

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors held on
Wednesday 30th June 2021
 (Virtual – MS-Teams meeting)

Members present

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Munday (Executive Director, Children's Services, London Borough of Barnet) Lisa Coffman, Barnet Parent-Carer Forum Councillor David Longstaff (Chairman of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee and Lead Member for Children's Services) Samson Olusanya, Chair of Barnet Secondary Headteachers' Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ricky Rebello, Director elected by BELS staff Sarah Sands, Chair of Barnet Primary and Nursery Headteachers' Forum Ben Thomas (Assistant Director, Education, Strategy and Partnerships, London Borough of Barnet) Ian Harrison, Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, Barnet Education and Learning Service
Attendees Only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darren Turnpenney (DT), Director of Finance, Barnet Education and Learning Service Helen Phelan (HP), Director of SEND & Inclusion Service, Barnet Education and Learning Service 	

MINUTES

	Item	ACTION
1	Apologies - none Meeting chaired by CM.	
2	Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2021 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.	
3	Declarations of Interests None declared.	
4	Chief Executive's report <u>Budget report</u> IH introduced the budget outturn report, which shows a £635,530 improvement on the forecast at the end of month 10 (January 2021), as reported to the March meeting of the BELS Board. The largest single item behind this variance is the release of the £350,000 of cost contingency provision, which was not required. Insurance and audit costs were £65,000 less than in the previous forecast. The other £220,000 net saving arose from underspend on various budget headings. The overall result was an end of financial year surplus of just over £1m, which is 6.3% of the gross revenue income.	

	<p>It is proposed to allocate £400,000 of this as a general cost provision in 2021-22 and a further £100,000 for a possible shortfall in traded services income, which equates to £500k of carry forward money, with a proposal to allocate £285k for one off projects, as listed.</p> <p>IH also introduced the revised budget for 2021-22 (item 5 on the agenda). It incorporates the new income streams for 21-22 and includes the budgeted savings earmarked in agreement with the council. Overall it shows a loss of £284,938. However, £285,730 of budgeted expenditure is one-off spending on the items listed.</p> <p>DT said that, apart from the one-off items we are funding, the overall underlying structural budget is balanced.</p> <p>IH added that the 2021-22 budget has changed since the draft budget, and the main reason for that change is because LBB has allocated £500k from its Covid recovery budget. The proposed expenditure agreed with the council is shown in the Appendix to Paper B.</p> <p>SS asked about the focus for the Social Media and Marketing Officer. IH stated it was for marketing the BELS Business and establishing a clearer web presence in the hope of generating more traded services income.</p> <p>SO asked about the £10k allocated for year 11 new arrivals with ESL. IH said BELS had identified twelve Year 11 new arrivals who Could not be placed in a school now.. Barnet and Southgate College has been commissioned to put on a 3-week course for them which includes English for speakers of other languages as well as other skills. CM added that we have 4 Home Office hotels, which are dispersal centres, for asylum seekers, many of them under 18.</p> <p><u>Staffing</u></p> <p>IH ran through the rest of the report with regards to staff restructures, recruitment and a staff survey on future ways of working.</p> <p>The survey showed that most staff would prefer to work from home most of the time. The management team believe that the pandemic has shown that all staff can work effectively from home. It had therefore been agreed that staff may continue to work from home for the indefinite future unless the type of work requires the staff member to be present in schools or other venues because face to face work is judged to be more effective. In those cases, decisions on home working or face to face work will be based on risk assessments.</p> <p>CM asked RR as board staff rep if there were any views from staff on the proposals in relation to working from home. RR stated he has spoken to a few staff members who are happy with the flexibility of being allowed to work from home or come into the office.</p> <p>CM added it was important that staff know that there is a requirement for a presence in Barnet, as Barnet is their place of work. He added that this does not only mean the Colindale office but Barnet as a whole, schools and other offices/locations. IH added that the place of work being Barnet is in staff contracts and it is not proposed to change that.</p> <p><u>Committee reports</u></p> <p>IH stated that two reports were taken to Committee, on Elective Home Education and the Post-16 Strategy. Both were approved.</p>	
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	<p><u>Education recovery</u></p> <p>Education recovery has been discussed with Headteachers and it was clear that it was not only about lost learning, but also about scaffolding support for schools across a range of issues.. Thus the list of projects listed in paragraph 3.2.8 of the Chief Executive's report.</p> <p>LC added that the Barnet Parent Carers Forum had coproduced a mental health conference with NCL CCG and Barnet Health Providers and it was important not to underestimate the concerns around children's and young people's mental health and welcomed that element in the proposals. CM added that there were other projects not included in the education recovery programme specifically focussing on mental health. .</p> <p>SO concurred with LC on all these issues and stressed that recovery and other demands such as work on sexual harassment put such demands on schools that a large injection of funding is needed from central government.</p> <p><u>Therapies</u></p> <p>HP introduced the section of the report on therapy services. Whittington Health NHS Trust were supporting interim arrangements to provide therapy services. The council is also commissioning some independent speech and language and occupational therapists to provide programmes of support for schools. Currently 80 schools have taken up the offer of the Language Enrichment Programme. BELS is also working with 2 independent occupational therapists on a 12-week programme, called the 'Otto Club' for Reception aged children and year 1 and 2.</p> <p>CM added that a report will be considered by the council's Urgency Committee on 8 July, with a proposal to go out to procurement for a new therapy provider.</p> <p><u>Preparation for the SEND Inspection</u></p> <p>HP explained the preparations being made for the impending OfSTED inspection. This includes updating the Local Area SEF, with details on our response during the pandemic.</p> <p>DL asked if NELFT will have any bearings on the inspection. HP stated that she believes that it would, certainly as a line of enquiry.</p> <p>LC said parent-carers are likely to speak out about the lack of therapy support. HP said a communication will go out to parents as soon as possible about the new therapies provider.</p> <p>The Chief Executive's report was noted and approved.</p>	
5	<p>Revised Annual Budget 2021-22</p> <p>IH went through the budget report while introducing item 4.</p> <p>The revised budget was approved.</p>	
6	<p>Audit of BELS Governance Arrangements</p> <p>IH stated that this was part of the Council's annual audit programme. As we were set up as a new company in September, the Council included a review of our governance arrangements to check if key risks have been addressed especially around decision-making and accountabilities. PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) were</p>	

	<p>commissioned to do the report. IH went through each of the recommendations and proposed responses.</p> <p>CM said he did not think it appropriate for him to appraise Board members, given they are appointed and supports the proposed response. LC said the type of self-appraisal proposed as the response worked well at a school where she is a governor.</p> <p>CM said the Board should consider succession planning in relation to the senior management team. IH agreed and said he would add that to the response.</p> <p>LC pointed out that she is not the Chair of the BPCF, but the Treasurer and Co-ordinator.</p> <p>The Board agreed the management response to the audit, subject to the addition about succession planning and the correction to LC's position.</p>	
7	<p>Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>IH introduced the reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI monthly report – noted all KPIs on target for April and May • Annual KPI report 2020-21 – noted all KPIs on target except 2 which very marginally fell short of the targets, but not by enough to trigger any thresholds. LC said that she is part of the team carrying out audits of EHCPs and it was currently difficult to meet the KPI target as the audit questions did not relate well to the EHCP application form and final Plan. A small team were working on tweaking the approach. • Review of KPIs – various minor changes were proposed to existing KPIs and a list of internal KPIs was proposed. IH explained that, once agreed by the Board, the changes would be proposed to the council at the next Contract Monitoring Board. <p>The Board noted the reports and approved the proposed changes to KPIs and the proposed list of internal KPIs.</p>	
8	<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Policy - IH proposed acceptance of the council's risk policy, as indicated in the response to the governance audit. This was agreed by the Board. • Risk Register – The updates to the Risk Register were noted. The proposed internal risks were agreed and it was also agreed to add a risk about retention/retirements of staff and one about the risks associated with the contract with the council coming to an end in 2026. 	
9	<p>AOB –</p> <p>LC asked if a list of acronyms used in reports could be circulated before Board meetings. [Note: I have tried to ensure all acronyms are spelt out the first time they are mentioned in the 29.9.21 papers].</p> <p>LC said a few members at the parent-carer forum have asked about a council monitoring officer that they could take a complaint or concern to. She said there is no information on the Local Officer about this.</p> <p>CM confirmed the monitoring officer is Jessica Farmer, who is the Head of Legal Services but said the normal way for a complaint</p>	IH

	<p>would not be to go via the monitoring officer; it would be via the complaints procedure and then can be escalated to him. CM added he would be more than happy to meet with those parents with Helen Phelan and Linda Orr to resolve issues. If parents were still not satisfied, the next step would be the Ombudsman.</p> <p>HP added that the Local Offer is being amended to include information about complaints.</p>	HP
	<p>Date of next meeting – Wednesday 29 September 12.00-13.00</p> <p>Microsoft Teams meeting</p> <p>Join on your computer or mobile app</p> <p>Click here to join the meeting</p> <p>Or call in (audio only)</p> <p>+44 20 3321 5256,,843309247# United Kingdom, London</p> <p>Phone Conference ID: 843 309 247#</p> <p>Find a local number Reset PIN</p>	