



Barnsley College Corporation Meeting Minutes

Date: 17 March 2026
Time: 16:00-18:00
Location: A325, Old Mill Lane

Attendance (Governors)

	Role
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
Jo Mallows (JM)*	Independent Governor
Gavin Day (GD)	Independent Governor
Carrie Sudbury (CS)	Independent Governor
Matt Mills (MM)	Independent Governor
Kalam Neale (KN)*	Independent Governor
Leon Etherington (LE)	Independent Governor
Samantha Dixon (SD)	Independent Governor
Sue Horner (SH)	Independent Governor
Leo Hibberd (LH)	Student Governor

In Attendance

	Role
Michael Wood (MW)	AoC External Board Reviewer
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

	Role
Carley Speechley (CSp)	Independent Governor
Tracey Johnson (TJ)	Independent Governor
Kayleigh Bell (KB)	Staff Governor

Absence

	Role
Megan Orrow (MO)	Student Governor
Steven Burkinshaw (SB)	Staff Governor

Mentions

	Role
Ellen Thinnesen (ET)	FE Commissioner
Esme Winch (EW)	Deputy FE Commissioner
Liz Kendall (LK)	Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology
Ed Miliband (EM)	Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero
Oliver Coppard (OC)	Mayor of South Yorkshire

*joined online

Procedural Matters	
<p>1. Quoracy ML welcomed Governors and MW to the meeting. The Governors introduced themselves to SH. It was confirmed the meeting was quorate.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies for absence Apologies were received from CS, TJ and KS. Absence was noted for SB and MO</p>	
<p>3. Declarations of Interest No interests were declared.</p>	
<p>4. Register of Interest The Board NOTED the register of interest.</p>	
<p>5. Any Other Business It was noted that two items of other business had been shared.</p> <p>ML asked LH to share his experiences from the Sri-Lanka trip delivered by the College as a result of Turing Funding and funding from Governors. LH talked to the positive experiences gained during the trip, including volunteering at a local school, teaching students English, supporting with building restoration and working at a turtle conservation centre. The trip provided significant opportunities for cultural enrichment.</p> <p>The Board welcome future opportunities to hear from students regarding the experiences provided through Turing funding.</p>	<p>Action: The SU to provide the opportunity for students to share feedback on trip experiences to Governors in support of the annual budget request.</p>
<p>6. External Board Review Introduction MW noted that conversations were ongoing and that an end presentation would be shared in July. He talked to the positive engagement with the process to date.</p>	
<p>7. Principal/CEO Report DA highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DA and ML had a positive meeting with ET and EW regarding the College's priorities regarding risk and governance. Discussion explored ET's vision for her time as FE Commissioner. An open offer was given by DA and ML to support wherever possible by sharing the College's governance principles. • The Clean Energy Training Centre hosted the UK's second jobs fair and was visited by EM and OC. • LK visited the College as part of her trip to announce Barnsley as the first UK Tech Town. The visit and discussions were positive. Discussion explored the vision of Barnsley College becoming a Technical Excellence College. • Barnsley College were not selected to deliver modular HE programmes funded through Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) from January 2027. Concern has been raised regarding the methodology and appropriateness of the scoring criteria which means that despite the College being a pilot provider, it was not selected for 2027 delivery. A 	

meeting with the SRO Director for LLE was scheduled to take place on 16/3/26, however they were unable to attend and so the Deputy Director attended in their place. It was agreed that he would provide an update following additional internal conversations. It was noted that Barnsley College are likely to have to re-apply during a later application window.

- The College has submitted a bid for the Digital and Technologies Technical Excellence College. The outcome will be shared in April 2026.

The Board discussed the outcomes of the merger with Northern College. It was noted that the merger was successful and integration has begun. The Northern College staff are involved in the business planning process ahead of next year. Conversations have been positive to date. The Board recognised the significant amount of work done by DA, ML and the Transition Board to deliver a successful merger.

The Board questioned the impact of not being selected for LLE delivery on the College's finances. DA explained there would be no impact as this had not been planned for due to approval not being granted, however there is potential reputational damage as a result of Barnsley College being the only HE provider in South Yorkshire who cannot deliver the LLE modules. The potential destabilising impact on the HE market in Barnsley was noted.

It was suggested that the risk and opportunities of LLE are explored during the planning conversations during the HE Growth Deep Dive.

The Board **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the update.

Action: HE Growth Deep Dive to consider the risks and opportunities of LLE entitlement.

