

THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF CORPORATE SERVICES MEETING 10.07.2023

PRESENT: P Studd (Chair, CG), S Brown (EM), J Castor (CG), R Davies (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), D Lusardi (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Governor), P Sharp (CG).

For Item 14 – P Lynn (CG) and D Still (Staff Governor).

OFFICERS: P Bland (Strategic Project Manager), P Blewitt (AP), Z Foster (Clerk), K Parkinson (ED), S Marshall (ED), M Russell – (VP)

For Item 10 - M Telling (Dir.), R Shuttleworth (Dir.), A Waller Amos (Dir.).

Key:	CG – College Governor	EM – External Member	VP – Vice Principal
	ED – Executive Director	Dir. – Director	AP – Assistant Principal

1. Apologies for Absence

M Lamb (CG).

2. Declarations of Interest – no declarations noted.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of 6 March 2023 - approved as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising – all matters arising had been completed.

5. Strategic Overview

5.1 Principal/Chief Executive's Verbal Overview and Risk Summary

Z Lewis outlined the main areas of risk pertaining to the Corporate Services Committee -student recruitment in some areas; energy and other cost pressures; staff recruitment and impact on students; and business continuity (adult centre lease/related issues). She also detailed the national context.

5.2 Strategic Projects Update including TTE Update

P Bland gave an update on the Esh dispute and TTE progress.

Clarifications were sought on the piling definitions, batch plant plans (relocating from TTE current site) and the budget for STEM adaptations and carparking.

5.3 Policy Update in relation to Managing Public Money

M Russell took the Committee through the key changes to financial policies and procedures as a result of reclassification focussing on: the College March return; changes to the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice and related expectations on reporting/audit; changes to the College's scheme of financial management and control; horizon scanning (possible year end change) and year end practicalities in relation to a subsidiary company.

Questions and discussion included: potential delays in decision making going forward for capital and larger projects with the requirement for DfE approvals; greater expectations on auditing (including regularity audit questionnaire additions); lack of information regarding bullet payments; and possible effects of a general election.

It was advised to update the expense levels within the Financial Regulations.

After consideration, the Committee **agreed** to recommend to the Governing Body that they authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Vice Principal of Finance and Registry, to provide an undertaking from the College to TTE Apprenticeships Limited that balances owing to the College at 31 July 2023 will not be called upon for a period of 19 months from 31 July 2023.

6. Finance Matters 2022-23

6.1 Five Year Financial Plan including Capital Plan 2022-2023

M Russell gave a detailed summation of the proposed budget for 2023-24 and outline financial plan for the remainder of the five year plan to 31 July 2028.

The Committee discussed: the various sensitivities with a recommendation to include a bridge between 2022-2023 and 2023—2024 and for this to be a norm in future years; the staff pay award both for the College and the national situation (including potential industrial action); staffing more widely including the use of various flexibilities; student demographic changes over forthcoming years and related staffing, build capacity and technology (e.g. AI) considerations; reasons for the general uncertainty on the budget beyond two years; options for the Adult Education facility going forward and related complexities; energy costs; additional costs in relation to resourcing increased support for safeguarding and mental health; future class size strategy and benefits; and clarification on use of names within the document.

The Committee **agreed** to recommend to the Governing Body (under Item 14)

- The detailed 2023-24 revenue budget, capital plan and financial assumptions as the College Budget for 2023-24
- The financial plan for the remainder of the five year period.

6.2 ESFA Financial Statements Letter 2021-2022

The Committee noted the letter confirming the College's Financial Health for 2021-22 as 'Good' and M Russell drew attention to the online benchmarking facility

6.3 Management Accounts May 2023

M Russell gave an overview to the May accounts.

There was a discussion on apprenticeships starts for the College in detail and more widely in relation to the local and national/political landscape.

6.4 Fees Policy 2023-2024

M Russell reminded the Committee of the annual requirement to publish the Fees Policy and outlined that there were no material changes.

The Committee **agreed** to recommend the Fees Policy to the Governing Body for approval and subsequent publication.

6.5 Subcontractors Update

M Russell gave a brief update on subcontractors performance. He and Z Lewis also highlighted the expected reduction of subcontractors for 2023-2024 from 3 to 2 and background behind this. The Committee and wider Governing Body would be appraised of any in-year changes should they be realised.

The Committee discussed the removal of the subcontractor and potential risks/justifications.

7. Human Resources and Workforce Development

7.1 Human Resources, Workforce Development and Payroll Update

K Parkinson gave an account of HR KPIs. She highlighted HR's work in relation to staff turnover and staff satisfaction including: a pulse survey to allow for comparison with the January data collection; wellbeing; workforce development drawing out the new ILM qualification; and new colleague and wider staff voice developments. She also drew attention to the exit survey results and relatively low response rate and improvements in the data collection for next year which would include more qualitative intelligence.

