

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF CURRICULUM PLANNING MEETING – 09.06.2025**

PRESENT: P Lynn (CG and Chair), D Budd (CO), A Coleman-Cooke (CO), M Gaze (CG), A Hassack (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Governor), A Shaffi (CO), M Wells (CG), L Woods (CG).

OFFICERS: A Adamson (VP), J Barwell (AP), C Duggan (Dir.) Z Foster (Clerk), R Gray (AP), S Marshall (VP), L McKenna (Dep. Dir.), T Pierce (Group Dir. TLA), G Potts (VP), B Robinson (DP), P Stone (Dir. of HE), S Cass (Head of Marketing), (P Watt (AP), C Yule (AP).

IN ATTENDANCE FOR RELEVANT ITEM: S Beesley (AD), J Cooke (AD), R D'Souza (AD), M Emery (AD), M Hall (AD), F Kempton (AD), A Jones (AD), D Longmore (AD), N Loughran (AD), T McNicholas (AD) P Moody (Exec. Dir), D Payne (AD), R Stainthorpe (AD), L Summerside (AD), K Tate (AD), J Tyzack (AD), B Williamson (AD), L Wood (Head of Quality),

Key: CG – College Governor, CO –Co-opted Governor, DP – Deputy Principal, VP – Vice Principal, AP – Assistant Principal, AD – Associate Director.

1. Apologies for Absence

R Anderson (CG), I Anwar (CG) S Brown (CO), J Castor (CG), C Cannon (CO), R Davies (CG), M Lamb (CG), S Lane (CO), D Lusardi (CG), M McClintock (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), P Sharp (CG), D Still (Staff Governor), J Tait (CG).

P Blewit (AD), P Donnelley (AD), O Rodley (VP), M Telling (Group Business Development Dir), C Weldon (AD).

2. Declarations of Interest – none declared

3. Curriculum Plan Overview 2025-2026

Z Lewis outlined the agenda and format in which the Assistant Principals (APs) for each faculty would give an overview including some financial slides, followed by Associate Directors (ADs) of each department giving a snapshot of key updates for the curriculum for 2025-26 and future opportunities and challenges.

B Robinson outlined the key influences affecting the Curriculum Plan for 2025-2026 including curriculum reform; emerging skills gaps; Government Policy; devolved funding/ASB, Stakeholders/employers advisory boards; LSIP/LSIF; TVCA local growth plan; and Net Zero Teesside.

Regarding Curriculum reform, B Robinson detailed a number of elements impacting the decision making ahead of expected big changes in 2027 and how the College was ensuring influence/involvement with the direction of those reforms where possible.

He then outlined the variety of information sources used to shape the curriculum to best support students and employers and fill the skills gaps, which resulted in the curriculum plans for each of the departments.

4. Department Presentations

4.1 A Levels – C Yule, R Stainthorpe and L Wood presented the A Level Curriculum plan, giving background detail to the faculty and department budget, notably that the majority of A Level income came from Sixth Form or extended Level 3 courses. **Key updates for 2025-2026 were outlined including:** the launch of new Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) for Health and Social Care and Human Biology; an additional group for Access to Science; a new A Level in Graphic Communication; and there would no longer be an offer of T Level Science due to staff recruitment issues.

Future opportunities and challenges included: further AAQs in such areas as Child Development and Sustainability; and challenges in respect of funding confirmation for some key courses (Applied Science and Criminology) beyond 2027; staffing and recruitment generally due to uncompetitive salary and terms and conditions against schools/Sixth Forms/industry; and an inability to recruit at all to Physics/Engineering role resulting in the removal of Engineering and Science T Levels.

