

THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING – 17.12.2020

PRESENT: R Davies (CG and Chair), R Anderson (CG), H Ashton (CG), A Coleman-Cooke (CG), C Cooney (CG), M Gaze (CG), J Golightly (CG), L Holdsworth (CG), S Lane (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), M McClintock (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), P Sharp (CG), D Still (Staff Governor), P Studd (CG), D Wade (Staff Governor), I Wright (CG).

OFFICERS: J Chance (VP), G Cumiskey (DP), Z Foster (Clerk), C Kipling (VP), J Steel (VP).

KEY: CG College Governor EM External Member DP Deputy Principal
VP Vice Principal Clerk to the Corporation

1. Apologies for Absence – R Davies

M Laidler (CG), S Mudd (Student Governor), A Thompson (Student Governor).

2. Declarations of Interest – R Davies

H Ashton declared an interest in 5.1 (in relation to TTE).

3. Minutes, Appointments and Written Resolutions – R Davies

3.1 Appointment of Student Governor

The Governing Body **approved**:

- the appointment of the second Student Governor, S Mudd from 17 December 2020 – 31 July 2021

3.2 Written Resolutions – confirmation of Approvals

3.2.1 College Re-opening Plans – 28 August 2020

3.2.2 T Level Constructions Contract – 22 November 2020

Both resolution approvals were confirmed.

3.3 Unconfirmed minutes of Meeting of 19.10.2020 - **Approved** as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising – R Davies

No matters outstanding.

5. Strategic Overview - Z Lewis

5.1 Principal/Chief Executive's Report

Z Lewis gave a very positive general overview; with reference to the ongoing Strategic Projects, which were on target and in relation to TTE options as outlined in the Corporate Services recommendations (*item 6.1*).

Governors' questions and discussion included: the complications of the mass testing from January 2021; and overall confidence in the safety protocols in place for students and staff.

Governors **approved** the College's approach to re-open as planned in January 2021, subject to no further changes in Government direction.

- Governors then had a full discussion on the TTE site options/strategy and were supportive of the proposals as outlined, **approving** the recommendation to authorize the Principal to progress negotiations with the landlord to acquire the TTE site [*INFORMATION REDACTED*].

5.2 Draft Revised Strategic Plan including KPIs – Z Lewis

Z Lewis presented the revised plan which had incorporated all responses from Governors.

There was some discussion on public presentation of aspects of the plan and also of explanation of financials to external stakeholders and how this might be addressed.

The Governing Body **approved** the revised Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and also approved publication of the entire plan

6. Strategic Finance

6.1 Corporate Services Recommendations – P Studd

P Studd gave a brief overview of the meeting of 7 December 2020 which had fully considered the financial position of the College thereby allowing approval of the Capital plan and pay award and had also considered the Payroll project in detail.

After due consideration, the following was **approved** by the Governing Body:

- The 2019/2020 Financial Statements (Middlesbrough College, Northern Skills Group Limited, Northern Apprenticeship Group Limited, TTE Technical (UK) Ltd, TTE International Ltd and TTE Apprenticeships Ltd), prior to them being signed and returned to the Education and Skills Funding Agency before the 31 January 2021 deadline (*as per Item 6.2*)
- That the bad debt of £1,430 for 2019/2020 be written off
- 2019 / 2020 Student Union Activity
- The following for all staff:
 - A 2% consolidated pay increase from 1st January 2021 for all staff (including hourly contract 1 rates) subject to meeting the relevant performance criteria
 - a £100 one off payment of thanks from the Governing Body for all staff employed on 1st January 2021 and having worked during term 1 of 2020-21 – payable in mid-January (with £50 for those working less than 0.5 contract on average) again subject to meeting prescribed performance criteria
 - and at its July 2021 meeting for the Corporate Services Committee to consider a further one off payment of thanks from the Governing Body for all staff subject to the financial position of the College at that time
- the TTE recommendation as per the Principal's Report (*Item 5.1*) – authorising the Principal to progress negotiations with the landlord to acquire the TTE site [*INFORMATION REDACTED*].

6.2 Financial Statements 2019-2020 – C Kipling

The statements below were as presented and recommended for approval by both Audit and Risk and Corporate Services Committee. C Kipling gave a brief overview for the benefit of Governors not part of either Committee.

