

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 21.10.2024**

- PRESENT:** L Woods (CG/Chairing the meeting), R Anderson (CG), I Anwar (CG), J Castor (CG), T Edgcombe (Student Governor), M Gaze (CG), A Hassack (CG), M Lamb (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), O Manners (Student Governor), M McClintock (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), D Still (Staff Gov), J Tait (CG), I Wallace (CG).
- VIA TEAMS:** R Davies (CG/Chair), D Lusardi (CG), A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Gov), I Wright (CG).
- IN ATTENDANCE:** A Bradford (Student Council VP)
- OFFICERS:** A Adamson (VP), Z Foster (Head of Governance), S Langstaff (VP), S Marshall (VP), K Parkinson (VP), G Potts (VP), B Robinson (DP), O Rodley (VP).
- KEY:** CG College Governor CO Co-opted Governor DP Deputy Principal
VP Vice Principal Clerk to the Corporation

Health and Safety Briefing

S Marshall presented governors with an abridged version of the staff mandatory training on the following topics:

- Major Incident Action Reminder –in respect of both an outside threat and lockdown procedures instigated or internal threat (Run, Hide, Tell). The detailed training would be shared post meeting with all governors.
- Fire Alarms Reminder

1. Apologies for Absence

P Lynn (CG); B Murphy (CG), P Sharp (CG).

2. Declarations of Interest – R Anderson in respect of any LSIP/LSIF related discussion.

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of 11.07.2024 – were approved as a correct record.

3.2 Minutes of 1.10.24 Strategic Planning session were also approved as a correct record.

3.3 Confirmation of Written Resolutions

- 3.3.1 Bus Contract (August 2024)**
- 3.3.2 External Auditor Contract (September 2024)**
- 3.3.3 Skills Bootcamp Subcontractor (September 2024)**

All three approved resolutions were confirmed.

4. Matters Arising – all matters had been resolved or were in progress.

I Wright informed the Governing Body that whilst themes had been determined for the Internal Audit Plan, there was still some flexibility for the forthcoming year should further ideas be identified.

5. Strategic Overview

5.1 Strategic Risks Report

Z Lewis gave an update in respect of the top risks from the report:

- Negative impact of qualification reform in which a DfE review was currently taking place with expected results December/January
- Recruitment and Retention of staff which currently looked stable overall albeit electrical engineering remained a key area of concern (both for the College and at local and national levels)
- Health and Safety risk increase due to a combination of factors, with S Marshall providing greater detail under *Item 7.4*
- Compliance/governance remained a red risk although there had been a positive re-audit of the subcontracting issues which gave assurance in this area. The implications of the Procurement Act would be closely monitored by the Corporate Services Committee over the year.

Z Lewis drew out three further areas within the papers:

- Management Accounts and reasoning behind the delay. S Langstaff would be taking the Board through the updated position in detail, but attention was drawn to the position in relation to TVCA, capacity to deliver

bootcamps, higher than anticipated exam costs and the College's NEET strategy in light of higher numbers (both a local and national issue).

- QiP 2024-2025 – the key areas of focus were highlighted: i) student progress ii) persistent absenteeism iii) support for new teachers.
- Safeguarding and the positive effects of the changed process

There would be an opportunity for governors to give feedback on the reports at the end of the meeting.

5.2 Principal/Chief Executive's Report

Z Lewis presented the written report, drawing attention to the update in respect of the Accountability Statement.

Governor questions and discussion included: clarification on progress measures; persistent absence including the threshold (less than 85%), the increased numbers of absence nationally both in colleges and in schools, the association between levels and absence and of absence and progress, support for absent students and mechanisms used, clarification on the term absence over absenteeism, targeted provision of learning for the most vulnerable; ways of encouraging students to attend including practical and social focuses, and the related issue of the waiting list for the College's NEETs provision and possible actions.

5.3 Strategic Plan including Corporate KPI Update

O Rodley drew out some key points within the 2023-2024 KPIs:

- Achievement rates where there had been positive progress overall with the exception of Adults which had been just under the College target (although higher than the national rate)
- Learner Progress where there was still no national data currently (although this was set to change from this year). College data showed that Level 3 progress still had strides to make, and actions were in place to address this (including a review of the target setting process, and implementation of a grading matrix using historic ALPS data)
- Adults - Access to HE Achievement and ESOL were the two areas where achievement did not reach target rates and O Rodley detailed the reasoning behind this and ongoing focus for 2024-2025.

