



TyneCoastCollege

Meeting of the Board

Venue: South Tyneside College/Teams

Date: Thursday 03 April 2025

Time: 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Present: Malcolm Grady (in the Chair)
George Clark
Kimberley Ellis (Student Governor)
Joanne Fanning
Gary Hindmarch
Clive Johnson
Nicola McCluskey (Staff Governor)
Jackie Watson Teams)
Lindsey Whiterod (LWh)
Jim Dafter (Teams)
Michael Johnston
Rachael Taylor

Apologies: Martin Alexander
Doug Cole
Surajah Hunter

In Attendance: Neil Longstaff (Director of Governance)
Lorna Lister (Senior Governor Support Officer)
Jane Cuthbertson (Chief Operating Officer)
Allyson Edney (Director of HR)
Simon Ashton (SSMS Principal)
Craig Scott (Director of IT)

Action Tracker

Minutes

ITEM NO.	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	Apologies for absence The Board received and approved apologies for absence from those identified above after having first considered the reasons for their absence.	
2.	Declarations <u>2.1 Declarations of interests</u> The Chair reminded members to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose on the agenda.	

	<p>There were standing declarations for links to Tyne Coast Academy Trust for the following: MG, LW, JF, GC and CJ.</p> <p><u>2.2 Business to be raised under Item 10</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
3.	<p>Confirmation of the minutes.</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 19 December 2024, 23 January 2025 and 17th March 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Clive Johnson was to be removed from the attendance list (17/03/25).</p> <p>Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda</p> <p>As shown on the Action Tracker.</p>	
4.	<p>Strategic Matters</p> <p><u>4.1 Presentation – Continuing Professional development</u> Allyson Edney (HR Director) and Nicola McCluskey (Learning & Training Manager) presented an overview of the CPD that had been conducted in the College and the planned activities for the future.</p> <p>Q. How do you link Learning & Development plans to competencies? The professional standards are via the Education & Training Foundation (ETF). JF offered her support as she'd had experience of working with the standards.</p> <p>Q. What CPD is offered to the LSA's? AE explained there were many LSA's that worked within the College. There were planned CPD days involving a guest speaker to present. Delivery of in-house CPD around their role and how it fits into the curriculum.</p> <p>Q. How do employees access CPD? Initially through induction.</p> <p>Q. How do you receive feedback from the staff? Constructive feedback is sought from HR Roadshows and via Quality meetings and staff voice.</p> <p>Q. Could there be CPD between college's or curriculum areas? Yes, NM had visited Gateshead College and Tony Pattison (Quality Director) had visited another local college to share good practice.</p> <p>Resolved: The Board acknowledge the presentation.</p> <p><u>4.2 Chairs Update/Actions</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>4.3 Progress against Strategic Priorities in Strategic Plan</u> <u>Confidential item</u></p> <p>The latest Strategic Plan had been presented and approved by the Executive Group and was being presented to the Board for approval.</p> <p>The CEO emphasised the 7 Strategic Goals and highlighted the changes made following the last Board meeting, views were sought from the governors.</p> <p>A governor requested that the 7 Strategic Goals be listed on the Executive Summary cover sheet.</p>	

