

THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC TRAINING SESSION (PART 1) OF 08 MAY 2021

PRESENT: R Davies (CG and Chair), R Anderson (CG), H Ashton (CG), C Cannon (EM), C Cooney (CG), M Gaze (CG), J Golightly (CG), M Laidler (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), P Lynn (CG), M McClintock (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), S Mudd (Student), P Sharp (CG), S Shepherd (EM), D Still (Staff Governor), P Studd (CG), S Wilson (EM), I Wright (CG).

OFFICERS: S Ankers (AP), P Bland (Strategic Project Manager), Z Foster (Clerk), C Kipling (VP), S Marshall (ED).

KEY: CG College Governor EM External Member DP Deputy Principal
VP Vice Principal Clerk to the Corporation ED Executive Director
AP – Assistant Principal

1. **Pre-reading** – *it was noted that this would be referred to in the second Strategic Session*

2. **Apologies for Absence – R Davies**

J Autherson (EM), J Chance (VP), A Coleman-Cooke (CG), G Cumiskey (DP), (CG), S Green (EM), A Hanif (EM), L Holdsworth (CG), K Parkinson (ED), S Lane (CG), J Steel (VP), A Stephenson (EM), A Thompson (Student).

3. **Declarations of Interest – R Davies**

R Anderson in relation to Item 4 update on the NE Chamber's LSIP proposal

Z Lewis gave a brief overview of the changed session and new follow on session on 24 May 2021.

4. **An update on the External Environment**

Z Lewis took governors through the key aspects of the Strategic plan triangle focusing on:

- One Voice – drawing attention to key stakeholders and in particular, plans for greater parental involvement/consultations
- the key aspects of the external environment: political; social; economic, and technical
- the changing landscape
- Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and the North East Chamber of Commerce's lead role in a local bid for the North East region (submission due by 25 May) which was fully supported by local Colleges

R Anderson (Assistant Director of Policy at the North East Chamber of Commerce) gave background and reasoning in relation to the collaborative bid that the Chamber was leading on.

Governors' questions/discussion included: the likely low level of risks associated with being involved with the bid for the LSIP; and local employer views.

- the accountability/outcome based possibility for the future and implications for the region
- Education Recovery Funding of which there was an imminent report due with a likely focus on FE (and primary). Z Lewis detailed the possible extra 100 funded hours and complexities of where this might be spent (and related lobbying for some usage with soft skills); staffing; space and time issues for the College, and FE regionally and nationally.

Governors' discussed: the need for enrichment and personal development and of a variety of possible ways this could be achieved should the funding come through as expected; the ability to recruit suitably qualified staff in time both for the College and nationally depending on how the

funds could be spent; and regional English and Maths demands due to gaps in learning and the College's response.

5. Financial/Projects Update

Z Lewis introduced the item giving the background for the College leading up to the current Outstanding Financial Health situation including: key financial health improvements; income and funding rates; demographics; the effect of Covid and catch up funding.

Investment Priorities

Z Lewis detailed the current investment priorities in relation to revenue and capital.

Organizational Resilience – C Kipling gave a detailed overview including:

- the current revenue budget and improvements leading to outstanding financial health
- that the proposal for a further one off bonus for staff in the summer was affordable
- an update on applications
- core income streams/trends and revenue priorities
- the updated capital plan including grant funds, digital strategy and core IT infrastructure requirements
- a reminder of the 5 year financial plan presented in March 2021
-

Governors' questions and discussion included: HE application figures and possible reasons both locally and nationally; clarification on 5 year projection and related prudence.

The Campus Masterplan was outlined highlighting a trim back in relation to the Campus heart plans.

S Marshall gave a detailed update on:

- Estates including the completion of the capital works required in response to Covid and the plan to bring services in-house through the apprentice route
- IT – a new Director of IT would be joining the College from 1st July (Richard Shuttleworth); Cyber Essentials had now been achieved and a review of the helpdesk was underway
- Cyber Security focus and planning
- WiFi survey to ensure infrastructure capacity; Net Zero environmental group and commercial and events growth aided by the campus heart developments

The Board were reassured of the developments within IT and Cyber Security and asked for ongoing updates and assurances.

6. Digital Strategy

Z Lewis detailed the draft digital strategy 2021-2025 for Governors, which would be finalized when the new Director of IT took up post.

The Student Device Scheme was also detailed in full including the various stages for cohorts of students starting in September 2021 with all Level 4 first year students and all Level 2 and 3 students (totaling some 4500 devices). Both positive and negative aspects of the scheme were highlighted for discussion.

The capital plan to support the scheme was outlined with full costings detailed within.

Governors' questions and discussion included: overall enthusiastic support for the student device scheme; the need to focus on the positive aspects of the scheme (including reducing digital poverty, increasing e-learning, greater employability; greater resilience for any further Covid related lockdowns, and better communication); careful promotion of the scheme as part of the wider College offer; and the practicalities including in-College charging points.

7. TTE Update and Initial Discussion

S Ankers and P Bland gave a brief background to TTE, current status and of the latest developments including external advice; landlord proposal and the status of the DfE bid (outcome due by 21st May 2021).

Z Lewis detailed the options A and B (and spin off options from each) available at the current time including advantages and disadvantages of each.

Governors were sent information via email in respect of TTE and went into breakout groups for 20 minutes.

On return from groups Governors' had a full discussion including: possible additional options depending on whether the DfE grant was forthcoming; the current lease timeline and ability to delay absolute decision making currently; further financial information depending on grant outcome; the current site and related implications; branding of TTE generally and in relation to MC and NSG; student and employer perceptions of possible options (and other stakeholder views).

Governors were encouraged to reflect on the information and feedback anything pertinent to Z Lewis or Z Foster. A further summary which would include further options (3a-c) for consideration would be detailed at the meeting of 24 May 2021.

8. Date of Next Meeting

8.1 A part two Strategic Session was organized for Monday 24 May 2021 at 5pm

8.2 Thursday 15th June 2021 at 5.00pm

9. Matters for Publication

The full presentation from the day was published post meeting for information.

10. Any other Urgent Business

Z Lewis outlined the scope for the forthcoming Ofsted inspection for ITE (38 students).

11. Reserved Matters – no reserved matters

The meeting ended at 12.30pm