Governor questions and discussion included: how staffing was being organized if some courses were not being run for 2025-2026 with confirmation that they were being utilized elsewhere (such as within the Adult provision); the difficulty of recruiting to T Level science with multiple staff being required; the typical combinations being offered with Physics A Level as (generally) Computer Science, Chemistry and Further Maths; detail of the full offer of 21 A Levels and 9 mix it up programmes; the potential positive impact of government u-turn on rules around combination of courses, allowing a better fit for student need (e.g. medical science) and faculty work on developing appropriate career pathways/options for students via AAQs; detail of the OCR model which benefitted students with certification at year 1 and year 2; whether AAQs were recognized by UCAS in the same way as BTEC and were of a similar content; increase in applications for 2025-2026 and possible associated risks of this; where applications were falling and how the faculty were supporting students where courses were not running; improved school liaison engagement; and STEM course figures which had previously dropped and were now moving up again.

4.2 Social Care, Nursing and Midwifery, Business and Professional, Childcare and Education – J Barwell gave a general overview highlighting that the majority of the provision was within T Levels. She also drew attention to the split of Health and Social Care as a result of curriculum reform into Social Care and Nursing and Midwifery, detailing what courses fit into each department.

Nursing and Midwifery – R D'Souza outlined the provision which was generally lower level, roll on roll off and the new technical qualification. **Key updates to the Curriculum for 2025-2026** included: a planned distance learning Access to Health cohort; redesign of access curriculum to offer more practical skills in the ward (fulfilling LSIP priorities); introduction of Pre Access; increase in T level group numbers; increase in Foundation programmes; and a clear IAG for learners.

Growth and Development opportunities included: a review of the health, wellbeing and social care degree to further internal progression; further exploration of T Level occupational specialisms; increased development of industry links to support work placements; tailored support for staff coming in from industry; immersive suite resource development; and expansion of midwifery pathway and resulting work with Pearson to create a T Level.

Governors questions and discussion included: increased value of T Levels by students, universities and employers, albeit acknowledgement of lower UCAS points score and impact of this (and work to lobby on this); delivery method of information and advice (not full guidance) within the team; and the variety of strategies used to support industry based staff interested in teaching.

Social Care - K Tate gave an overview of the department in terms of provision and related income. **Key updates to the Curriculum for 2025-2026** included: clear information and advice for all learners; a new personal development lead and introduction of HUB (health, understanding and behaviour) drop ins to better support the lower level learners, an overall focus on skills (both practical and academic) including the incorporation of digital skills as requested by the SLSIP/employers.

Growth and Development opportunities included: development of employer links in the sector; working with Skills for Care; release of new technical qualifications for 2026; development of immersive suite resources; and review of the social care HE provision to ensure alignment with LMI and LSIP.

Governors questions and discussion included: work experience opportunities to support learners into work which focused on block weeks for all L1 and L2 learners and a week in the ward; how learners knew of the appropriate routes for specific professions such as paramedic and social worker (via information and advice); adult courses to support sector training (e.g. care homes); and a synopsis of key changes in the current year including branching out beyond the adult curriculum (L2 and L3), counselling provision, the new foundation programmes, and the first substantial cohort of T Level students.

Business and Professional – D Longmore outlined the department budget which was in large part 16-18 based. **Key updates to the Curriculum for 2025-2026** included: a redesigned curriculum offer better aligned to business trends and learner needs; the introduction of the new Business Academy for lower level learners; the introduction of T Level Marketing; the affiliation with the ACCA for Accounting T Level and benefits of this; and the introduction of distance learning/evening class options for Access to HE Business to widen adult participation.

Opportunities for growth and development included: relationship building with key stakeholders and local schools to support growth; further association and relationship building with professional bodies (CIM, CIPD, ICAEW) aligned with T Level offers; and sharing of good practice on exam preparation throughout the faculty.

Governors queried whether there was sufficient work placement provision and D Longmore outlined how a new member of staff was leading on this, alongside the benefit of having further opportunities in this area with the ACCA association.

Childcare and Education - Key updates to the Curriculum for 2025-2026: L Summerside detailed some significant changes within L3 curriculum reform resulting in one offer, that of the T Level – Assisting Teaching and Early Years; the new technical qualification for L2 Childcare – License to Practice and the importance of this in respect of staff/student ratio within provisions; programme change to focus on project based assessments to better support learners and address employer feedback; and response to the adult curriculum with SEN qualifications across TVCA and NECA(North East Combined Authority).

Opportunities for growth and development included: upskilling of staff with phonics teaching in line with school based curriculum changes; and growth opportunities in NECA at Sunderland and Newcastle sites for SEN and Autism awareness.

Governors queried how far entrepreneurship was built into programmes and the type of businesses wanting to be involved with work placements.

NSG Business and Professional/Professional Skills - Key updates to the Curriculum for 2025-2026 included: a new Senior Health Care Support Worker L3 Apprenticeship standard (in conjunction with TEWV NHS trust); an

introduction of a new L2 Foundation apprenticeship enhancing progression; the positive impact of the uplift of apprenticeship standards funding bands and significant reduction of EPA fees in Dental Nursing thereby increasing the financial contribution of the department; and the introduction of the Early Years Educator Apprenticeship Standard to support employer demand and funding changes for families.

Opportunities for growth and development 2025-2026 included: improving employer links particularly across North East Combined Authority (NECA) region; the new L3 Team Leader standard which should result in a growth with its increased suitability for middle management; growth opportunities resulting from collaboration with the NHS contract for apprenticeships in Health and Care regionally; and the aim of increasing numbers in the Newcastle hub with a focus on additional sales with a staff restructure and dedicated person to lead on this.

4.3 Hair and Beauty/Catering and Hospitality/Sport, Travel and Public Services/Visual and Performing Arts/Digital – P Watt gave an overview of the faculty which included 5 departments with 4 of those being predominantly 16-18. In terms of budget, he detailed a 7% growth from this year and 5% increase in contribution rates and reasoning behind this and variance of funding for the departments depending upon Government priorities.

Hair and Beauty / Catering and Hospitality – S Beesley outlined an increase in student numbers and within HE for 2025-2026. **Key Changes to the Curriculum for 2025-2026 included:** the first year of running an OU BA Specialist Hair and Makeup for Creative Industries degree; a new Level 3 Barbering course as a result of the success of L2 this year; and additional 16-18 Catering group on Level 2. However, technical qualifications were no longer running and there would be no L3 patisserie progression.

Opportunities for growth and development 2025-2026 included: being an Excellence College for L'Oréal which included the Colour Keys course for learners on the programme; engagement with City and Guilds to develop the Occupational Technical Qualifications (OTQs); alongside further enhancement of digital skills.

Governors questions and discussion included: confirmation on the largest area – which was Hair and Beauty; reasoning behind the offering of L3 Barbering which included greater content (e.g. wet shaving) and was in response to student numbers; average class sizes with a discussion on the variance of this (e.g. catering – 16 due to heavy practical base, against hairdressing 20-22); and acknowledgement of importance of running these qualifications to support the local economy, despite the lower level funding/contribution rate.

Sport, Travel and Public Services – J Tysack drew attention to the positive increase in class sizes for Sport and Aviation, both being more popular this year requiring the recruitment of more staff. In addition, **key changes to the Curriculum for 2025-2026** included: a move from BTEC to NCFE for public services L3; Les Mills link for sport allowing the delivery of industry recognized certification and thereby increasing employability for students; and revalidation activity for Travel and Tourism and Airport and Airline management in January 2026.

Opportunities for growth and development included: a new broad based degree as part of the Public Services team (September 2026); further development of industry links e.g. North Yorkshire police; Sports Academy – successful application into the National Youth Football league with Whitby Town as a football club link and submission of the application for CBL tier 3 Basketball National league, both of which would strengthen the elite performance for the academy.

Clarification was given regarding girls football, which was not at the same level currently though it was hoped new links would be coming through to develop this further.