8. Analysis of Complaints

GB highlighted the following points:

- During the period of 1/8/25-5/2/26 the College received four formal complaints. This is a 50% reduction compared to ytd last year. The reduction is attributed in part to the improved handling processes in the Quality department.
- The complaints received are categorised into the following themes:
 - Communication
 - Bullying/harassment
 - Discrimination
 - Other
- Three out of the four complaints were received by the Foundation Learning Department, with the other being Safeguarding. There are not any perceived patterns of complaints.
- Significant improvement is seen in Apprenticeships, with complaints currently sitting at 0, compared to 25 in 2022/23.
- Two of the complaints have been fully resolved and actions taken by the College have been explained to the complainants. Two complaints

<p>remain open, however they are in line with the prescribed response timelines. It was noted one may be resolved as a complaint and one may be resolved and dealt with externally.</p> <p>The Board questioned the College’s approach to responding to public reviews, such as google reviews. It was explained that negative reviews on public platforms are not engaged with publicly, instead the individual is engaged with privately and directed to the College’s complaints process. It was noted that positive comments are not always replied to due to staff capacity.</p> <p>A discussion explored the College’s approach to complaint handling, and the involvement of departments as a first step of resolution, to give those accountable for the delivery of a service the chance to understand it and resolve it. The challenge of this approach with recording number of complaints was noted and it was suggested that learnings be taken from near miss and accident reporting to allow accurate reporting and trends to be identified. It was recommended that language on complaint reporting should be aligned to external language of upheld or dismissed.</p> <p>The Board RESOLVED to NOTE the report and APPROVE the assurance it provides against objective 1.3.</p>	<p>Action: GB to use upheld, dismissed and appealed terminology in future complaint reports.</p>
<p>9. GCSE English and Maths November Results / Mid yr Position</p> <p>GB talked to the report, highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the current academic year (2025/26), there has been an increase in students needing to resit GCSEs, with 1,349 requiring English and 1,535 requiring Maths. • The College’s policy is to enter all students who have not achieved a grade 9-4 in GCSE English and/or Maths for the resit opportunity in November. • The November 2025 series saw an 16% increase in examination entries. In November 2025, 7.7% of the overall cohort resitting GCSE English and Maths, achieved a Grade 4 compared to 9.7% in 2023/24. • 52 remark submissions have been made and to date 34 have returned. 8 have been upgraded and 26 remain the same. • Overall, 12.5% of students with a grade on entry of 3, improved to a Grade 4 or better. • 16.8% of 16-18 year old students with a grade on entry of 3 in English, improved to a Grade 4 or better. • 7.0% of 16-18 year old students with a grade on entry of 3 in Maths, improved to a Grade 4 or better. <p>GB explained the College’s approach to resits and the impact this has on the high number of November entries compared to other organisations. It was explained that whilst improvement by November is unlikely, this approach helps desensitise students to the exam environment and gives them exam practice. It was noted that grade improvement is reported to be harder within</p>	

<p>Maths. GB highlighted that progress board reviews indicate that the grade improvement pattern will continue throughout the year, and work is being done with past papers to prepare students to take the exams.</p> <p>Discussion explored the work being done to share best practice amongst English and Maths practitioners. It was noted that the College hosted the Education Training Foundation's (ETF) first English and Maths development sessions and requests are often made to share how the College delivers its policy on restricted group sizes.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the 16-18 Maths and English resit policy is out for consultation at the moment and is likely to stop the College doing a November resit.</p> <p>GB highlighted the QIP action regarding attendance in Maths and English, explaining that influencing learner attitudes plays a key role in this.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the report and noted the assurance it provides against objective 1.3.</p>	
<p>10. Strategic Seminar Feedback</p> <p>GB talked to the report highlighting the following summary points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors valued the opportunity to engage with strategic themes, build stronger relationships and work collaboratively with the Executive Team, noting the College's strong position and preparedness for sector change. • Requests for future seminars centred on more carousel sessions, student-voice engagement and practical workshops, with a continued preference for in-house expertise. • Venue, organisation and team cohesion were praised, and the revised student session was seen as particularly impactful. <p>It was noted that the student session in 2027 will start with a reflection on the 2026 student feedback and actions taken against this. Discussion highlighted the need to ensure the feedback is also shared with the students who took part.</p> <p>The Board noted the success of the icebreaker, and the positive tone it set for the day.</p> <p>The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE that the report provides an accurate summary of the feedback following the annual Governor's Strategic Seminar and NOTED the assurance it provides against the objectives.</p>	
<p>11. Student Voice Seminar Feedback</p> <p>HA talked to the report shared with the Board, highlighting the following points:</p>	

- Overall feedback was positive, highlighting strong academic, pastoral and wellbeing support.
- Students noted areas for improvement such as stigma around the Sixth Form, limited cultural enrichment opportunities, a need for greater diversity education, and challenges with seating capacity and toilet cleanliness.
- Learners across groups expressed appreciation for supportive staff and quality teaching, while also identifying gaps such as inconsistent external experiences, limited volunteering access, and a desire for more off-site learning.
- The session provided Governors with valuable insight and will be followed up with a “you said, we did” session to demonstrate actions taken in response to student voice.

HA highlighted that the College has its week of culture coming up, which will support in addressing a number of the student’s comments.

It was noted that feedback on action taken in light of the session will be shared through student voice forums. It was noted that this needs to be shared with the involved cohort too.

LH noted that he is a course rep and the feedback reported aligns with the feedback discussed in the forums.

CH shared that as Link Governor for Student Experience/Voice, she would like to be involved wherever possible.

The Board noted the success of the grouping of the students to facilitate effective discussion.

The Board **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** that the report provides an accurate summary of the feedback from Students during the annual Governor’s Strategic Seminar and **NOTE** the assurance it provides against the objectives.

JM left the meeting at 17:02.

12. Link Visit Reports

ML highlighted that the Link Governor reports had been shared with the Audit and Risk Committee. She highlighted that the reports provide commentary and assurance against the Colleges work to ensure compliance with its statutory duties.

GD explained that he had completed his first meeting as Health and Safety Link Governor. He provided assurance to the Board that accidents are improving year on year and that he received significant assurance on the adequacy of the Colleges approach to dealing with accidents. It was noted a future visit to Construction is planned.

Action: HA to ensure feedback on action taken to address student voice is shared with the involved cohort from the seminar.

<p>The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE the assurance provided by the Link Governor reports.</p>	
<p>13. Balanced Scorecard Quarterly Update GB talked to the report, highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the strategic goals are on track to be achieved by the year end. • There are 2 goals and 10 performance measure targets that are rated as amber where additional focus is required. • There are 2 performance measure targets which are currently rated red: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Curriculum Pillar – T Level and Foundation Year student recruitment - due to the main 16-18 recruitment period having taken place, this is likely to remain red for the rest of the year • Quality – all goals are forecast to be green by the end of the year. Goal 5 is rated amber at moment so that it remains an area of focus. • Sustainability – all 4 goals are forecast to be green at the end of year, with all measures strongly positioned. <p>Assurance was provided that all amber and red measures remain closely monitored by staff responsible for them.</p> <p>The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE the assurance provided by the Balanced Scorecard quarterly update.</p>	
<p>14. Balanced Scorecard Goals and Performance Measures GB talked to the report which outlined the proposed Balanced Scorecard goals and performance measures for 2026/27, developed following the Governors’ Annual Strategic Seminar. He highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive have worked collectively with each other and other senior colleagues to consider the feedback given by Governors during the strategic seminar. • The proposals included in the report are aligned to the College’s vision and values. <p>Discussion explored the use of subjective language in the proposed performance measures, and the role of performance measures and metrics.</p> <p>It was noted that metrics (targets) will be assigned to each of the performance measures and will be presented at the July Board meeting. The Board questioned why the metrics (targets) are presented at a later date. It was explained that delivery needs to be closer to the end of the academic year to understand what stretch targets would be based off actual data. It was suggested that the Executive should consider the benefits and drawbacks of providing draft metrics in March for future years.</p> <p>The Board felt the summary was a fair representation of the discussions and feedback given at the strategic seminar.</p>	<p>Action: Executive to consider the language used in performance measures and metrics (targets).</p> <p>Action: Executive to consider the benefits and drawbacks of providing draft metrics (targets) with the performance measures in March (2027).</p>

<p>The Board are RESOLVED to APPROVE the proposed Balanced Scorecard priorities, goals and performance measures for 2026/2027.</p>	
<p>15. Quality Improvement Plan Update</p> <p>GB highlighted the following points regarding the Barnsley College QIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards reducing the volume of apprentices beyond their planned end date (PED) in Construction is pleasing, however more work is needed in Engineering. There are currently 58 apprentices past their planned end date at the end of P6. Whilst external reporting on past planned end date numbers reports the College as green, there is still more work to be done. • Apprenticeship deliverers have been placed onto rapid improvement plans. These will be managed by the Director of FE Quality and Performance. • Raising student attendance at English and Maths lessons continues to be challenging. Attendance continues to be monitored both centrally and departmentally, with students being set specific targets to address matters, where they fall short of expectations. • Indicators to monitor grade improvement in GCSE English and Maths are showing positive progress, with delivery policies being followed more consistently than in the past. • Progress Board 2 A Level value added indicators show incremental progress at this stage of the year, with more work still being done to ensure sixth form learners are stretched and challenged to achieve the best grades they can. It was noted that forecast improvement is not as positive as current predictions suggest. Whilst grade improvement is predicted to increase, it is still not forecast to be in the positive figures. • There have been changes to the leadership of Quality, Teaching and Learning functions at the College. A complete review of resource, policy, systems and processes will commence once all appointments start, with the very clear view of advancing Teaching and Learning across the college to deliver ‘everyday excellence’. • Pastoral programmes have been revised, and good progress is being made with supporting students and apprentices to understand the risks they may encounter in modern life. A review of the curriculum was undertaken in the summer to explore how it can be more responsive to what happens in the community. • 92% of observations say that the teaching standards are meeting expectations. Work is ongoing to look at practitioners who fall outside of the current scope to ensure that they are reviewed. <p>The Board recognised the link between the Self Assessment Report, the Quality Improvement Plan and the Deep Dive areas of focus.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update and APPROVED the assurance it provides against objective 1.3.</p>	