	<p>The governors felt that the Strategic Plan was positive and was presented in a simple visual format.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the Board agree the report acknowledging the information as presented. ii. That the Board endorse the Strategic Plan. <p><u>4.4 Report of the Chief Executive incl. Academy Trust Update</u></p> <p>The purpose of the report was to update on activities in the College and the Academy Trust.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted the following matters within her report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance update • FE Curriculum update • Marine School update • HR Update • IT Update • AoC Chief Executive's Letter – 17-01-25 • Letter from Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education • Letter to Institutes of Technology from Baroness Jacqui Smith, Minister of Skills <p>LWh formally informed the Board that the funding support from NECA had been approved, the Board were thanked for their hard work, support and response throughout the process. This was currently the largest build project in the country and was a huge achievement for the College and the local area. The Development Agreement had been returned with some amendments which were being worked through with the support of Ward Hadaway.</p> <p>It was reported that Ofsted had a new regime and were using a new framework, a report would follow what changes were to come and how this would tie into the college framework.</p> <p>LWh reported to the Board an anonymous complaint had been raised through the Union, generally policy and procedure stated anonymous complaints were not investigated however due to the content of the complaint it was agreed to investigate. An independent review was completed by the HR team and a senior member of staff, it was found to be unsubstantiated.</p> <p>Q. Has feedback been given to the Union? Yes, a full update was reported back.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted that finance was a concern especially with the impending increase in National Insurance.</p> <p>The Chair explained to those governors who were new to the Board the relationship the college had with Tyne Coast Academy Trust as the Sponsor. He noted that they had been working closely with GORSE Academies and that the collaboration had been working very well.</p> <p>Q. The £1.9m funding which had been awarded to Redby and Monkwearmouth School, how was this going to impact the other schools in the Trust? This was unknown at present.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the Trust worked across three local authorities and as the Sponsor of the Trust had overall responsibility, it was imperative that the College Board were kept well versed in all Trust business.</p>	<p>LWh</p>
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	<p>Resolved: That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</p> <p><u>4.5 Estates Strategy incl. New Build update</u> Confidential item</p>	
5.	<p>Audit/Risk</p> <p><u>5.1 Committee Chair Report</u> Chair reported that the feedback from the Auditors (Internal/External) was extremely positive with no issues presenting themselves. The feedback report showed that the college followed policy and procedures. The accounts were approved and submitted by the deadline, which was a credit to the staff, well done to all involved.</p> <p><u>5.2 Risk Management Deep Dive</u> The purpose of the report was to provide governors with the 'Deep Dive' review into the College Risk management process with specific reference to the Internal Audit Report recommendations and the recent External Governance review.</p> <p>Internal Audit conducted on the Risk Management aspect of the business was completed and recommendations were made. An External Review of Governance was also completed which highlighted some further recommendations.</p> <p>The report outlined the background, and the recommendations made from audit and actions for taking the recommendations forward specifically the External Governance review.</p> <p>It was discussed recommending to Board the distribution of high-level strategic risks to its committees for monitoring purposes, this would form part of the committees workplan for the year. A report would be presented from each committee to Audit on the monitoring of each of the allocated risks. This would then form part of an annual summary report that would be presented to Board in the Summer meeting demonstrating oversight, progression and areas of further work.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the Corporate Risk Register was to be presented at every Audit committee. It was also discussed that the New Build Risk Register, which was monitored through the task group, should also be presented to the Audit Committee for oversight.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. That governors accept the report acknowledging the information, as presented. ii. The Board agree the distribution of high-level risks to committees for monitoring purposes. 	
6.	<p>Finance/Resources</p> <p><u>6.1 Committee Chair Report</u> The Chair explained that the committee were concentrating on three key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finance of the College – this was improving this year however there was predicted pressure again next year. Finance and Budget holders were thanked for their support in the savings that had been made. 2. A separate report was requested at Finance Committee which highlighted the budget pressures, the Chair was confident to see that the pressures were being managed well. 3. Funding for 25/26 – positive report. 	

	<p>The Chair explained that discussions had took place around the new build in South Shields however noted that TyneMet was part of the College estate and was equally important.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the presentation by HR and acknowledged the positive impact the department was having.</p> <p><u>6.2 Management Accounts and Commentary</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>6.3 Business Continuity Update</u> The purpose of the report was to provide Board with an update on the college Business Continuity position.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the last report in March 2024, there were no business continuity incidents. According to our Business Continuity Policy, a desktop simulation exercise should be conducted if no incidents occur within 12 months. • In October 2024, significant refurbishment works began for blocks D, F, E, and Ignite at Tynemet. These works required the full vacation of blocks D, F, and Ignite, and the partial vacation of block E. • Approximately one-third of the campus needed to be relocated within a tight two-week period due to immovable project deadlines. The requirements and urgency of this exercise mirrored those of a business continuity event. • The relocation project was managed by the Director of Estates, Sarah Bartlett, involving timetabling classes into free slots and reusing mothballed floors. Daily Teams meetings were held to coordinate efforts between various departments. • Challenges included staff availability, the volume of materials to be relocated, and insufficient rooms with power and data cabling. Solutions involved prioritising project work, hiring temporary staff, and making substantial timetable changes. • Key to the success was the daily catch-up meetings via Microsoft Teams, which allowed rapid issue resolution and adherence to timescales. The response to this incident was used in place of a desktop simulation exercise. <p>CS updated the Board on a recent audit that the IT department had been involved in. The DfE require the College to have a Cyber Essentials Certificate, there were 2 levels, Basic and Plus. Audit had tested the processes and had finished after 3.5 days, and the Assessor commented that overall it was an outstanding outcome. The governors congratulated CS and his team.</p> <p>Resolved: That governors accept the report acknowledging the information, as presented.</p>	
7.	<p>Quality, Curriculum, Standards & Students</p> <p><u>7.1 Committee Chair Report</u> The Chair confirmed that the Quality Report, Safeguarding Report and the Halls Self-Assessment Report for 2023-24 had been scrutinised by the committee. He noted the risk around the T Levels and the TyneMet refurbishment which was almost complete. He felt that the Accountability Agreement update was very positive however were concerns around work experience and attendance as this was still low. The achievement of outgoing 16-19 was tracking lower than the previous year, the expectation was that 19+ achievement would be higher than last year and Apprenticeships of a similar standard.</p> <p><u>7.2 Student Union report</u></p>	

