

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING 24.03.2025**

PRESENT: R Davies (CG/Chair), I Anwar (CG), J Castor (CG), M Lamb (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), D Lusardi (CG), P Lynn (CG) – via Teams; B Murphy (CG) – via Teams, A Pajura-Jaszczak (Staff Gov), D Still (Staff Gov), J Tait (CG), M Wells (CG), L Woods (CG).

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

1. Apologies for Absence

R Anderson (CG), A Bradford (Student Council VP), T Edgcombe (Student Governor), M Gaze (CG), A Hassack (CG), O Manners (Student Governor), M McClintock (CG), S Mirsalehi (CG), P Sharp (CG), I Wallace (CG), I Wright (CG).

M Wells was welcomed to the Governing Body.

2. Declarations of Interest - I Anwar in relation to any discussion re the Tees Valley Business Board.

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of 16.12.2024 – were approved as a correct record.

3.2 Minutes of Development session of 18.02.2025 were also approved as a correct record.

3.3 Confirmation of Written Resolution

3.3.1 Utilities Contract (January 2025)

The resolution was formally confirmed.

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

5. Strategic Overview

5.1 Strategic Risks Report

Z Lewis highlighted the five red risks for governors' attention (and where there may be some future movement), in particular finance, where governor consideration and discussion would be helpful in relation to the key decisions the College were tackling within the current challenging environment.

She also detailed a broadly good and consistent account of student outcomes.

5.2 Principal/Chief Executive's Report

Z Lewis drew out key elements of her report including: partnership work with Middlesbrough Council in relation to TTE capital and NEETs provision where an outreach centre was looking the more likely option; and an update in relation to the current NEETs provision moving back to 2QS and reasons for this.

The addendum added ahead of the meeting was then considered with key elements noted below:

- i) Draft Head of Terms for the revised lease of Outwood School (Russell Street) from the DfE which confirmed £2M compensation (no ties) for the extension of the lease until 1 August 2027, which was positive.
- ii) Cash Flow Forecast – which was downgraded as a result of some recent funding announcements. However, it was noted that there were still a further 8 decisions yet to be confirmed. SLT were committing to being above the FE Commissioner's benchmark by next academic year with much background work being done to ensure this.
- iii) Salix – the award from Salix had been detailed in the Governors' Friday briefing. After discussion, SLT agreed the match would be better saved at the current time.

Governors discussed this recommendation in full: the priority of staff retention/pay in the current uncertain climate; how far in advance energy could be bought (up to 5 years with the new broker) and the possibility of extending the fixing for longer if Salix were no longer an option; payment terms required by the Salix contract and alternative support to match fund (e.g. MBC, TVCA); clarification on return on £1.25m investment; staff perception should Salix match funding go ahead; and the likelihood of future similar opportunities.

After consideration, the Governing Body **approved** the approach of SLT, i.e. that the Salix offer, and match funding was not taken forward.

Post Meeting Note: the College received the DfE capital grant on the 2 April 2025 which indicated that the £2.3m allocation could be spent over a three year period, could not be used for expansion or IT equipment and must be prioritised on estates condition and sustainability initiatives. This development meant that it now makes sense to fund the SALIX match fund of £1.25 – the Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of Corporate Services Committee were informed of the decision before the grant was signed.

5.3 Strategic Plan including Corporate KPI Update

O Rodley gave a brief appraisal of his report confirming that: achievement was very positive across all provision types; that whilst value added/progress remained amber this was moving in the right direction; ongoing work to capture more detail in relation to adult destinations data; positive learner satisfaction across the board and improvements on the parent survey return figures; staff sickness figures which were slightly above target; and organizational resilience KPIs which were green except for cash days.

Governor discussion and questions included: reasons for the increase in parental survey return (which included incentivisation and regular reminders); and whether the DfE could be approached for a loan for the Salix match funding which was considered unlikely in light of the capital grant coming through.

5.4 Accountability Statement Update

Z Lewis gave an update on progress in relation to the accountability targets where only one had not been achieved for 2023-2024 (failing to enrol 450 students onto T Levels with 17 short of that).

She reminded governors that the 2025-2026 statement would require governors approval by 31st June 2025 with the plan of presenting this at the May Strategic Planning event for approval.

Some clarification on numbers was given.

6. Corporate Update

6.1 Note of Employer Voice Committee Meeting – the note was received with no further questions for Committee members present.

