

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 13.07.2023**

PRESENT: R Davies (CG and Chair), R Anderson (CG), H Burrows (Dep. Student Governor), M Cameron (Student Gov), J Castor (CG), T Edgcombe (Student Governor), M Gaze (CG), M King (CG), M Lamb (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), D Lusardi (CG), P Lynn (CG); M McClintock (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Gov), D Still (Staff Gov), P Sharp (CG), P Studd (CG), I Wright (CG).

OFFICERS Z Foster (Clerk), S Marshall (ED); B Robinson (DP), O Rodley (VP), M Russell (VP).

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

1. Apologies for Absence and Welcome

A Adamson (VP), D Dodds (CG), S Lane (CG), K Parkinson (ED), J Tait (CG).

R Davies welcomed T Edgcombe as the new student governor.

2. Declarations of Interest – R Anderson in respect of any discussion on LSIP

3. Minutes

3.1 Appointments

The following appointments were approved by the Governing Body:

- Taylor Edgcombe as second student governor from 13 July 2023 to 31 July 2024
- Melissa Brant-Smith as a co-opted governor on a four year term as of 13 July 2023 to join the Curriculum and Standards Committee
- David Budd as a co-opted governor on an initial two year term as of 13 July 2023 to join the Audit and Risk Committee
- Darush Dodds as a College Governor on a four year term as of 13 July 2023 to join the Curriculum and Standards Committee

It was noted that a further series of interviews would take place early in the Autumn term to fill remaining College Governor vacancies.

Post Meeting – a written resolution was passed on 21 July 2023 approving the extension of the term of office for Max Cameron as Lead Student Governor to 31 July 2024 (with a 74% return of approvals).

3.2 Minutes of 13 March 2023 were approved as a correct record.

3.3 Minutes of Strategic Planning meeting of 5 May 2023 were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising – no matters arising.

5. Strategic Overview

5.1 Strategic Risks Report

Z Lewis gave an overview of the recent SLT risk management meeting which had considered the strategic risks to the College drawing attention to the top five red risks. She also highlighted an increase to the business continuity risk with the Adult Centre's lease being up for renewal within two years. She further updated on the primary risks of recruitment and retention of staff (and the positive announcement today of a 6.5% pay increase for teachers including those in colleges) and the qualifications reform.

Questions and discussion included: Eton College progress and complexities and linkages with other strategic risks; staff pay award for 2024 in light of 6.5% pay announcement and of UCU's recent letter on strike action; and the potential pause in Level 3 qualifications reform should there be a change in Government.

5.2 Principal/Chief Executive's Report

Z Lewis highlighted key aspects of her written report including: extra notice for Ofsted areas of deep dives during inspections; progress on TTE and she drew attention to the appendices for information and comment by governors.

Governors' discussion and questions included: the Leadership and Management position paper (Appendix 2) which was well received by governors; updated Ofsted guidance and likely timing for inspection; and the IoT Partnership.

5.3 Strategic Plan including Corporate KPI Update

O Rodley detailed Term 3 rag rated progress against the strategic KPIs. Key highlights included: the positive outlook for predicted achievement in the majority of areas; A Level progress; the ongoing challenge of work experience; and staff turnover figures and targets.

Questions and discussion included: student satisfaction clarification and future induction survey in October; progression opportunities for staff; and impact of cost of living on staff particularly in relation to turnover.

6. Student Experience

6.1 Verbal Update of the Curriculum and Standards meeting of 3 July 2023

P Lynn gave a verbal update of the meeting and drew out the areas of focus and monitoring for the Committee and the discussion on changes to the SAR process (detailed within 6.2 below).

6.2 Quip Update

O Rodley detailed the reasoning for the proposed changes to the SAR process.

Governors discussed: the benefits, particularly for new governors, of seeing the College level process for SARs to aid triangulation; the possibility of training for governors ahead of the October SARs; and requested that the agenda for the department day SARs be shared.

The Governing Body then **approved** the following:

- earlier completion and validation of the SAR and QIP process to ensure implementation earlier in the academic year
- That the department SAR and QIP be validated by SLT 13-15 September 2023 with an open invite to governors to attend (non mandatory)
- Validation by the Governing Body of the College SAR and QIP on 24 October 2023.

O Rodley then gave an update of the five priorities within the QiP highlighting attendance (College, national and regional); improvements within pedagogy impacting positively on the January exams; and staff turnover.

Governors discussed FE teacher recruitment and associated government strategies.

6.3 Quality of Education Update

(To note this item was taken after Item 5.1)

B Robinson gave a brief overview of the three quality of education judgements: Intent (which was strong), Implementation where good progress had been made overall and drawing out of areas of attention going forward with a focus on consistency; Impact which was in a solid position albeit with some areas of concern which were highlighted for governors. He also outlined the National Achievement Rates Tables (NARTs) for some useful comparative data in which the College had performed very well.

Key questions and discussion from governors included: clarification on the Local Skills Improvement Funding (LSIF) spend, process and collaborative approach; reasoning behind satisfaction rates in Health and Care; the uncertainty and potential impact of any summer staff turnover in some areas (e.g. engineering) and College response/planning; work placements and impact on recruitment numbers (T Levels in particular); the impact of staff notice periods (and variety of notice periods between cohorts) and early recruitment approach to avoid major issues in key areas, and the 6.5% pay award for teachers and possible options for parity for business support staff.

B Robinson left the meeting at 5.40pm

6.4 PDBA Update

Z Lewis highlighted aspects of the report including: disciplinarys increase and reasons; and the Turing Scheme.

Governors' questions included: more detail on the disciplinary process and support for students; NEETs; and why more female students access 'c cards' than males (noting that there were plans for activities to promote this more widely to male students in the Autumn term).

6.5 Safeguarding Update

Z Lewis reminded governors that the annual safeguarding report would come to the October meeting.

Questions and discussion included: clarification on the suicide attempt and suicide ideation numbers; the College process of recording referrals to the police (with referrals tending to be to social care with police involved at strategic level currently); the impact of social media on students at earlier ages; and detail of the caseload for safeguarding staff and support of their wellbeing

R Anderson left the meeting at 6.25pm

6.6 Student Journey 2022-2023

M Cameron and H Barrons gave an overview of the year which included: the Student Union Executive Team membership; key challenges (including student availability, enrichment space and funding) and solutions; improvements to the student council for the forthcoming year including an earlier Student Conference; improvements to the Cross College Council meetings and succession planning with the creation of assistant roles to support the four officers within the Executive Team; plans for Freshers 2023 and the wider enrichment offer for 2023-24.

Thanks and best wishes were shared to Macy Wild (Vice President and Student Governor), Harley Barrows (Vice President and Governor Support) and Jess Loughran (Health and Wellbeing Officer) who were all moving on from the College/and or SU positions.

Governors discussed the benefits of being on the Student Union and being Student Governors and how this might be shared with the wider student population.

Governors thanked M Cameron and H Barrons for their super presentation and wished H Barrons well in his future studies and career.

7. Corporate Updates

7.1 Audit and Risk Recommendations

I Wright gave background information to the recommendations for approval including: reasoning behind the second year extension for Mazars, market rates for Audit Fees; the soft tender for the internal audit service, and Committee approval for the Internal Audit plan which was clearly aligned to the identified strategic risks.

He also detailed the cyber security assurance exercise which took place at the June meeting and thanked D Lusardi for his attendance and expertise shared.

I Wright drew attention to the GDPR audit report which had been fully considered by the Committee and which would be closely monitored going forward with a first update at the September meeting.

Governors discussed the GDPR report specifically the early attention for the high profile recommendations. Z Lewis gave some further detail and highlighted the external advice currently being sought and M Russell outlined the operational steps currently taking place on the recommended actions.

More widely governors were in support of the full 50 day programme for internal audit to ensure full assurances going forward and commended the SLT team on its transparent and focused approach to areas of concern/risk.

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

- That the second year (up to 31 July 2024) of the two year extension for the External Auditor (Mazars) Contract be taken
- Appointment of the current Internal Auditor (RSM) for the 2023-2024 academic year until 31 July 2024 at the full 50 day service
- The Risk Management Plan 2023-2024
- The updated Audit and Risk Terms of Reference
- The Internal Audit Strategy 2023-2024 (including the Internal Audit plan 2023-24 amended as agreed)
- The External Audit Strategy to 31 July 2023 (incorporating the 2022-23 Financial Statements and 2022-23 Regularity Audit) and the External Audit fee as detailed in the report.

7.2 Note of approved Corporate Services Recommendations

P Studd confirmed that the recommendations within the papers had been **approved** by a quorate number of Governors present on 10 July 2023 as detailed below:

- Authorisation for the Chief Executive to provide an undertaking from the College to TTE Apprenticeships Limited that balances owing to the Group at 31 July 2023 will not be called upon for a period of 19 months from 31 July 2023.
- The Five Year Financial Plan specifically:
 - o the 2023-2024 detailed revenue budget, capital plan and financing assumptions as the College's Budget for 2023-2024
 - o the financial plan for the remainder of the five year period.
- The Fees Policy 2023-2024 (and its publication ahead of the new academic year)
- 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 which was being sold by the Landlord.

He detailed the consideration of the Five Year Financial Plan which provided a robust balance between risk and opportunity.

Governors discussed: TTE ground conditions and possible savings; the use of overdrafts and authorization rules/restrictions under reclassification; 2 Queen Square lease and alternatives; and the positive news of increased in funding per student next year.

7.3 Management Accounts May 2023

M Russell gave a brief overview of the accounts.

7.4 Subcontractors Update

Z Lewis gave an update to the report which was tabled for the Governing Body within which there was a proposed reduction of the subcontracting arrangements from three to two providers (which had been previously agreed at the March 2023 meeting) She outlined the reasoning behind the recommendation and M Russell detailed the current planned allocations reflected in the budget for the two proposed providers for 2023-2024 which was an overall reduction in subcontracting which aligned with the DfE's preferred approach of a phased decline in subcontracting activity across the sector.

After consideration, the Governing Body agreed to **approve** the following proposal for subcontracting arrangements in 2023-2024:

- That the College would work with two providers – these being Hope Foundation (TVCA) for subcontract delivery of up to £500,000 and Uplift Associates (Out of Area) for subcontract delivery of up to £1,000,000 (thereby allowing headroom to allocate further delivery to subcontractors subject to funding and College performance).

7.5 Health and Safety Term 2 Update

S Marshall expanded upon her report confirming that all but one minor action remained from the Health and Safety re-audit. She also detailed the Fire Risk Assessment work which was being carefully monitored by both the Audit and Risk and Health and Safety Committees. More widely, she reported that all of the food outlets within the College had received their 5 star rating and she gave an update on accident reporting.

7.6 Equality and Diversity Terms 2 and 3 Update

Z Lewis gave a brief overview to the report for the Governing Body.

7.7 Staff Recruitment and Turnover

Z Lewis outlined key aspects of the report and the analysis within including exit information data; experience levels of teaching staff within departments; and of the ongoing risk of recruitment and turnover within the sector and College going forward.

Governors discussed the exit interviews and teacher workloads.

8. Governance Update

8.1 Link Governors – verbal report and discussion

The Link Governors present (S Mirsalehi, M Gaze, R Davies, P Lynn, P Sharp, and D Lusardi) each gave a brief overview of their involvement, oversight and triangulation within their respective link roles throughout the year.

8.2 Search and Governance Recommendations

R Davies gave a brief appraisal of the recent meeting and highlighted the renaming of External Member category of membership to Co-opted Governor going forward.

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

- Publication on the College website of the final External Governance Review Report
- Approval and Publication on the College website of the Governance Review Action Plan
- The Governing Body Training Plan 2023-2024

8.3 Governance Report

Z Foster gave a brief overview of her report and recommendations within.

The Governing Body then **approved** the following:

- Updated Student Constitution Process
- Confirmation that the Terms of Reference for all Committees has been met during 2022-2023 and remained fit for purpose for 2023-2024

9. College Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures were presented and approved by the Governing Body:

9.1 Disability Statement 2023-2024

9.2 Equal Pay Statement

9.3 Equality Statement and Policy

9.4 Health Safety and Welfare Policy

9.5 Fees Policy

9.6 Subcontracting Fees and Charges Policy 2023-2024

9.7 Subcontracting Procedures

It was **agreed** that further information would be added to the Equality Statement and Policy for the 2024-2025 update.

10. Review of Strategic Risks – verbal

It was **agreed** that within the September SLT Risk Management meeting a review would take place re Data Protection/GDPR/Artificial Intelligence (AI) with the registers being updated to reflect that discussion ahead of sharing with the Audit and Risk Committee at its September meeting.

11. Date and Time of Meetings/Activities for Term 1 2023 -2024

- Governing Body Strategic Planning – Monday 25 September 2023 – 1-5pm
- Governing Body (Ordinary) – Monday 23 October 2023 – 5-8pm
- Governing Body SAR validation - Tuesday 24 October 2023 – all day
To note – Governors would also receive an invite to the curriculum SAR meetings in September (voluntary)
- Governing Body Social Evening – Tuesday 24 October 2023 - 6.30pm
- Governing Body (Ordinary) – Monday 18 December 2023 5-8pm

12. Matters for Publication

No restricted matters were identified

13. Any other Business

R Davies gave a number of goodbyes and thanks:

- P Studd who came to the end of his second term of office as College Governor/Chair of Corporate Services
- E Kunonga who was leaving the Governing Body but remaining linked to the College's Safeguarding, Welfare and Wellbeing Committee
- Harley Barrons who had supported the Student Governor team admirably throughout his term of office

14. Reserved Matters - none taken

The meeting ended at 8.06pm