Visual and Performing Arts - B Williamson confirmed that curriculum reforms were not affecting the department until 2027 therefore the curriculum was stable, albeit truly diverse with qualifications from L1 through to L6 in a wide range of areas. However, there were some **changes to the curriculum for the forthcoming year** including: the mapping of HE Audio and Music to Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs); the movement from assessments to presentations and increase in guest speakers and employer workshops to improve softer skills; which was also linked to employer feedback for improved softer skills e.g. confidence.

Opportunities for growth and development 2025-2026 included: developing stronger partnerships with employers; furthering the immersive and interactive experiences along with Digital and SIRS departments; and the integration of AI and Technology.

Governors considered the destinations of arts students including movement out of the area for future careers and opportunities.

Digital - N Loughran gave a brief assessment of the budget, noting that income was slightly down and applications were slightly lower overall. However, this did not include the 5% T Level uplift which would much improve the contribution rate overall. More positively, adult numbers were growing.

A general discussion took place about the number of students applying for digital courses and possible reasons why numbers were not higher. Detail was also given in relation to range of College activities to increase numbers.

Action by N Loughran and A Hassack to meet to consider tailored approaches for schools to better signposting and knowledge of the digital courses offer.

Key Changes to the Curriculum for 2025-2026 included: further development of courses (degree level and T Level); development of soft skills as requested by employers; and the introduction of a new e-sports course. Detail was also given in relation to the removal of Games at HE as the numbers were low.

Opportunities for growth and development 2025-2026 included: integration of emerging technologies; further development of strong industry partnerships; and staff upskilling in the fast paced and ever changing digital education environment.

NSG Digital and Services Industries – T McNicholas detailed increased income and pay lines within the budget, resulting in a slightly lower contribution rate. However, there was an expectation that this would recover. **Key Changes to the Curriculum for 2025-2026 included:** new standards, removal of Hospitality Team member standard; digital entry L3 pathway; and Foundation Apprenticeships L2.

Opportunities for growth and development 2025-2026 included: expansion of the online delivery/national offer; the hopeful growth in the North with a Newcastle based business development executive; and some future revalidation of courses.

Governors discussed the positive direction of moving online though noting the requirement to have the achievement figures broken down to 'online' and 'in person' where appropriate. It was also confirmed that employers were visited if local, but not at a national level.

4.4 Adult and Community Learning – R Gray gave a brief overview of the wide range of courses and activities under the umbrella of Adult and Community Learning; all linked to the strategic plan of TVCA. She detailed the funding reduction challenge for the upcoming year.

F Kempton took Governors through the **Key Changes for 2025-2026 included:** Roots (16-18); reduction in ESOL; removal of distance learning; BELP sector specific provision; bootcamps, which were stretching beyond the region; work with North East Combined Authority (NECA), all ensuring a response approach.

K Woodland outlined **Opportunities for growth and development 2025-2026 included:** BELPS (SeAH Wind, construction (TVCA) and painting and blasting (Wilton); bootcamps both Project S and TVCA and BELP provision in NECA.

Governors questions and discussion included: TVCA's reduction of ESOL and possible future Government funding/changes to eligibility and how quickly the College could adapt, particularly in relation to staffing – confirmation was given that this was being effectively managed and supported to ensure stability; the range of learners accessing basic skills training; and collaboration between faculties within the College to support students and the wider community.

Governors praised the comprehensive and highly responsive programme of activity serving the local community.

4.5 Construction/Engineering and TTE – G Potts gave the background context for the faculty highlighting activity for Engineering with the local growth programme, net zero agenda, and wider sector skills shortage for Engineering. For Construction, the offer was responsive to Government priorities with skills training in those key areas (including retrofit).

Z Lewis drew particular attention to the considerable size of the faculty and its income of £23M, which would increase further with the new funding rate and gave an extremely healthy contribution rate of 53%.

Construction – M Emery gave a positive overview with improved retention rates and growth through progression. He detailed **key changes to the curriculum for 2025-2026 including:** progression growth leading to an additional 7 groups; changes to some qualifications due to curriculum reform (new L2 joinery replacing T Level joinery); changes and reworks to some workshops to facilitate growth and required increased staffing (which was always a challenge to ensure skills, qualification, experience and ability to teach to students).

In relation to **growth and development**, opportunities included: retrofit (subject to funding), extra T Level group for electrical; L2 Occupational Technical qualifications with potential for further disciplines; new additionality courses focusing on starting your own business and future sustainability courses developing further employer links to better destinations for students; and staff development and succession planning to support all of the activities.

Engineering – D Payne drew particular attention to the increase in HE and Full Cost for the department. **Key Changes for the upcoming year included:** reduction of EEP additionality hours from all BTEC Extended diploma courses and how workshop time was being retained; hopeful recruitment to the BTEC Extended Diploma in Process Engineering (which did not run in 2024-2025); and planning changes to workshop delivery in STEM.

Growth and development opportunities included: growing of employer links; growth due to high retention; development of new HE Lab/workshop; and possibilities of increasing numbers on some study programme groups and starting a second cohort of Full Cost NHD learners in 2026.

TTE – J Cooke detailed the huge success of the TTE move and associated changes. **Key Curriculum Changes** included: no T Level Instrument for year 1; standardization of L3 curriculum; Renewable L2 programme reform; and reworks to workshop facilities and increase of staff to support growth.

Growth and development opportunities included: employer link development; further expansion of some groups (Electrical L3); enhancing the British Steel work experience opportunity; and developing the Health and Safety culture which had recently been reviewed fully.

NSG Construction and Engineering (Apprenticeships) – M Hall detailed the **key changes in the curriculum for 2025-26** which included: the introduction of a 5 day in-centre process technician offer, Engineering Maintenance Technician, Process Industry Manufacturing Technician, Mechatronic Maintenance Technician and Engineering Manufacturing Support Technician courses; and the retirement of Maintenance and Ops Engineering Technician, Science Industry Manufacturing Technician and Eng Tech courses.

Opportunities for growth included: Domestic Plumbing and Heating Engineer which was not currently offered anywhere locally; L2 Plumbing Apprenticeship; Foundation Apprenticeships and commercial offering of NVQ portfolio.

Motor Vehicle, Welding and Full Cost – A Jones showed a 20% increase for 16-18 applications which was already fully staffed to support the growth. In relation to **key changes**, these included: L3 T Level Maintenance Installation and Repair (Motor Vehicle); opening of a new Electric Vehicle workshop and further investment in equipment for MOTs; and a move to associate delivery models for specialist commercial courses.

Opportunities for growth and development included: full cost commercial courses; specialist TIG and SAW welding courses; SeAH Wind upskilling programme and a number of bootcamps in a range of areas.

Governors queried: the split across departments for some delivery (e.g., mechatronics and engineering)

4.6 Inclusive Learning

C Duggan outlined a significantly increased contribution rate (25.9% against 16.2%). He detailed the various pathways for students (all L1 and below) and showed the increased numbers both nationally and locally. **Key Changes for 2025-2026 included:** the introduction of pre-entry 16-18 ESOL (noting the challenge of unaccompanied minors); introduction of a L1 Vocational Steps provision; higher pastoral and wrap around support which made the inclusive learning resource cost heavy; and development of projects, employer encounters, social action and careers engagements initiatives to further support learners.

Opportunities for growth and development included the supported internship non-ehcp pilot extension with 7 additional places, and development of therapeutic presence across the curriculum

4.7 Summary and Discussion

Z Lewis and B Robinson encouraged Governors to feedback on any of the elements of the Curriculum Planning session.

B Robinson drew attention to the ambition through the curriculum plans and hoped that Governors had enjoyed meeting the wider teams involved in each of the departments. He also encouraged Governors to come into the College and go into Departments via the walkthrough process organized by T Pierce.

5. Dates of Next Meetings

5.1 Curriculum and Standards - 4 July 2025 at 2pm

5.2 Governing Body (Ordinary) - 10 July 2025 at 5pm

6. Any other Business – none taken

The meeting closed at 8.20pm