6.2 Audit and Risk Recommendations

The Governing Body **approved** the 2024-2025 Performance Indicators (as agreed by the Committee) for the External Auditor (Forvis Mazars).

S Langstaff confirmed that there would be a tender process for the Internal Auditor during the summer term.

6.3 Note of Corporate Services Committee meeting

J Castor confirmed that there had been no direct recommendations resulting from the meeting. She detailed some excellent presentations received by the Committee from Business Support departments. She also highlighted the key discussions and decisions at the meeting which had included Salix, the Pay Award, and MC Click changes (which were approved by the Committee).

6.3.1 Digital Strategy – the strategy had been received by the Corporate Services Committee.

Governors queried the lack of detail re costs, and it was confirmed that the strategy was high level giving flexibility on implementation over the three years and in light of continually changing costs/specifications for tech. S Marshall also clarified that the Digital Transformation group (to which D Lusardi sat on behalf of Governors) would have the specifics in relation to any spend.

Governors also discussed any potential risks in relation to Microsoft in the future, particularly in relation to the international climate. D Lusardi outlined the backups and additional support around the College systems and practice which should generally support any likely College specific issues.

The Governing Body then **approved** the Digital Strategy 2025-2028.

6.4 Management Accounts (December 2024)

S Langstaff presented the Management Accounts, confirming that the budget had been updated as agreed at the February training day session. She drew attention to the fact that whilst different options for a pay award had been considered by SLT, currently they were not in a position to make a formal pay award recommendation.

She also detailed the ongoing work of budget and cash plan phasing with a front loaded spend requirement whilst income remained generally backloaded.

Governors questions and discussion included: an update on the budget as of March 25; the potential risk re bootcamps with G Potts giving an update regarding this; capital plan approval which may come in May or July depending on spend requirements; and an update on the situation re the pay award.

6.5 Subcontractor Update

G Potts gave an update to his report. He confirmed that there had been no additional pressure on costs passed on from subcontractors as a result of the NI increases in April, the full impact of which may not have been realized by companies, and this was discussed by Governors.

6.6 Health and Safety Term 1 Update

S Marshall drew out from her report: the secondment for the Head of HSES which was working well; and confirmed that phase two of the competency audit had taken place in February with the final report imminent, which had shown that high risk areas had improved though there were recommendations for consistency of reporting more widely which would be actioned with departments and in liaison with P Sharp (as Link Governor for Health and Safety).

6.7 Equality and Diversity Term 1 Update

K Parkinson gave an update to the report written by L Barry for governors.

6.8 Staff Recruitment and Turnover

K Parkinson gave an updated position to her report where turnover for contracted staff was 2% lower than last year. She reminded governors that the main teacher resignation period was forthcoming therefore figures may increase.

Questions and discussion included: general increase in number of applications for all roles (and possible reasons why including calmer market, general economic climate and positive staff benefits) and areas where recruitment was still an issue (specialist skilled such as engineering); curriculum planning considerations including support for unqualified staff, further teacher resignations particularly in specialist skills areas; and retirement monitoring and associated succession planning.

6.9 One Commitment Update

G Potts updated Governors on his report, in particular, that apprenticeship recruitment had caught back up after a slow quarter 1, and detailed a number of positive employer engagement visits/conversations and developments.

Governors discussed the Net Zero Teesside Industry scholarships which was already eliciting a great response.

6.10 TTE Subsidiary Companies – Change of Registered Address for TTE Technical (UK) Ltd, TTE International Ltd and TTE Apprenticeships Ltd

Following on from the relocation of TTE from the South Bank site to the main College campus the College was required to change the registered address on Companies House of all three TTE subsidiary companies – these being: TTE Technical (UK) Ltd, TTE International Ltd and TTE Apprenticeships Ltd, from the current registered address of:

Edison House
Middlesbrough Road East
South Bank
Middlesbrough
TS6 6TZ

To that of the College's main address of:

Dock Street
Middlesbrough
TS2 1AD

The Governing Body Committee **approved** the change of registered address on Companies House for the three subsidiary companies individually gave approval for Z Lewis (as Director) to sign the approved minutes for logging with Companies House as soon as possible.

7. Student Experience

7.1 Note of Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting

P Lynn gave a brief appraisal of the March meeting, drawing particular attention to the two department presentations from Health and Care and TTE which had resulted in some healthy discussion.

7.2 QIP Update

O Rodley updated the Committee on progress against the QiP including greater detail of persistent absenteeism progress which was declining and learner progress over time which was progressing. He also outlined three departments which were being given intervention support.

Governors' discussion and questions included: areas where persistent absentee levels were highest and potential options at enrolment to ensure full classes and related complexities of such approaches; heavy resourcing of undiagnosed additional needs and impact; accommodation space issues with high numbers of students and outreach options for NEETs; and the positive improvements for many students with persistent absence when compared to their individual previous school attendance records, despite being at lower than optimal College targets.

Z Lewis also updated Governors on the recent Government announcement in relation to Construction funding support, of which further details may follow with the Spring Statement.

7.3 Quality of Education Update

B Robinson drew attention to the proposed changes by Ofsted and likely future changes to reports to Governors as a result of this. More widely, he confirmed that curriculum intent was strong, and the support of new staff was working very well, albeit that staff turnover was an ongoing risk factor (particularly in hard to recruit areas).

Curriculum reform was discussed as being one of main areas of concern (as outlined in B Robinson's update to governors last week which had given a full summary); the ongoing commitment to T Levels by the Government and of a more accessible approach to them; and changes to English and Maths requirements.

It was anticipated that the curriculum and assessment review is likely to make recommendations by November.

In addition, with the Ofsted framework changes, the whole self-assessment process would likely need to be reviewed to align appropriately with the new inspection framework which is still in consultation phase, although the current advice from the Head of Ofsted had been to not change anything for 2025-2026.

7.4 PDBA Update

A Adamson gave an update to her report in respect of persistent absentee rates which were now slightly lower at 25.36% (from 26.24%) and higher completion rates of the progression interviews.

7.5 Safeguarding Update

A Adamson presented her report.

Governors questions and discussion included: whether figures were likely to increase with transition information from schools suggesting that this was likely; suicidal idealization figures which whilst a concern, suggested a positive culture of safeguarding and an increase in learners who could be appropriately supported; case management and support for staff; the benefits of the proactive system used at enrolment this year which would be used going forward; how high level safeguarding cases/risks were managed; the variety of mechanisms to protect learners and staff more widely; Prevent related activity in the local area; and detail of the Smoothwall monitoring system in action and how this had been developed for the college environment.

Z Lewis updated governors in respect of a recent Gazette article referring to a historic incident.

7.6 Student Voice Update

The Student Voice report was received for information.

8. Governance Update

8.1 Search and Governance Recommendations

The following recommendations were **approved** by the Governing Body:

- **Link Governors**
For both Marina Gaze and Jon Tait to have link governor responsibility for the following areas:
 - Teaching, Learning and Assessment including Apprenticeships
 - Maths and English
 - ITE
- **Second Term of Office (Co-opted Governor)**
For Stephen Brown, at the end of his current term of office, to be given a further two year term from 16 December 2025 until 15 December 2027
- For the Chair of the **Governing Body Elective Process** to be instigated as of 24 March 2025 with initial applications to be received by 28 April 2025.
- **Change of Status** - for Rob Davies, at the end of his current term of office (31 July 2025), subject to the successful appointment of a new Chair, to move to Co-opted Governor on a two year term (until 31 July 2027) in the first instance (with an option to extend) with the following responsibilities:
 - Mentor the incoming Chair of the Governing Body
 - Remain as Link Governor for Finance for one year (in the first instance)
 - Remain on the Corporate Services Committee for the two year term
- The early addition to the incoming Chair (once determined either by single nomination or as a result of an elective process) onto the Search and Governance Committee and involvement in other appropriate activities

during the summer term, ahead of formal appointment at the July meeting, to allow for early shadowing, mentoring and support.

8.2 Governance Report

Z Foster presented her report.

Approval was received by the Governing Body for the Corporate Governance Report 2023-2024 which included the Remuneration Report 2023-2024.

Both reports would be published on the College website as soon as possible.

9. Review of Strategic Risks – verbal

The strategic risks were reconsidered and after discussion, it was **agreed** these remained as per Item 5.1. Any update in relation to those risks and the impact of them would form part of the May Strategy day agenda.

10. Date and Time of Meetings Summer Term 2025

- Strategic Planning Day – Friday 9 May 2025 1-5pm
- Curriculum Strategy Meeting – Monday 9 June 2025 5-8pm
- Governing Body (Ordinary) – Thursday 10 July 2025 4.30-8pm

11. Matters Not for Publication

None recorded.

12. Any other Business - none taken

The meeting ended at 6.48pm