Governors' discussion and questions included: financial and financial health forecasting as presented in the accounts and tweaks for clarification; FE sector financial health; and the LGPS pensions liability for both the College and sector.

The Governing Body **approved and recommended for signing:**

- Middlesbrough College Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2020
- Northern Skills Business Services Group Limited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2020
- Northern Apprenticeship Company Limited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2020
- TTE Technical (UK) Ltd Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2020
- TTE International Ltd Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2020
- TTE Apprenticeships Ltd Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2020

7. Student Experience

7.1 Standards Recommendations – A Coleman-Cooke

To note: this item was taken after Item 7.2

A Coleman-Cooke gave a brief synopsis highlighting the Committee's very positive view of improvements made despite Covid, and key discussion points from the meeting.

The Governing Body then **approved**:

- The 2019 / 2020 College Self-Assessment Report with a Grade 2 (Good)
- The 2020 / 2021 Quality Improvement Plan

7.2 SAR 2019-2020 and QUIP 2020-2021 – G Cumiskey/J Chance

G Cumiskey gave a brief overview of the SAR process and clarified that the validations remained unchanged from the meetings.

Governors' discussion and questions focused around Apprenticeships including learning from TTE success and the likely need of a curriculum review.

7.3 2020-2021 Strategic Plan KPIs Update – J Chance

The report was received and J Chance drew attention to key aspects including: blended learning approach; study programmes progress; adults' growth; HE progression; apprenticeships progress and strong strategic KPIs overall.

7.4 Curriculum Update – G Cumiskey

G Cumiskey gave a brief summary which resulted in a positive year overall for 2019-2020, albeit with some areas of focus for the forthcoming year.

Governors' discussed: the lack of national rates and possible future impact; the ongoing effect of grade inflations in 2020 for quality KPIs over a number of years; and leavers progress.

7.5 Safeguarding Update – J Steel

J Steel gave a comprehensive update highlighting the general increase in referrals and in which areas; external liaison and collaboration; and tracking of lower level interventions by the team.

Governor discussion and questions included: specific areas of increased reporting; emotional impact on Safeguarding Team and support; likely increase in figures over time and possible reasons why; interventions by area; and tracking.

Governors asked for percentages in relation to interventions by areas to be added to the next report (*Action by J Steel*).

7.6 Written Statement from Student Governor – J Steel

The report gave a clear overview of activity within Term 1 – J Steel drew attention to: virtual clubs and societies, the revised Student Council structure which was working well; the recent interview process for the second student governor; fundraising and key areas of supportive action all of which had resulted in a very positive first term.

Governors had no further questions.

8. Corporate Updates

8.1 Audit and Risk Recommendations – I Wright

I Wright drew attention to the importance of the December meeting of the Committee, which allowed the application of an opinion.

He also highlighted two recent internal audits – the first being Governance which provided assurances on a robust framework; the second - IT Programme Management, for which there were a number of actions and recommendations which the Committee would be monitoring.

After due consideration, the following were **approved** by the Governing Body:

- The 2019/2020 Risk Management Annual Report
- The 2019/2020 Audit Findings Management Letter
- The 2019/2020 Financial Statements (Middlesbrough College, Northern Skills Group Limited, Northern Apprenticeship Group Limited, TTE Technical (UK) Ltd, TTE International Ltd and TTE

Apprenticeships Ltd) prior to them being signed and returned to the Education and Skills Funding Agency before the 31 January 2021 deadline.

- The 2019/2020 Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee which included:
 - the 2020-21 Internal Annual Audit Plan
 - Terms of reference
 - the 2019/2020 Internal Audit Annual Report
 - the 2019-2020 Audit Findings Management Letter (Item 7.1)
 - the Risk Management Annual Report (Item 6.1)

After approval the report would go to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) alongside the financial statements.

- The outcome of the 2019 / 2020 Performance Indicators for the Financial Statements/Regularity Auditor (Mazars).
- Confirmation of the re-appointment of the Financial Statements/Regularity Auditor (Mazars) for a period of one year commencing 1 August 2020.