	<p>This report provides an update on Student Union activities, progress made, and areas requiring support with the board. It aligned with the college's strategic goals by focusing on student engagement, community development, and support for learners.</p> <p>Communication had improved throughout the Union, there was more advertising of events and the Facebook page was live, which was updated regularly. There was noticeable improvement of involvement from the students around the planned events.</p> <p>The following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 136 SU members + • 2 New leads from Foundation at Tyme Met • Valentines Events • Pride • Eid • Freshers 26 Planning <p>KE noted that a new Student President had been appointed and did not want the momentum to stop, she felt that this role should be split between TyneMet and STC in order to allow both sites to feel involved. The CEO acknowledged this and agreed to look into this.</p> <p>Governors asked could they be informed when student events were organised so that they could attend.</p> <p>The CEO noted the vibrancy around the college, The Vice Chair thanked KE for her report.</p> <p>Resolved: That the governors accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</p> <p><u>7.3 Quality Update</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>7.4 Safeguarding Report</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>7.5 Halls Self-Assessment Report 2023-24</u> The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the halls for the Board demonstrating, progress, safeguarding and achievements of our u18 residents, highlighting processes implemented, to ensure the college met the social care and boarding Ofsted minimum standards.</p> <p>Dr Winterbottom Halls of Residence, was currently rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, on the boarding inspection framework, last inspected in March 2023. The SAR, demonstrated how we were doing, what we were doing well and what we could do to improve the service provided. The college rated themselves a 'good' based on the standard of accommodation being clean but basic, offering shared bathroom facilities. The level of pastoral care, however, was outstanding from our self-assessment. The college could evidence, in the SAR that students living in the Halls of residence were positively impacted by the experience.</p> <p>The Self-Assessment report was provided for information and comment.</p> <p>The Chair of QCS Committee informed the governors that recently a cooking course had been provided to the younger students, which was very well received. The</p>	
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	<p>governors also welcomed the engagement with the students and complimented Safeguarding Manager and his staff for the support they offered.</p> <p>Resolved: That the governors accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</p> <p>7.6 Accountability Agreement Update This report was tabled at the most recent QCS Committee, it was noted that it was an excellent report, presented well with a positive theme. The Chair of QCS stated he had no concerns with the report, the final version of the report would be presented to the Board in June at the Development Event with a view to the Agreement being submitted to the DfE by the end of June.</p> <p>Resolved: That the governors accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</p> <p>7.7 HE Strategy 2025-2030 The purpose of the report was to provide the Board with an updated Higher Education Strategy, the report had been scrutinised by the QCS Committee.</p> <p>Tyne Coast College had a large HE Curriculum and was one of the largest providers of HE in the North of England, outside of universities. The college needed to remain central to the skills agenda in North and South Tyneside and the wider region's future prosperity, which could be achieved through Higher Education programmes, alongside FE programmes. Therefore, a revised Higher Education Strategy had been devised by the Principal SSMS and the Director of HE: Quality and Systems.</p> <p>It was noted that there had been minimal changes, the College were awarded the Broze TEF award however were hoping to increase this to Silver in the coming years.</p> <p>Resolved: That the governors accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</p>	
8.	<p>Governance/ Link Governors</p> <p>8.1 Governance Update including appointment of Vice Chair The purpose of the report was to provide an update on governance arrangements for the College and to plan for appointments in a timely manner.</p> <p>The following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current composition and membership of the College Board was provided. • Views were to be considered of the appointment of Gary Hindmarch as Vice Chair following the retirement of the current Vice Chair. • The Board were to complete any outstanding mandatory training and returns for 2024/25 and attend one of the online training sessions for the new governor portal 'Decisions'. • The Board considered the re-appointment of Joanne Fanning as her first year in position as governor was due to expire on the 16th April 2025. • The Board was to consider the membership of its committees and to identify Vice-Chairs where not already appointed, which was a key element of the Board's succession planning. V Chairs were required for the following committees: Finance, Audit, Quality and Governance. <p>GH was asked to vacate the meeting whilst the Board discussed the Vice Chair appointment, The Chair noted that he had liaised with the CEO, Director of Governance and the current Vice Chair regarding the appointment all of which agreed to the</p>	

	<p>nomination. All governors endorsed the nomination and felt that this would be a positive appointment for the Board, GH was welcomed back to the meeting.</p> <p>JF was also asked to vacate the meeting whilst governors discussed her re-appointment for a further three years, once again all governors agreed. JF was welcomed back to the meeting.</p> <p>The Director of Governance informed the Board that there were two ongoing governor applications which were now at the stage to invite to their 'Get to Know You' meetings with a view of the Governance & Search Committee recommending to Board for approval. It was noted that although there were no current vacancies on the Board the new candidates could support through committees until a position became available.</p> <p>Dr Winterbottom Fellowship update – there had been no nominations to date, two individuals could be appointed per year. The Marine Principal noted he had two potential nominations however would have to make further enquiries and report back to DofG.</p> <p>DofG explained that there were still two governors with extended periods of leave, The Chair asked for a letter to be sent to both expressing the Boards well wishes.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the governors accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented. ii. That the Board agree to complete any outstanding training and mandatory returns for 2024-25. iii. That the Board approve re-appointment of Joanne Fanning for a further 3 years until 16th April 2028. iv. That the Board endorse and approve the appointment of Gary Hindmarch as Vice Chair to the Board commencing in July 2025. <p><u>8.2 Application of the College Seal</u> The college seal was applied to the amendment to the Exclusivity Agreement to Avant Homes.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board endorse the use of the college seal on the Avant Contract.</p>	
9.	<p>Consent Agenda</p> <p><u>9.1 Statutory Reports/Policies/Reports for Information</u> Governors received the following documents for formal approval, which were deemed not to require further Board discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fees Policy b. College Financial Handbook c. HE Admissions Policy d. FE Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy e. HE Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy f. Business Continuity Policy g. Security Policy h. Risk management Policy i. Subcontracting Fees and Charging Policy j. Senior Postholder Disciplinary Policy and Procedure k. Grievance Policy <p>Resolved: That the Board agree the above-mentioned reports.</p> <p><u>9.2 Minutes of Committees/Task Groups of the Board</u></p>	

	<p>The following minutes were received by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Business Development Committee – 6 February 2025 b. Audit Committee – 6 March 2025 c. Quality, Curriculum & Standards – 19 March 2025 d. Finance & Resources Committee – 20 March 2025 e. New Build Task Group – 16 December 2024, 13 January 2025, 10 February 2025 & 10 March 2025. <p>Resolved: That the minutes of the above-mentioned Committees are received.</p>	
10.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>None</p>	
11.	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 12th June 2025 12noon – 4.00pm (Development Event & Board) • It was also agreed that the Audit Committee was to be rescheduled to 5th June at 9.00am. 	
12.	<p>Identification of confidential items</p> <p>The Board agree that the following items should remain confidential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 4.2 – Chairs Update • Item 4.5 – Estates Strategy and New Build Update • Item 6.2 – Management Accounts • Item 7.3 – Quality Update • Item 7.4 – Safeguarding Report 	

Chair:

Date: