

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY 5 MAY.2023**

PRESENT: R Davies (CG and Chair), S Brown (EM), A Coleman-Cooke (EM), M King (CG), M Lamb (CG), S Lane (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), D Lusardi (CG), P Lynn (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Gov), D Still (Staff Gov), P Sharp (CG), S Shepherd (EM), A Stephenson (EM), J Tait (CG), I Wright (CG).

OFFICERS A Adamson (V), Z Foster (Clerk), S Marshall (ED); P Moody (ED), K Parkinson (ED), B Robinson (DP), M Russell (VP).

IN ATTENDANCE: B Watkin (Sixth Form College Association) for Item 3; H Kemp (Business Solutions Director – TVCA (Tees Valley Combined Authority)) for Item 3

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

1. Apologies for Absence

R Anderson (CG), H Burrows (Support to Student Governors), M Cameron (Student Gov), C Cannon (EM), J Castor (CG), M Gaze (CG), A Hanif (EM), E Kunonga (CG), M McClintock (CG), E Rennison (EM), O Rodley (VP), P Studd (CG), S Wilson (EM).

2. Declarations of Interest – no declarations

Z Lewis gave a brief introduction to the session.

3. National and Local Updates

3.1 National Perspective Update – B Watkin gave an overview of some of the sector preoccupations including funding, industrial relations, Level 3 and below review, summer 2023 assessments and grading, teacher recruitment and retention, ONS (Office of National Statistics) reclassification and accountability agreements.

Discussion and questions included: funding changes should there be a change in government; recruitment difficulties particularly with lack of national settlement for FE sector (unlike school sector); Level 3 future choices particularly for students not suited to T Levels; issues with transition programmes and concern for disadvantaged groups more widely with defunding of alternative academic qualifications beyond the one year delay; the introduction of the Maths policy for all to 18 policy and practice with shortage of maths teachers; and Post 16 Baccalaureate update.

3.2 Local Update from TVCA – H Kemp gave an update on the recent Tees Valley economic assessment and focus on communities and place, support of local businesses, people and skills and the overall assessment of need for the Tees Valley resulting in strategies for employment and skills; digital and Net Zero. She also highlighted the inward investment to manage the talent pipeline and detailed the TVCA's work with local businesses (Business Solutions team), data analysis, skills and the LSIP (Learning and Skills Improvement Plan). She informed governors of the removal of the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnerships) and the new Business Board's remit and the College's role within.

Discussion and questions included: how the local economy was split between public and private sector; education not seen as a core sector yet one of the largest employers (and critical for skills) and challenge of involving education in Adult Skills; high expectations from LSIP on education (rather than both education and employer roles); effect of devolution of adult education in the local area (no adult uplift to support skills and provision); graduates and graduate jobs locally and related statistics; the Combined Authority's role in linking education and employers (e.g. disparity where advertising of courses; apprenticeships etc.) which would be considered by the Business Solutions Team; and the statistics on people within the Authority (life expectancy etc.).

R Davies thanked both B Watkins and H Kemp for their updates (both left the meeting).

4. **Qualifications Reform** – B Robinson thanked B Watkin for his useful introduction to the Post 16 qualifications reform at Level 3 and then went through the implications of this reform through the three phases; how the new level 3 qualification landscape looked; the requirements for Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) and subjects in which academic qualifications will be considered for funding approval.

P Moody then took governors through the potential impact of T Level reforms at the College with a focus on the critical challenge of being able to offer the alternative routes for those students not meeting the entry requirements for the new T Levels.

Governors had a full discussion on the topic including: transition options for first year students to prepare for T Level study; how to best support Level 2 students; capacity to deliver transition programmes; NEETs and how these were likely to increase under the current policy plans; apprenticeships alternatives; the wider political agenda of this reform; other level 3 provision at risk from 2026; AoC's lobbying in this area; and AI (Artificial Intelligence) impact on qualifications (leading to more exam based qualifications).

5. **Student Behaviour** – A Adamson outlined the external context affecting student behaviour in the College (including cost of living, covid, deprivation); the positive reports from deep dives on student behaviour including a three-day DfE familiarization visit. She highlighted the internal trends with some issues in attendance and an increase in student disciplinaries, both policies of which were being reviewed as part of a wider three-year Behaviour Strategy (based on trauma informed practice) which focused on relationships, connection, humanity, and empathy which had been developed with all key stakeholders and would result in several operational changes.

Questions and discussion included: how the College worked with Police for analysis of vaping confiscations and the overall focus on reducing vaping within the College; methods of understanding root causes of behaviour sooner (schools, parents etc.); BMS/CCTV monitoring systems and related privacies; lanyard wearing; and the increase in safeguarding referrals and pressures on staff (albeit the service was well resourced) with the increase in statutory responsibilities for safeguarding nationally.

6. **Our Workforce** – this item was not taken. A full report on staff recruitment and turnover would go to the Governing Body meeting in July for consideration.

Governors were encouraged to give feedback on the staff benefits form tabled.

7. **Accountability Agreement** – Z Lewis gave an overview of the accountability statement which aligned closely to the College Strategic Plan, and which detailed targets for the priority areas highlighted by the Government/LSIP.

Governors' questions and discussion included: clarification on the NEETs provision; Adult Education faculty's work on employability; further clarification on the annual accountability statement (part 2) and its requirement for the contractual funding; reasoning behind the target percentages; going beyond that required (e.g. personal skills and digital); a focus on digital skills for students more widely as identified within the TVCA strategy and LSIP and through the Microsoft Showcase College route and defined modules within the 16-19 courses next year; a general discussion on GPT and AI; affordability (cost and time) of apprenticeships for small businesses and additional ways the College Sales Team could highlight the benefits and how the TVCA skills clusters might be utilized to support this.

The Governing Body **approved** the Accountability Agreement statement ahead of the submission deadline and subsequent publication.

8. **TTE Capital Loan Proposal Update**

M Russell tabled the TTE Loan update and recommendation to members. He highlighted the DfE College Capital Loans Scheme which was well suited to the College requirements for the TTE project. He detailed the application currently being prepared to support the TTE capital scheme for the maximum amount (and reasons for this).

Governors discussed elements of the DfE Loans scheme against the existing terms with the bank particularly in relation to security. In addition, Governors' questions included an update on the Council's input to the scheme; working capital and cashflow; and expected building value increase. The Governing Body **approved** the application to the DfE College Capital Loans Scheme as detailed in the report.

M Russell detailed the next steps with likely September approval for signing. He confirmed that R Davies (as Link Governor) was fully involved at every stage with supporting the programme.

9. External Governance Review

R Davies updated Governors on the feedback meeting with the External Reviewer and the Search and Governance Committee earlier in the day highlighting:

- That the Governing Body had come out in the top level of grading (of three) which was of great reassurance
- The Search and Governance Committee had suggested some last minute amendments to the report, therefore the final report and action plan would come to the Governing Body for approval ahead of publication in July.

Z Lewis highlighted the areas of good practice found, particularly the strong approach to risk management.

10. Appointment of Change of Status – R Davies

After consideration, the Governing Body **approved**:

- That M Laidler move from College Governor to External Member with immediate effect (5th May 2023)
- That he retains the Safeguarding and Prevent Link role and support the Safeguarding Lead and attend the formal strategic College Safeguarding meetings
- That he ceases to be a member of the Curriculum and Standards Committee
- That the term of office is until after the next full College Ofsted visit or up to 31 July 2024 whichever is the sooner.

Z Lewis gave an update on a possible candidate to replace M Laidler's skills on the Governing Body.

11. Matters for Publication

No restricted matters were identified.

12. Time and Date of next meetings

12.1 Curriculum Planning 5pm on Monday 12 June 2023 – all governors invited.

12.2 Corporate Services Recommendations 4.30pm on Monday 10 July 2023

12.3 Governing Body (Ordinary) 5pm on Thursday 13 July 2023

13. Any other Business

- a) Z Lewis, B Robinson and R Davies had received the initial feedback from the ITE Inspection which took place this week. The full report would follow in due course.

The meeting ended at 4pm.