Governor discussion and questions included: clarification on the new matrix to be used for progress measures to support standardization and consistency and a wider discussion on the complexities of this; the reliability of the English and Maths achievement outcomes with RCU data; A Level results (which had increased) and predicted improvements going forward with the strategies currently in place; methods to decrease the recruitment window for appointments; and counter offer culture and related onboarding approaches.

The Governing Body then **approved** the proposed KPIs for 2024-2025.

5.4 Enrolment Update – S Langstaff

S Langstaff gave an update in relation to enrolment figures, where whilst there was some deviation from plan, gave a positive overall enrolment picture.

She highlighted the current situation with TVCA in which it was hoped to have some confirmation forthcoming.

Governors' discussion and questions included: potential reasons for lower HE figures for the College and the wider national picture; lower level of HE satisfaction and actions by the College (resulting in a new KPI this year); T Levels in relation to drop out rates and ongoing general lack of understanding of the qualification more widely; clarification on income scenarios (TVCA, bootcamps, International etc.); redeployment options for staff in areas of over recruitment; subcontractor delivery confidence; and an update on Project S.

6. Student Experience

6.1 QIP Update

O Rodley gave a brief summary of the 2023-2024 5 areas for improvement's end of year position. He highlighted some progress with persistent absenteeism by the year end.

He then detailed the three main priorities which were emerging for 2024-2025 SAR:

- Learner Progress
- Early Careers Teacher support
- Persistent Absenteeism

Governors' discussion and questions included: confidence on staff retention figures; and clarification on apprenticeship progress (which was not measured) and complexities of applying methodology used to improve achievement to other study areas.

6.2 Quality of Education Update

B Robinson presented his report and drew particular attention to the innovations in recruitment and teacher support (including use of relevant government initiatives e.g. FE Bursary, employing recent graduates (and related awareness events), ongoing development of a talent pool, and development of a College teacher bootcamp for those new to the profession to address the challenge of recruiting industry specialists without teaching experience.

Governors discussed: the differences of teaching within schools and further education and varying expectations and support; possible reconsideration of apprenticeship route for new teachers (ITT); development of the ITE mentorship programme; and how the new FE bursary might be used to support new teachers (e.g., enabling timetable reductions) and whether TVCA might support any funding gaps.

B Robinson gave an update on TTE.

6.3 PDBA Update

A Adamson gave an update to her written report including: that 2699 employer encounters had now taken place; that the College had won the EDI Education Provider award at the Tees Valley EDI awards; attendance of 90.5% on main programme; a decrease in persistent absenteeism to 23.65% and 1979 letters/conversations in relation to attendance concerns.

Governors discussed the positive impact of the increased consistency of staff implementation of the behaviour policies (including the trauma informed training).

It was confirmed that Sexual Harassment formed part of the Thrive tutorial programme for students this term.

6.4 Safeguarding Update

A Adamson presented the report.

Governors' questions and discussion focused on: male mental health noting that male/female was not separated within the figures; diversification within mental health awareness including student talks and Smoothwall Pulse; how timely transition data was from schools and how the transition arrangements worked in practice; and some greater detail of the outcomes in relation to stop and search procedures.

Student governors confirmed that safeguarding processes were widely known and publicized; that staff were visible and there was a positive and supportive atmosphere generally and when students needed particular support.

Governors received confirmation that students had been actively involved with the consultation process in relation to the Thrive pod changes through class rep/cross college meetings feedback.

6.5 Safeguarding Annual Report

A Adamson presented the annual report to the Governing Body.

Comparisons with schools' experiences were discussed with agreement that safeguarding incidents/impact had risen in both sectors post covid. It was also noted that the wait for external services was extremely high, and it was hoped that recent funding support from a Teesside Charity to be used to aid students to access online counselling services would be a positive addition, alongside the current commissioning of counselling services for high risk students.

Adamson confirmed that 15 hours of supervision per half term was given to the Safeguarding team. She also highlighted that the team were finalists (Safeguarding) in the National Young People Awards.

The Governing Body **approved** the annual report.

6.6 Student Voice Update

Student governors updated members on progress with elections, forthcoming student council meetings, Freshers week activities, positive changes to the Thrive Pod, the positive effect of greater social media engagement by the College, student led enrichment additions, and informal student feedback.

They also drew attention to forthcoming activities including: Brave the Shave and the Remembrance Parade.

7. Corporate Updates

7.1 One Commitment Update

G Potts detailed the new client management approach launch which had received positive initial feedback. He also updated governors on the scholarship interviews, apprenticeship recruitment figures and challenges, work experience, and bootcamp provision expansion.

Governor questions included: developments on simplifying apprenticeship signups albeit not through Project S as hoped; detail of the memo of understanding with BP and collaborative work; applications for the scholarships; T Level work experience and the current response to increase this for the current year, and also the likely implications of the impact of any Level 3 curriculum reform changes on this.

7.2 Audit and Risk Recommendations

I Wright gave a brief appraisal of the September meeting which had focused on: a rich discussion of strategic risk contextualized by Z Lewis and within which it was confirmed that the Health and Safety increased risk would be closely monitored by the Committee; the regularity audit questionnaire (which was a useful repository of the strategic documents) and the important role of the External Auditor work in the assurance process; and the KPIs for both internal and external auditors both of whom had fully met their requirements. He also reminded governors of the outcome of the External Auditor retender which resulted in Mazars being successful and the additional year's extension of the current Internal Auditors ahead of a tender process in 2025.

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

- The 2023-2024 Regulatory Audit Questionnaire
- The outcome of the 2023-24 Performance Indicators for the Internal Auditor (RSM) received for information and approved for their accuracy.
- Confirmation of the re-appointment of the Internal Auditor (RSM) for a period of one year commencing 1 August 2024.
- The outcome of the 2023-2024 Performance Indicators for the Financial Statements / Regularity Auditor (Mazars) received for information and approved for their accuracy.
- Confirmation of the re-appointment of the Financial Statements / Regularity Auditor (Mazars) for a period of one year commencing 1 August 2024
- The 2024-2025 Performance Indicators for the Internal Auditor (RSM)

7.3 Management Accounts July 2024

S Langstaff gave a full account of the year end accounts up to the end of July 2024. She detailed the reasons for the variation from the budget and May accounts drawing attention to the key major changes which had impacted this within income, pay costs, non-pay costs - most notably the increase in exam costs and numbers, non-cash adjustments, delays, and two issues relating to High Needs (one income correction, and one resubmission of High Needs application to confirm actual student numbers rather than estimated numbers for 23-24).

Z Lewis gave the background to the reasoning for the delay in the set of accounts and S Langstaff confirmed that the October management accounts would be available for Corporate Services in a timely fashion and would include an updated forecast.

Action by R Davies – to liaise with relevant party at Stockton LA in respect of High Needs 2023-2024

Governors' questions included: External Audit in respect of materiality (likely below), in-year funding arrangements for unfunded delivery (which will be shown in each set of management accounts); the change in requirements with the move to the public sector (cash surplus focused and no overdraft facility); and request for an update in respect of collection of outstanding sums asap.

Z Lewis informed Governors that the AoC had recommended a 2.5% pay award. She confirmed that the allowance within the budget for the pay award would not be recommended until the budgetary situation was clear.

7.4 Health and Safety Annual Report 2023-2024

S Marshall presented the annual report and gave an update in respect of term three 2023-24 into term one of 2024-2025.

She detailed the reasoning for increasing the health and safety score on the risk register from 12 to 15 with the aim that this be reduced back down after the successful implementation of the actions outlined which included some external support with the involvement of Northern Safety Group both in terms of on the ground health and safety support and an audit on areas of concern.

An update was given on the new construction mezzanine and related health and safety training for staff and associated risk assessments.

The annual report was **approved** by the Governing Body.

7.5 Staff Recruitment and Turnover

K Parkinson gave a brief update on the current position where turnover had slightly increased since the report (but with expectations that this would decline). She also drew attention to the new retention incentive payment introduced by the Government which had yielded 48 applications so far which the team were working through.

7.6 Subcontractors Update

G Potts gave a brief appraisal of the current subcontractors partners and activity.

After consideration, **approval** was given for.

- the growth of Wave 5 Bootcamps for 3T as detailed in appendix 2 of the report.
- the Project S Bootcamp allocation for Rely on Nutec (detailed in appendix 2 of the report), pending successful completion of due diligence.

