

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE  
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY DEVELOPMENT SESSION 18.02.2025**

**PRESENT:** R Davies (CG and Chair), R Anderson (CG), C Cannon (CO), J Castor (CG), A Coleman Cooke (CO), T Edgcombe (Student Governor), M Gaze (CG), M Lamb (CG), D Lusardi (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), P Lynn (CG); O-R Manners (Student Governor), S Mirsalehi (CG), A Shaffi (CO), J Tait (CG), I Wallace (CG).

**OFFICERS:** A Adamson (VP), J Barwell (AD), P Blewitt (AD), Z Foster (Head of Governance), R Gray (AD), S Langstaff (VP), S Marshall (VP); K Parkinson (VP), G Potts (VP), T Pierce (Group Dir), B Robinson (DP), O Rodley (VP), P Stone (Dir), P Watt (AD), C Yule (AD).

For Item 5.1 only

D Ward (Head of Workforce Development) and N James (Workforce Development Business Partner)

<b>KEY:</b> CG College Governor	CO Co-opted Governor	DP Deputy Principal
VP Vice Principal	Clerk to the Corporation	GD Group Director

**1. Apologies for Absence**

I Anwar (CG), S Brown (CO), D Budd (CO), A Hassack (CG), S Lane (CO), M McClintock (CG), B Murphy (CG), A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Gov), P Sharp (CG), D Still (Staff Gov), M Wells (CG), L Woods (CG), I Wright (CG).

**2. Declarations of Interest** – R Anderson in respect of the LSIP.

**3. Strategic Plan / SLT Update on Key Issues for the Governing Body**

Z Lewis introduced the update which began with detailing the key issues within both local and national contexts impacting on finances, accommodation, staffing and future planning.

She drew particular attention to the unusual enrolment this year, whilst having overall increased (due to 16-18 and adults growth), presented complex challenges notably significant uncertainty in relation to in-year funding. As Governors determined in December 2024, due to the uncertainty, the pay award decision for staff had been delayed. Governors had also agreed that the College should do all it could to make the 3% pay award and increase cash days and she then detailed progress in this regard.

Steps thus far taken by SLT/College were presented and a new approach to future financial planning outlined which focused on: setting a higher surplus; not accounting for lag at 50%; reduction of the annual capital plan to accelerate cash balance increases and link staff pay to lag until the cash operating headroom was reached.

**TVCA Update** – a comprehensive update was given in relation to TVCA's funding mechanisms for delivery over time and significant proposed changes to funding and associated lobbying by local networks which had resulted in a delay to the changes.

**Student Number Growth/Accommodation** – Z Lewis detailed the growth of students numbers thus far and anticipated forecasted learners at 16-18 (circa. 1000 across the next six years) - and the associated pressures on core services should the numbers be realized.

The ongoing support to Outwood Riverside in terms of accommodation was outlined, notably the request to extend the lease to the school until summer 2027. Negotiations with the DfE were ongoing in respect of a one off payment to support temporary buildings for the College's student growth numbers to allow this extension to go ahead.

In addition, timetables were being further investigated to best support greater utilization of the current site.

**College Finances/Pay Award** - S Langstaff updated Governors on the delay from the DfE on in-year funding decisions citing an update from the ESFA which suggested more detail would be available on all elements of funding in March 2025. . In relation to TVCA (adult funding), a letter of comfort had been received. She then led Governors through a set of assumptions which would make the pay award of 3% affordable as outlined overleaf:

Points of uncertainty	24/25 revised forecast
In year lag (16-18)	£1.167m
In year one off grant (£50m)	£360k
NI fully covered	£107k
In year lagged FSM	£360k
TVCA 24/25	£900k growth delivered and received
Bootcamps 24/25	£2m delivered
Funding uplift 25/26	£2.7m (lag full + rate uplift + NI fully funded + FSM)
TVCA 25/26	£5.5m (- £600k from £6.1m)

3% pay award 24/25 and same budgeted surplus – per Dec mgmt. accounts  
Pay award 25/26 funded through lag up lift – and improved surplus to circa £1m

A summary position was also detailed in relation to 2024-2025 and forecast 2025-2026.

S Langstaff then outlined the assumptions to support the cash days increase over 2024-25 and 2025-26 which, if realized, would give cash days of 36 at the end of 2024-2025 and 33 at the end of 2025-2026 and how this sat positively against the FE Commissioner benchmark of at least 25 days.

Governors discussion and questions included: what the impact of not giving the 3% award might be with comparisons being made with universities, schools and in light of the wider economic turndown; whether a greater focus on the financial viability of individual departments going forward/selection would be necessary and how this sat against the College's values and commitment to the local community (particularly in respect of key areas such as NEETS and High Needs) and wider student choice; the complexity of increasing class sizes and impact on finances; noting that the areas of College growth were also those areas of difficult staff recruitment, need for specialist spacing etc; wider politics surrounding supporting young people's potential and employers in the current uncertain economy; potential impact of eventual demographic downturn (7 year time); curriculum reform and how this might add to pressure on key areas such as T Levels and it was hoped the Curriculum assessment Review due in Spring 2025 which might give some detail on this; staffing and lack of ability to match salaries from industry/schools currently; and a return to the overall risk of not giving a pay award in the current climate on recruitment, retention, morale and consideration of the pay award strategy longer term.

Z Lewis detailed a national Youth Guarantee pilot programme which the Tees Valley was involved in which tracked 18-25 year olds for a year starting in March 2025.

After discussion, it was agreed once a determination on the pay award had been finalized, that the May Strategic Planning Day might allow some wider thinking on future strategy

### Recommendations

The following recommendations were then considered and **agreed:**

- Virement of the February budget as outlined
- Governing Body approval of 3% for all staff, backdated to 1 January 2025, if settlement information provided in March was within £200K of revenue assumptions and £500K of capital assumptions
- And that the information detailed to Governors would be shared with JCNC through a version of the presentation on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February, with a staff note following that meeting outlining the deferment to March and commitment to backdate. In addition, that staff would be awarded three days holiday (between Christmas and New Year) to recompense for the future delay

#### 4. Building Governor Understanding Workshops

A number of revolving workshops (supported by SLT and SLTT members) took place on the following themes: new Ofsted Framework; College Data Dashboards/FE Dashboard; College KPIs and Adult and HE programme understanding.

To note: pre reading pack re Ofsted Inspection proposed changes consultation 'Rest, Reform, Rebuild' (launched 3 February) had been shared ahead of the meeting for this item with key dates below:

- The consultation would end on 28 April 2025 with inspections paused in Autumn 2025 until November 2025 to allow for the new implementation
- ITE inspection changes which would result in full inspections starting January 2026 (with thematic visits ahead of then to gather good practice and consider key themes).

## **5. Mandatory Training**

### **5.1 Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace**

N James led an informative and interactive workshop (including case study work) which detailed the changes to sexual harassment in the workplace and the College's response to that.

The Governing Body thanked N James for her engaging session.

### **5.2 Safeguarding and Governors' Responsibilities**

A Adamson took Governors through the annual Safeguarding training outlining the critical role of governors in protecting young people and ensuring their wellbeing in College. Information included the statutory duties and guidance.

Governors questions and discussion included: whether the College was anticipating higher numbers of safeguarding incidents for future cohorts of students with the general consensus being that figures were likely to increase based on school numbers coming through and also other relevant factors such as increased numbers of: unaccompanied children (ESOL), absence rates; complexities of learner needs, mental health, child protection issues and children in need; detail of the work with external bodies and associated stretched resources of such organisations; the College's involvement (led by A Adamson) of a national benchmarking activity involving 220 colleges on this area; the higher focus on Prevent locally (and within College with its first case); any lasting effect of the summer disruptions with confirmation that this had settled; and of local priorities and concerns relating to drugs, knife crime, extreme political views impacting on students and safeguarding more widely.

Post meeting note The presentations and related information were shared with those Governors unable to attend the training to ensure compliance.

## **6. Matters for Publication**

Post meeting note - the full presentation was made available in the Governance Hub for reference immediately after the meeting.

## **7. Time and Date of Next Meetings**

- Monday 24 March 2025 5pm for Ordinary Governing Body.
- Friday 9 May 2025 1-5pm for Strategic Planning Session

## **8. Any other Business**

The Governors Social evening would start at 6.30 in the Brasserie.

The meeting ended at 6.05pm