8.2 Audit and Risk Annual Report 2019-2020

I Wright outlined the purpose of the report and drew attention to his opinion on what had been a complex year.

He, confirmed that no major concerns had been identified by the Committee when compiling the report, which was corroborated by the view of the External Auditors.

The Committee confirmed that they had been assured that risks were being well managed and thanks was given to the SLT Team and staff more widely on their considerable efforts.

The report was discussed and approved under 8.1 above and would go to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) alongside the financial statements.

8.3 Management Accounts(October 2020) – C Kipling

C Kipling gave a brief outline of the Management Accounts for the Governing Body.

8.4 Marketing and Communications Update – J Steel

J Steel drew attention to key aspects of the update including: school leaver applications and the School Team's related activity and the Fresh Start campaign in January.

Governors' discussion and questions included: enrolment and further analysis to decipher changes; the national enrolment picture reporting higher 16-18 recruitment but also higher number of NEETS acknowledged by Ofsted as a major concern; targets for the forthcoming year; school feedback; and schools careers advice locally.

Governors asked to be kept updated on NEETS via the weekly bulletin (*Action by Z Lewis/A Waller Amos*).

8.5 Subcontractors Update – J Chance

J Chance confirmed a strong outturn with no concerns on delivery, with both Corporate Services and Standards Committees having looked at the provision in detail at their recent meetings.

8.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2019-2020 – Z Lewis

Z Lewis gave a brief overview of the annual report including: disability statistics analysis; staff diversity improvement plans and planned strategic objectives; and overall good progress.

Governors' discussion and questions included: strategic objectives for the forthcoming year; equality in relation to terms and conditions and possible actions within the year; 14-16 cohort update.

9. Governance Update – Z Foster

Z Foster gave a brief overview of the report.

The Governing Body then approved:

- the 2019-2020 Governance SAR (which included the 2020-2021 Areas for Improvement)

- retrospective approval of the use of the College Seal as detailed within the update.

10. College Policies and Procedures

10.1 Whistleblowing Policy – J Chance

J Chance gave an overview of this updated document based on the Eversheds template for the FE sector.

Governors' had a full discussion which included: processes in relation to raising an incident or concern; whether two options for reporting was sufficient and perception of objectivity/independence for the two reporting lines (Executive Director of HR and Clerk to the Governing Body); suggestions re terminology for greater clarity; the role of governors; training of staff and students on Whistleblowing (planned as part of HR/Finance awareness CPD in next two terms for staff); further external lines of referral (Ofsted, ESFA, OfS); and the complexity of confidentiality in relation to disclosures.

The Whistleblowing Policy was approved subject to the rewording discussed (*Action by K Parkinson/J Chance*).

In addition, Governors asked that over the course of the year, the Executive Director of HR/Clerk to review the procedure to ensure the reporting mechanisms are sufficient and recommend accordingly at December 2021 meeting (*Action by K Parkinson and Z Foster*).

11. Date of Next Meeting– R Davies

11.1 Monday 22 February 2021 at 5pm (Development) likely through Teams.

11.2 Monday 22 March 2021 at 5pm (Normal)

12. Matters for Publication – R Davies

One redaction was approved in relation to 5.1 and 6.1

13. Any other Urgent Business – R Davies

- Z Lewis reminded governors of the College Panto (online) taking place at 7.30pm
- R Davies, on behalf of the Governing Body, thanked Z Lewis/SLT and all staff for the exceptional effort over the past months.

Officers, Staff and Student Governors, the Principal/Chief Executive and Clerk to the Governing Body left the meeting.

14. Reserved Matters

14.1 Remuneration Recommendations – H Ashton/R Davies

H Ashton, Chair of the Remuneration Committee, presented the recommendations from the 7 December 2020 meeting.

After due consideration and discussion, the Governing Body approved recommendations in relation to:

- appropriate application of the Remuneration Code by the Committee during 2019-2020
- the Principal/Chief Executive's 2019-2020 Staff Appraisal and Pay Award
- the Principal/Chief Executive's 2020-2021 Objectives
- the Clerk to the Corporation's 2019-2020 Staff Appraisal and Pay Award
- the Clerk to the Corporation's 2020-2021 Objectives

The Principal and Clerk returned to the meeting to be appraised of the decisions.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm