THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING – 21.03.2019

PRESENT: R Davies (CG and Chairman), A Allen (CG), R Anderson (CG), H Ashton (CG), A Coleman-Cooke (CG), C Cooney (CG), M Gaze (CG), C Hudson (Student Governor), S Lane (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/Chief Executive), A Malcolm (CG), T Parkinson (CG), A Waller-Amos (Staff Governor).

OFFICERS: J Chance (VP), G Cumiskey (DP), Z Foster (Clerk), C Kipling (VP), J Steel (AP).

KEY: CG College Governor EM External Member DP Deputy Principal
      Clerk Clerk to the Corporation VP Vice Principal AP Assistant Principal
      DOP Director of Programme ED Executive Director

1. Apologies for Absence
M Clarke (Student Governor), D Cleves (Staff Governor), J Golightly (CG), L Holdsworth (CG), Y Khan (CG), P Studd (CG).

2. Minutes and Appointments
2.1 Minutes of 18.12.2018 – approved and signed as a correct record
2.2 Minutes of Development Session 0f 07.02.2019 – approved and signed as a correct record
2.3 Search and Governance Committee Recommendations – R Davies

The following recommendations were presented, discussed and unanimously approved:
- That all governors complete the Skills and Competency proforma at the meeting of 21 March 2019
- That H Ashton and R Anderson be appointed as College Governors from 21 March 2019 for a period of four years
- That H Ashton be assigned to Corporate Services and R Anderson to Audit and Risk Committees
- That S Wilson’s term of office as External Member be extended for a further four year term (the initial term having been for two years ending on 19.05.2019) until 18 May 2023
- The Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of Governors Process for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2021 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the recommendations sheet. Additionally, in order to determine appropriate succession planning as required:
  - That R Davies and A Coleman-Cooke would stand for a further term of office as Chair and Vice Chair respectively with the proviso of seeking a Chair and Vice Chair designate by March 2020
  - That if any other governor choose to stand for office for either position that they be considered as per the process
  - That the process started on 21 March 2019 (as per Appendix 1 timeline)
  - That the process be completed with approvals sought at the Governing Body meeting of 15 July 2019.
- That the election of Chair and Vice Chair of Committees for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2021 be considered at the meeting of 15 July 2019

Action by Z Foster to ensure that the recommendations were actioned and recorded as outlined above.

H Ashton and R Anderson were welcomed to the Committee and full introductions were given.
3. **Matters Arising – R Davies**
All actions had been completed or were in progress as per the tracking sheet.

4. **Declaration of Interests – H Ashton** in relation to Item 6.3 (detailed under that item)

5. **Strategic Overview – Z Lewis**
Z Lewis presented a full report including:
- That the QUIP was continuing to move in the right direction. Two main areas of focus remained i) Health and Care ii) Apprenticeships including possible funding decisions
- Staff survey showed 10% overall improvement with key areas in which to make progress
- Finances were on budget though not as originally planned which was reflective of the volatility of income streams
- AoC and DfE quality and funding updates including: shared data of the average class size being 14 (MC – 13.4); performance tables and the political focus on T Levels and A Levels
- Further detail on attendance research and recommendations, high level budget analysis and apprenticeship funding would all form part of the May Strategic planning session.

**Governors’ discussion and queries included:**
- Attendance research outcomes? Varied – some through teaching more hours for E&M; schools were more systematic and the college was piloting some initiatives. Discussion followed on attendance officers, resources (staffing), tutorial systems; linking bursaries to attendance and the local effects on attendance November – January. There was acknowledgement from governors experienced in the sector that attendance was currently still more positive than in many other colleges.
- Apprenticeship funding particularly non-levy underfunding and implications

6. **Student Experience**

6.1 **Standards Committee Recommendations – A Coleman-Cooke**
There were no recommendations for approval from the meeting of 4 March 2019.

A Coleman-Cooke presented an overview of the meeting including: the positive indicators from the QUIP in most areas after Assessment Point 3 and a positive student QDP survey. Areas of concern highlighted were attendance, apprenticeships and Health and Care.

6.2 **Progress Measures and KPIs Update – J Chance**
J Chance presented a full report including: strong predicted outturn for Main Study programmes; Adults update including higher retention and predicted achievement; apprenticeships and the rate of progress all of which had been reported and debated fully in Standards Committee.

**Governors’ queries and discussions included:**
- Whether there had been a resolution over HE student access over the Easter (complicated by College closure)? The LRC would be moving some resources over to the STEM centre and online was available. This was debated in detail in relation to longer term plans for HE linked to IoT
- The two main areas of concern: i) Adults ii) Apprenticeships particularly in relation to the rate of change. Governors acknowledged the complexity of the apprenticeship agenda
- Whether the merged Apps quality system was effective? There was certainly a better line of accountability and reporting on this would be further tailored for Standards Committee
6.3 Curriculum Update – G Cumiskey

G Cumiskey drew attention to the key areas:
- Positive progress with BE; good progress 16-18 with increased support for Access (Adults)
- A Levels and English and Maths improving. However, this was cautious and careful monitoring was in place as these areas were ‘end tested’

The Committee’s discussion and queries included:
- Concerns with Health and Care where governors queried the effectiveness of the strategies in place. As these were on-going it was difficult to see the impact as yet. It was hoped that after external assessment in April there would be a better idea of the effect of these
- Queried the student comments within the student focus groups on lessons. G Cumiskey outlined the minor issue within Maths and English, which had now been addressed
- A full discussion on Maths mentors in relation to: funding (which ended in a year’s time) and future funding decisions; profile of mentors and investment in some via ITT which governors were supportive of; recruitment of mentors and how they were used within the classroom.

H Ashton declared an interest in relation to this item on a general basis in that she currently sat on the board at NCFE.

6.4 Safeguarding Update – J Steel

The report was presented, followed by a full discussion and questions session which included:
- Recognition of the work the college had done – finalist in the AoC Beacon Award on 22 March 2019. Governors wished J Steel and her team the best of luck.
- Apparent reductions in homelessness? The various types of homelessness were discussed and the self-disclosed nature of the issue, also that figures tended to increase later in the year
- High levels of interventions in Health and Social Care? This was the area with the largest student numbers therefore naturally drew higher levels of support
- Positive retention rates of students who were involved in intervention was discussed
- The mental health strategy of the College was discussed and governors were impressed by the dedicated work in this area. J Steel outlined the processes in place including assessment at enrolment, students seeking support and tutorial discussions
- Increase in numbers reported for Sexual Abuse was queried? There had been a greater number of disclosure many of which were historic. Additionally, there was greater general awareness and this was discussed by governors and college leadership
- Adequate resourcing of Safeguarding? J Steel – yes particularly in light of changes made to the Safeguarding Team which was bigger and where officers were allocated a particular curriculum area which was working well. Additionally, much of the reported detail was from incidents outside of the College. She gave reassurances that the College was a safe environment
- Whether there was an increase in knife crime? J Steel – there had not been any incidents at MC. There was awareness raising taking place including a police visit on 20th March. The College followed all guidance within this area in relation to its policies and provision.

Linked to this item, Z Lewis updated Governors on a tragic accident which had occurred on the college site earlier in the year but had only recently been released via local news (including the Gazette). Governors discussed this in some detail and Z Lewis confirmed that all appropriate actions had been taken by the college and that support was in place for those affected.

7. Corporate Updates

7.1 Corporate Services Committee Recommendations – R Davies

After full consideration, the following recommendations were approved by the Governing Body:

Governing Body Minutes 21.03.19 (16.07.19)
7.2 Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations – A Malcolm

A Malcolm presented the recommendation to enter a tender exercise for an External Auditor (currently KPMG). Governors discussed this particularly the length of time KPMG had been the college auditor and good practice principals regarding the rotation of auditors.

Governors approved unanimously the decision to enter into a tender exercise to award a new three-year audit contract from 1 August 2019 to undertake the 2019 / 2020 year-end financial statements and regulatory audit with an option to extend for a further two periods of 12 months.

A Malcolm also drew attention to the following which governors discussed:
- The excellent progress with IT which would be an area for internal audit by December 2019
- The internal audit system under RSM this academic year and the detailed audits received
- Risk Management – Curriculum deep dive, part of which resulted in more information specifically on English and Maths coming to a later Audit and Risk Committee meeting for assurances (though it was acknowledged that detail of this sat with Standards Committee)

7.3 Management Accounts (January 2019) – C Kipling

A full overview was given at this half year position including: that the College was still on target for achieving the 1.4m operational surplus; the reduction in 16-18 core funding had not been as large as originally predicted and could decrease further; ongoing risk re apprenticeships and devolution which would require a strategic discussion; and the success to date of the financial health improvement plan.

Z Lewis gave a further update in relation to land sale and wider borough wide issues in relation to school provision and the potential impact on the College. She would keep governors informed.

A full discussion took place about the financial health strategy and it was agreed that this would be considered in more detail when more information was known particularly in relation to land sales, IoT, devolution and year-end figures.

Governors’ questions and discussion included:
- Adult Devolution re-cap and update under the Combined Authority and what the College was doing to be best placed for success within the bidding process. Z Lewis confirmed that decisions would be made at cabinet in May 2019.
- Update on ESF contract situation which would end on 31st March 2019

7.4 Recruitment, Admissions and Sales Report – C Kipling

C Kipling highlighted the format changes to the report and A Waller-Amos gave an update on recruitment and marketing including:
- That applications were strong in all areas and up on last year
- Significant marketing activity was taking place including events such as Year 10 Discovery Days (which were proving hugely popular), alumni and social media strategies.

Governors’ discussion and queries included:
- Local competition both within and outwith Middlesbrough and the factors affecting this including the upturn in demographics and the need to recruit more to maintain stability.
- Whether the College could cope with admissions of 3900? Yes – had done more than 4000 before and were working up accommodation strategies for increase expected over the next ten years
- The funding situation including discussion on ‘lagged funding’ and business cases for in-year funding; funding factors and why recruitment had to be increased in order to maintain current position; commercial income and strategies to improve this
- Work experience and how this operated? The College was developing strategies to increase opportunities including the recent restructure of the sales and work experience teams into one. Governors discussed the reasons for the variation in success of gaining work experience placements between departments, students finding their own placements, accessibility for students, attendance and the need to increase placements at the lower levels.
- T Levels and the challenge of 50 day placements specifically: quality assurances; student appetite for long placements and associated factors; T level pilots and the suggestion that 50 days is proving too much for both students and employers (DfE report); what was best for the student experience
- Apprenticeship sales and the possibility of increasing these through successful work placements with an appropriate follow up strategy. G Cumiskey drew attention to some focused work by S Coleman in this area. Z Lewis suggested a cultural shift was required by students and employers which may take a number of years – but should be beneficial for both.

7.5 Subcontractors Update – J Chance
Highlights drawn attention to included:
- Increased number of subcontractors to spread risk and mitigate any possible loss of delivery
- Reporting on Subcontractors to be changed for Standards Committee
- Achievement on par with last year

Governors queried whether there were any considerable risks (as last year). It was hoped not due to strategy of spreading the risk which was RAG rated based on audit information.

7.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Term 1 Update – G Cumiskey
G Cumiskey drew attention to:
- The College had retained the Equality Gold Award which was supported by Equality North East and the BIG (Bullying Intervention Group) Award in FE had been retained for 5 years in a row
- College had fundraised to the tune of £3000 for worthy causes (both national and local)
- There had been good progress in relation to the action plan and priorities

Governors raised the equality and diversity figures in relation to staffing. It was confirmed that Y Khan was working with the Equality and Diversity Committee and HR Director, through the People Strategy, to develop the staff profile via a longitudinal approach.

8. Governance Update – Z Foster
Z Foster drew attention to:
- Under 8.4 - that there was an expectation from the DfE that the adoption (or not) of the AoC’s new Colleges Senior Staff Remuneration Code was referenced in the Financial Accounts Report for
December 2019. **Action by C Kipling and Z Foster to ensure this referencing occurred (subject to the code being formally approved at the next meeting of the Governing Body)**

- The Performance Indicators 2017-18 document would form part of the Corporate Governance Annual Report due to be received by the Governing Body this academic year
- 2018-2019 Performance Indictors document would be revised to accommodate changes in attendance. Additionally, the Attendance Policy would be revised through Search and Governance then come to the Governing Body at its July meeting.

**Governors unanimously approved the following:**

8.1 Student Union Constitution Update  
8.2 Calendar of Dates 2019-2020  
8.3 Standing Order Update  
8.4 Terms of Reference Update

It was noted under 8.4 (as per the Code of Governance for English Colleges (10.3)) that the Governing Body was satisfied that all of the Committees have met their Terms of Reference and that they remained fit for purpose.

9. College Policies and Procedures  

9.1 Avoidance and Handling of Redundancies Policy – J Steel  
J Steel confirmed the minor changes to titles of unions and notice period changes.

**Governors unanimously approved** the Avoidance and Handling of Redundancies Policy for adoption

J Chance updated Governors on the requirement for the Code of Conduct for requirements by the OU and OfS (and general good practice). The document had been formulated after consideration of legal advice supported by research into codes in other organisations. After approval by the Governing Body this would be disseminated through all of the College systems and structures.

**Governors unanimously approved** the Freedom of Speech Code of Conduct.

10. Date of Next Meetings – R Davies  

10.1 Friday 17th May 2019 1-2pm lunch followed by Strategic Planning 2-5.30pm  
- Z Foster reminded governors to remove the 18th May 2019 date from outlook  
- Z Lewis informed members that the first hour of the session would be led by Kirsti Lord (Deputy Chief Executive – Member Services) from the AoC  
10.2 Monday 15th July 2019 – 5pm would be the final Governing Body meeting of the year

11. Matters for Publication  
All with the exception of references to possible land sale.

12. Any other Business - **Action by Z Foster – to organize buffet for future GB meetings.**

13. Reserved Items – none taken

The meeting closed at 6.53pm.