

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE  
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING GOVERNING BODY MEETING 25.09.2023**

**PRESENT:** R Davies (CG and Chair), R Anderson (CG), S Brown (CO), D Budd (CO), A Coleman-Cooke (CO), D Dodds (CG), M Gaze (CG), M King (CG), M Lamb (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), P Lynn (CG); M McClintock (CG), A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Gov), S Shepherd (CO), D Still (Staff Gov), J Tait (CG).

**OFFICERS** A Adamson (VP), Z Foster (Clerk), S Marshall (ED), K Parkinson (ED), B Robinson (DP), O Rodley (VP), M Russell (VP).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** For items 1-6 J Gravatt (AoC Deputy Chief Executive) and C Nicholls (AoC Area Director of NE, Yorkshire and Humber)

<b>KEY:</b>	CG College Governor	CO Co-opted Governor	DP Deputy Principal
	VP Vice Principal	ED Executive Director	

**1. Apologies for Absence**

M Cameron (Student Gov), C Cannon (CO), J Castor (CG), T Edgcombe (Student Governor), S Lane (CG), D Lusardi (CG), E Rennison (CO), P Sharp (CG), I Wright (CG).

**2. Welcome to New Governors/Co-opted Governors**

R Davies welcomed D Budd (Co-opted Governor) and D Dodds (College Governor) to their first meeting.

J Gravatt and C Nicholls from AoC were also welcomed to the meeting.

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

**4. Appointments**

After interview on 25 September 2023, R Davies recommended the immediate appointment of I Anwar as College Governor on a four year term joining the Corporate Services Committee. This recommendation was **approved** by all present.

R Davies also recommended that D Budd become the Sustainability Link Governor with immediate effect which was also **approved** by members present.

**5. AoC National Issues**

J Gravatt gave a comprehensive overview of the national picture focusing on: national politics generally; policy towards education; FE and skills policy and local influence; qualification reform (T Levels, Level 3 reform) and associated challenges; and funding, pay and public sector status.

Governors' questions and discussion included: T Level numbers; the potential impact of the rate rise and affordability; the impact of a change in government on the education budget; and positive enrolment across the sector and the need for early receipt of in-year growth 16-18.

**AoC Local Context** – C Nicholls outlined the key issues affecting the sector (workforce – recruitment and retention; qualification reform and local issues (LSIP/LSIF) with a need for Governing Bodies to focus on the key issues and priorities (both short and long term) using the AoC for support.

He further updated on the recent pay review negotiations which had resulted in the AoC proposing a 6.5% increase (to match schools). Unions had not currently agreed to the proposal with some disparity between national and local perspectives.

Z Lewis updated the Committee on the status for the College union negotiations (not yet resolved), in respect of the recent written resolution to offer 6.5% from 1 October 2023.

Qualification Reform was outlined and discussed in full including: the recent DfE event for Northern colleges; T Levels - the recent thematic review of T Levels, issues on recruitment figures nationally, the lack of government data on T Levels, the lack of general understanding by the public (parents, students, employers) of the T Level offer and the difficulty securing industrial placements; and the increase in Maths and English resits (and how this would be accommodated); capital investment; the cost of new qualifications; and the adult provision.

C Nicholls outlined some of the local issues and opportunities including: the LSIF and the role of Middlesbrough College in the Tees Valley collective of Colleges in this; the Duty to Review and the approach regionally in response to this; Eton and Star Academy; and the wider influencing role of the College and its Governing Body (including Colleges' Week, wider stakeholder engagement, contributions to longer term thinking led by the 2030 Group).

Clarity was given on the Duty to Review and collaborative expectations locally - which were to be fully reviewed in the Spring term (with governor involvement).

*R Davies thanked both J Gravatt and C Nicholls for their presentations.*

## **6. NEECC LSIP Overview**

R Anderson gave a comprehensive update of where the LSIP currently was with a focus on: the leading role of the NEECC; the key sectors (green energy/net zero; health and social care; professional services and transferable skills such as digital and business); business engagement and findings from those key sectors which were influencing Phase 2.

She detailed the role of the NEECC within Phase 2 which included: monitoring progress of the implementation of the LSIP, deep dive research projects; annual review and refresh exercises; employer assistance; the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSiF) project support and liaison with Ofsted.

Clarification on transferability of models across the North of Tyne and Tees Valley models; the levels of funding and ring fencing; and the potential impact of a general election were discussed.

Z Lewis gave an update on the collaborative work with other local colleges. The College's response to the LSIP would be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Further discussion included: links to the revised Strategic Plan of the accountability agreement; the role of Ofsted in assessing the delivery of the accountability agreement; and Phase 2 research.