Questions and discussion focussed on: clarification on apprenticeships figure percentages for staff; turnover figures (which were skewed by varying notice periods); any trends for exits (mostly external reasons); variations in supply of new staff; flexibilities in recruitment and retention; ongoing succession planning by departments and wider periodic College full evaluations; temporary pool offers for retiring staff generally; and TTE staffing strategy.

8. Campus Services Update

S Marshall gave a comprehensive account of her report including: energy improvements (excepting the current TTE build); capital and maintenance costs; security; the proposed move for the Sunderland Office; 2 Queen's Square; changes to carparking; actions from the Health and Safety audit and Fire Risk Assessment actions (which were monitored in detail by the Audit and Risk Committee); and an update on staffing of the team.

Questions and discussion included: an update on the vape alarm strategy; wider behaviour in various areas; monitoring and safety practices in relation to weapons and drugs; and detail of the new proposed five year licence for the Sunderland office.

After consideration, the Committee **agreed** to recommend to the Governing Body approval (and signing by R Davies) of 5-year licence with Sunderland County Council for an office for Northern Skills Group Business Services (NSG) to replace current leased office being sold by Landlord.

8.1 Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan

S Marshall gave the background to the creation of the strategy and action plan and of the recent consideration of both by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Questions and discussion included: boiler longevity and difficulties of electric alternatives going forward; solar panel update; use and ability to source electric vehicles; strategy in relation to non replenishable items; and support of the staged approach.

The Committee were reminded that there was still a vacancy for a Sustainability Link Governor.

The Committee **approved** the Sustainability Strategy and action plan for publication.

9. Digital Services Update

R Shuttleworth gave a detailed account of progress within Digital Services including: 5 year strategy update; positive impact of achieving of Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus; new Wifi roll out; NCSC educational institutional findings generally and in relation to the College; early outcomes from the recent Red Team Exercise; VDI replacement and KPI update.

He also detailed the monitoring and scrutiny by the Audit and Risk Committee which had included a full review of cyber risks at its last meeting resulting in actions to be discussed at its September meeting.

Questions included: robustness of data protection; and staff support of Smoothwall system.

There was a full discussion on all aspects of the Smoothwall system.

10. Business Development

10.1 Marketing and Communications Update

A Waller Amos gave an update on applications across the faculties and through progression. She highlighted Access to HE (which was a national issue) and of marketing activity to improve applications in this area. She also detailed some recent successful activity including Year 10 Taster Days and follow up events for those cohorts.

Z Lewis shared a graph which detailed applications against prior years and gave detail of the increased accuracy of the current data for greater assurance of the risk / opportunity associated with the current picture.

Questions and discussion included: clarification on the comparison tables and of opportunities and expectations to improve; school access and the impact of not getting this; website improvements; and the range of advertising avenues used including social media platforms.

10.2 Employer Engagement Update

M Telling gave a brief overview of his report with a focus on apprenticeships and commercial training

10.3 International Update

M Telling and P Blewitt outlined the current budgetary situation; delays in activities; and of possible new international opportunities.

The Committee were pleased to see the momentum of opportunity coming through and looked forward to hearing of future progress.

11. Committee Review of Top Risks

The Committee reviewed the risks again with no new risks being identified. It was acknowledged that the requirement for DfE approval in the future for key activities (such as capital projects) may present a future risk.

12. Date and Time of first meeting of 2023-2024

Confirmed as Monday 11 December 2023 at 2pm

13. Any other Business

It was noted that it was P Studd's last meeting (both as Chair of the Committee and Governor). The Committee thanked him for his fantastic service to the Governing Body and Committee over his eight year tenure.

14. Recommendations for Approval by the Governing Body

Additional Governors (P Lynn and D Still) joined via Teams for this item

The following formal adoptions were **approved** by all Governing Body members present on 10 July 2023 after the business of the Corporate Services Committee and as a separate item. An account of the meeting and adoptions formed part of the papers for the Governing Body meeting of 13th July 2023 for information.

05.3 Agreed to authorise that the Chief Executive would provide an undertaking from the College to TTE Apprenticeships Limited that balances owing to the College at 31 July 2023 will not be called upon for a period of 19 months from 31 July 2023.

06.1 Approval of the Five Year Plan specifically:

- **Approval of the 2023-2024 detailed revenue budget, capital plan and financing assumptions as the College's Budget for 2023-2024**
- **Approval of the financial plan for the remainder of the five year period.**

06.4 Fees Policy 2023-2024 (and its publication ahead of the new academic year)

08 Approval (and signing by R Davies) of 5-year licence with Sunderland County Council for an office for Northern Skills Group Business Services (NSG) to replace current leased office being sold by Landlord.

The meeting ended at 5pm