<p>16. Independent Training Services (ITS) Quality Improvement Plan ML explained that the ITS quality improvement plan had been approved by the ITS Board at their meeting on 17/3/2026.</p> <p>CS noted that the ITS Board deemed sufficient assurance to have been provided by the actions contained within the QIP.</p> <p>GB talked to the content of the QIP, noting that work is ongoing by the ITS team to address the actions. It was noted that the ITS QIP aims to promote consistency across delivery.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the ITS QIP and APPROVED the assurance it provides against objective 1.3.</p>	
<p>17. Staff Survey Results TJo talked to the staff survey results report, highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Survey was completed in December 2025 and had a completion rate of 80%. • The average satisfaction rate has increased to 94%, exceeding the balanced scorecard target. It was noted the last time this average satisfaction rate was achieved was 2015. • The majority of departments have a satisfaction rate of over 90%. • An improvement is seen in communication, with it scoring over 90% for the first time. • The only area that scored less than 90% was Appraisal, Training and Development (88%). It was noted that plans are in place to ensure that College values and behaviours are reinforced through appraisals and 5x5 meetings, wellbeing is considered and promoted and workload is managed. • The College will be introducing a “People Principles Framework” that supports and clarifies how we expect managers to manage staff. This will also support wellbeing and development. • There are some departments identified via the Staff Survey as requiring stress action plans. It was explained this is not the result of stress being prevalent in the areas but is a pro-active way of preventing stressors building up (Sixth Form, Creative and Digital, and Engineering). <p>The Board noted the extremely positive completion rate and satisfaction outcomes. They questioned if there is a difference in satisfaction between teaching and non-teaching staff. It was explained that to promote anonymity and encourage completion, the data to allow breakdown by anything other than department is not captured.</p> <p>The Board recognised the significant improvement in the satisfaction of the marketing department, seeking to understand actions which led to this. JPL explained that significant work had been done to make changes to operation</p>	<p>Action: TJo to include an update on stress interventions in the Annual HR Report.</p>

<p>and set the department vision. A key driver of success was walking through the changes and the rationale for them with staff to generate buy in.</p> <p>It was noted that the survey is delivered in house and therefore not benchmarked externally, however future delivery of the survey in this format will allow for year-on-year comparisons.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the analysis of the staff survey results and the assurance it provides against objective 1.2 and 2.4.</p>	
<p>18. CSTEM Update ML and GB shared the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board previously agreed to close the task and finish group looking into CSTEM. • ML and GB met to close the group and analysed data across Construction and Engineering. • The College have made changes to the staff structure within Construction and Engineering. Time is needed to see the impact of these changes. • Although the task and finish group is closed, this will still be monitored internally as there is progress to be made. • The 3yr positive outcome data shows a 4-percentage point improvement in achievement rates. • Whilst performance is better than other similar Colleges, the College is striving to be better for its own standards. • GB will be seeking to learn from other Colleges who perform well in this area and is encouraging Heads of Departments to be outward looking. • The College are currently performing above the SSA national achievement rates – an improvement on 22/23 when performance was below the national rate. 	
<p>19. Audit and Risk Committee Minutes It was noted these were provided to the Board for information. No questions were raised regarding them.</p>	
<p>20. BCD Minutes It was noted these were provided to the Board for information. No questions were raised regarding them.</p>	
<p>21. iTrust Minutes It was noted these were provided to the Board for information. No questions were raised regarding them.</p>	
<p>22. Think Barnsley Ltd It was noted these were provided to the Board for information. No questions were raised regarding them.</p>	
<p>23. ITS Minutes It was noted these were provided to the Board for information. No questions were raised regarding them.</p>	
<p>24. Principals Good News Report</p>	

<p>DA shared the Principals Good News report with the Board. The Board recognised the positive report, noting that publicity on the stories shared within it had been positive.</p>	
<p>25. Reflection ML sought assurance from the Board that Governors had the chance to challenge and question the Executive and time to comment. Governors confirmed this.</p>	
<p>26. Any Other Business LL talked to the letter of engagement provided by RSM, who were appointed as Northern College's external auditors. The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE the RSM Letter of Engagement for signature by ML. It was noted that RSM are aware of the need for objectivity and independence.</p> <p>ML closed the meeting at 17:56.</p>	