*J Gravatt and C Nicholls left the meeting.*

## **7. Strategic Plan Overview – External Context and Strategic Risks**

Z Lewis gave a full overview which focused on: the external context and cultural and technical shifts over the past two-three years; local ambition and the government response (particularly with regard to high value job focus).

She detailed the College's STEM strategy over the past ten years which supported much of the LSIP and also the climate of increased external direction and increased funding (and the complexities of this). The positive aspects of reclassification were also highlighted (greater opportunity, positive language, increased funding and hoped greater stability and influence).

Z Lewis then drew attention to the mission of the strategic plan and the strategic themes which in turn led to highlighting the four main risks to the College. An update on progress towards inspection was also outlined.

Questions and discussion included: whether the Eton decision could be reversed with a change of government; clarification on the 9K pay gap between FE lecturers and school teachers and the impact of this particularly in high demand subjects (e.g. Maths); detail of the College teacher pay structure and benefits; the value of softer skills and how these skills were taught; and an update on current staff turnover.

## **8. Self-Assessment**

M Gaze reminded Governors of the upcoming SAR Validation Day on 24 October and of the value of this for all Governors.

She then outlined the process of self evaluation highlighting: the main purpose of self reflection (and resulting action); and national (and internal) standardization against the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) used by Ofsted which was fully explained.

M Gaze highlighted the role of Governors within inspection, and of the key ideas to support the evidence base to show that provision for learners was both safe and effective.

Governors' discussion considered how previously outstanding Colleges had performed in recent inspections and of the positive status of all North East Colleges currently.

**Emerging Themes 2023-2024** – O Rodley detailed the emerging strengths and areas of focus which had come out of the departmental SAR process which would be fully considered on 24 October.

Governors' had a full discussion on the complexities relating to A Level provision which included the current status in relation to achievement; retention and destinations.

## **9. Qualification Reform Update**

B Robinson outlined the background to the qualification reform and of the proposed academic and technical qualifications landscapes from 2025. He detailed the potential impact of the reforms both nationally and for the Middlesbrough College Group should they come to full fruition. He also highlighted areas of opposition to various elements of the proposed changes as a result of monitoring and reporting (including from the Education Select Committee and Ofsted) and of the political divide on reform.

B Robinson concluded his presentation with an update on the College's actions to best support students at this turbulent time, and detail of the College's T Level outcomes and comparison data.

Questions included: student placements and role of employers (T Levels) and employer feedback; whether the sector had leverage to oppose the changes; the value of T Levels for some students; detail of the 1 year T Level transition programme; and update on the 'mix and match' programme at A Levels in the current climate.

## **10. Campus Development/TTE Loan Update**

Z Lewis gave a general overview of campus developments over recent years followed by an update on progress to the TTE project which was both on time and on budget. She also reminded governors of the complexities of reclassification regarding new projects, particularly in relation to borrowing.

M Russell then updated Governors on the TTE Loan Status which would result in a written resolution once legal contracts were finalized.

An update was then given on new capital bids which had been placed under the LSIF and Levelling up umbrellas. Particular attention was drawn to the Adult Community Learning Centre which was fully detailed and also of possible car parking solutions from 2024.

Further progress would be shared with the Governing Body in due course.

## **11. Safeguarding Update**

A Adamson gave a comprehensive update to the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 document drawing particular attention to the four main changes.

She reminded governors of the requirement to read at least Part 1 of the document as part of their duty and highlighted all of the responsibilities required of the Governing Body in this area which also formed an essential part of the induction process.

A Adamson highlighted the referral poster which was evident all across the College which gave full detail for all staff on safeguarding levels, expectations and links for early reporting including a QR code. Reporting links and the QR code were also directly available on the main staff portal for ease.

Z Lewis and A Adamson outlined the whole staff training in August which introduced the revisions and expectations for all staff.

As a result of the changes, the Safeguarding Policy had been reviewed and was presented for approval.

Subject to minor adjustments, the Safeguarding Policy was **approved**.

A Adamson also highlighted a further extension of the Smoothwall programme from mid-January for all devices linked to the College network.

Governors had a full and productive discussion including: monitoring of the effectiveness of the training, resources and policy; and clarification on the safeguarding service hours (not 24/7).

An update was then given on recent cases for the College in this area which were discussed in some detail.

**12. Matters for Publication** – no restricted items were identified.

**13. Date and Time of Next Meetings**

- Governing Body (Ordinary) – Monday 23 October 2023 – 5-8pm
- Governing Body SAR validation - Tuesday 24 October 2023 – all day
- Governing Body Social Evening – Tuesday 24 October 2023 - 6.30pm

**14. Any other Business**

- a) The College's enrichment offer was discussed generally and in relation to Eton. A full report on personal development (including enrichment) would come to the October Governing Body meeting.

*The meeting ended at 5.20pm*