8. Governance Update

8.1 Search and Governance Recommendations

R Davies presented the recommendations from the Committee's meeting of 10 October and after consideration the following were **approved**:

- **Appointment** of Marina Gaze as College Governor from 21 October 2024 on a four year term, and for Marina to join the Curriculum and Standards Committee as Vice Chair of the Committee
- **Second Terms of Office for College Governors:**
 - Petrina Lynn, at the end of her current term of office, for a final four year term from 22 March 2025 until 21 March 2029
 - Dominic Lusardi, at the end of his current term of office, for a final four year term from 16 December 2025 until 15 December 2029
- **Second Term of Office for Co-opted Governor:**
 - Caroline Cannon, at the end of her current term of office, for a final four year term from 22 March 2025 until 21 March 2029
- **Extended Term of Office for Co-opted Governor**
 - David Budd, at the end of his current initial two year term, for a further two years up to 12 July 2027 (with a further four year term an option)
- **Change of Status** for Sharon Lane to move from College Governor to Co-opted Governor with immediate effect (as of 21 October 2024) on a four year term up to 20 October 2028
- **The Governance Self-Assessment Areas for Improvement 2023-2024**, subject to final approval at the Governing Body meeting of 16 December 2024 within the Governance Self-Assessment Report
- **The draft Governance Assessment Areas for Improvement 2024-2025**
- **Confirmation of adherence to the Code of Governance** (as per the mapping exercise approved by the Search and Governance Committee)

8.2 Governance Report

Z Foster gave a brief update to her report highlighting the Staff and Student Governor AoC Summitt which would be reported on by those attending at the December meeting and drawing Governors attention on the required confirmation of the Public Interest Disclosure Notice for 2023-2024 which was subsequently **approved** by the Governing Body.

8.3 Freedom of Information Summary 2023-2024

S Langstaff presented the summary for the Governing Body.

8.4 Complaints Summary 2023-2024

O Rodley presented the summary and gave a brief overview of the statistics for Governors.

D Lusardi left the meeting

9. College Policies and Procedures

9.1 Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

S Langstaff detailed the changes to the annual update which were minor in nature

9.2 Equality Statement and Policy

K Parkinson outlined the minor changes to this annual review

9.3 Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedure

A Adamson outlined very minor changes aligned to the KCSIE 2024 updated document.

All three statements/ policies were **approved** by the Governing Body.

10. Review of Strategic Risks – verbal

The strategic risks were reconsidered and after discussion, it was **agreed** that the Finance risk should be upgraded until there was a clear understanding of the budget and three year plan.

In addition, the frequency and volume of safeguarding incidents would be monitored.

11. Date and Time of Meetings Autum Term 2024

11.1 Governing Body SARS – Monday 11th November 2024 8.30-2.30pm

11.2 Audit and Risk Committee – invite to hear Financial Statements Auditor – Friday 13th December 2024 1pm (Teams)

11.3 Governing Body (Ordinary) – Monday 16th December 2024 5-8pm

12. Matters Not for Publication

There were no restricted items.

13. Any other Business

R Davies thanked L Woods for chairing the meeting.

Staff and Student Governors along with officers (excepting Z Lewis, K Parkinson, and Z Foster) left the meeting ahead of the final two items.

14. Reserved Matters

14.1 Termination Payments 2023-2024

K Parkinson took the Governing Body through the annual (anonymized) paper which included above statutory contract payments.

Governors noted the small number and sum of the payments for the size of organization and K Parkinson outlined the general processes involved in such circumstances.

K Parkinson detailed the circumstances for each payment. She also informed Governors on an upcoming Tribunal case in 2025, detail of which had been shared (and updates also shared) as required, with I Wright (as Chair of Audit and Risk), R Davies and P Lynn.

15. Report Reflection

An overview of this item was given to start the discussion.

A full discussion took place which considered: the value of the executive summaries; processes for any late reports in the future as per the slides for the management accounts item (noting that this had been an exceptional circumstance); focus of verbal presentations being related to key issues; ensuring that requirements of governors are clear i.e. whether for information/discussion or approval; and in respect of policies and procedures it was worth noting where the scope was limited.

There was additional discussion around the running order of the agenda with possibility of rotation of items to ensure due consideration of all items and debate on whether decisions be made early on in the agenda. It was noted that the Chair of the respective Committee determined the running order and could adjust this as required.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm