.</li> <li>• The revised policy expands on examples of public interest disclosures to include tax evasion, breaches of legal duties and deliberate concealment.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The revised policy reinforces the College’s commitment to the Antibribery Act (2010) and the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (2023).</li> </ul> <p>The Board sought assurance of the work done by the College to ensure staff are informed of the legislation. TJo explained that sexual harassment training is mandatory for all staff and completion rates are reviewed during the performance review process. He noted that completion is up to date, with only a few individuals having not completed the training due to starting recently at the College.</p> <p>MM questioned the limitation of the policy scope to staff and workers, seeking to understand if consideration had been given to expanding this to include students and Governors. TJo reinforced the purpose of a whistleblowing policy. TJo agreed to consider this during the full review of the policy.</p> <p>The Board <b>RESOLVED</b> to <b>APPROVE</b> the proposed changes to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> TJo to consider expansion of scope of whistleblowing to include Governors.</p>
<p><b>17. Any Other Business</b></p> <p>ML updated that NA had resigned from the ITS / Smartstyle Board. It was noted the ITS/Smartstyle Board shall consider the co-option of CCS until December 2026, to ensure compliance with the Articles conditions at its meeting on 17 March 2026. The Board supported this action.</p> <p>ML thanked the Board for the contributions.</p> <p>The meeting was closed at 13:53.</p>	