



# TyneCoastCollege

## Meeting of the Board

**Venue:** The Customs House/Teams (T)

**Date:** Thursday 17 July 2025

**Time:** 4.00pm – 6.10pm

**Present:** Malcolm Grady (in the Chair)  
Jim Dafter  
Kimberley Ellis  
Joanne Fanning  
Neil Henry  
Gary Hindmarch  
Michael Johnston  
Rachael Taylor  
Donya Urwin (T)  
Lindsey Whiterod (LWh)

**Apologies:** Martin Alexander  
Doug Cole  
Nicola McCluskey  
Jackie Watson  
Surajah Hunter  
Clive Johnson

**In Attendance:** Neil Longstaff (Director of Governance)  
Lorna Lister (Senior Governor Support Officer)  
Jane Cuthbertson (Chief Operating Officer)  
Karen Ritchie (Head of Finance)  
Allyson Edney (Director of HR)  
Craig Scott (Executive Director of Digital and Projects)  
Simon Ashton (Principal South Shields Marine School)  
David Gardner (Interim Principal)

### **ACTION TRACKER**

Item	Summary of Action Required	By whom	Status	Comment/Update
Meeting of the 17 October 2023				
3.	<b><u>Presentation</u></b> presentation at the beginning of a Board meeting - feedback from Careers Advisers on students' readiness for work.	<b>Chair</b>		Scheduled for July 2024 <u>As at 16.7.24</u> Deferred until Autumn 2024
Meeting of the 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2024				
8.1	<b><u>Report of the CEO:</u></b> Exploration work to commence at Monkseaton School.	<b>LWh</b>		16/10/25 - Task Group been set up to work with North Tyneside Council and key stakeholders to do an options appraisal for all

				potential sites in North Tyneside.
Meeting of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2025				
7.2	<b>Student Union Report:</b> Activities ran by the Student Union to be shared with the Governors.	KE		
Meeting of the 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2025				
4.3	<b>Progress against Strategic Priorities in Strategic Plan</b> Provide 6 monthly update to Board to track progress	LWh		16/10/25 - See Board report been updated to include strategic plan and strategic priorities tracker.
4.4	<b>Report of the Chief Executive:</b> To be included in the HR update to Board the evolving Marine Levy 4	AE/LWh		
6.4	<b>Student Union Budget:</b> If the student union generated their own funds could this be match funded?	JC		16/10/25 - The student union are encouraged to generate own funds and in previous years they haven't spent their budget, and the surplus has been moved to support DWH funds.
7.4	<b>Student Union Report:</b> Freshers' week activities to be shared with the Board	KE		
	The Board to write to both Student Presidents to acknowledge support and hard work.	MG		
7.6	<b>Stakeholder Engagement and Client Management:</b> A paper to be presented to the Board on the insights of working with the Mayoral Authority	DG		16/10/25 – Verbal update to be given at the meeting.

### Minutes

ITEM NO.	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	<b>Apologies for absence</b>  The Board received and approved apologies for absence from those identified above after having first considered the reasons for their absence.	
2.	<b>Declarations</b>  <u>2.1 Declarations of interests</u>  The Chair reminded members to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose on the agenda.  There were standing declarations for links to Tyne Coast Academy Trust for the following: MG, LW and JF.  <u>2.2 Business to be raised under Item 10</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing update</li> </ul>	

3.	<p><b>Confirmation of the minutes of the Board</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on the 3 April and 12 June 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b>Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda</b></p> <p>Item 4.5i - College Campus Relocation update on Programme</p> <p>As shown on the Action Tracker</p>	
4.	<p><b>Strategic Matters</b></p> <p><u>4.1 Presentation – Sexual Harassment in the Workplace</u></p> <p>Allyson Edney (HR Director) gave a presentation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, highlighting the potential new legislation coming in 2026, which would place additional responsibilities on the College. AE recapped the definition of sexual harassment as per the Equality Act 2010 and discussed why addressing it was crucial for the College.</p> <p>The presentation covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current law</li> <li>• The Employment Rights Bill's new responsibilities regarding third-party harassment</li> <li>• The steps the College needed to take, including developing an action plan, reviewing policies, delivering training and conducting risk assessments.</li> </ul> <p>AE emphasised the importance of documenting all actions taken to evidence compliance with the new legislation. There were queries from the members of the Board about the perception of sexual harassment among staff and students, the liability if a student harassed another student and the connection to keeping children safe in education. AE and other Board members discussed these points, highlighting the need for vigilance and responsibility.</p> <p>The members of the board thanked AE for her presentation.</p> <p>AE left the meeting</p> <p><u>4.2 Chair's Update/Actions</u></p> <p>Confidential item</p> <p><u>4.3 Progress against Strategic Priorities in the Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>LWh provided a verbal report on the progress against strategic priorities in the Strategic Plan. She thanked the members of the Board for their contributions to the plan, which she found very coherent and dynamic.</p> <p>The report covered various goals, including financial health, facilities, digital transformation, people, FE and HE curriculum performance, Marine School growth and partnerships. Each goal was discussed in detail, highlighting achievements and ongoing work. LWh emphasised the interconnected nature of these goals and the importance of maintaining strong financial health to support other initiatives. LWh proposed regular updates at least every six months to track progress.</p> <p><b>Q. Under the new Mayoral Authority, did you meet with other colleges?</b> Yes, the College was to mirror what the Universities were doing to partner with the Combined Authority in order to gain funding and access to further funding. The Chairs of all colleges would meet as the next step.</p>	



	<p><u>5.1 Committee Chair Report</u> As George Clark (former Audit Committee Chair) had completed his term of office as a governor JC confirmed that all was in order and progressing well.</p> <p><u>5.2 Internal Audit Strategy 2025-28 and Plan 2025-26</u> JC presented the internal audit strategy for 2025-28, which had been discussed at Senior Executive Group and recommended by the Audit Committee. The strategy was developed based on the College's strategic initiatives, risk profile and assurance framework, identifying areas for internal audits that would provide the greatest benefit. The Board were pleased to see the new HR system had been implemented.</p> <p><b>Q. Should the College Capital Strategy be included in the audit?</b> This would be an additional feature and it has been agreed for the auditor to attend the Capital Project Board meetings in the future to assess what was required.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></li> <li>ii. <b>That the Board approve the Internal Audit Strategy 2025-28 and plan for 2025-26.</b></li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>Finance/Resources</b></p> <p><u>6.1 Committee Chair Report</u> CJ, the Chair of the Finance Resources Committee, was absent but had sent observations via email. CJ reported that the Committee had discussed the financial position of the College, highlighting the need for improved cash flow and major restructuring. Benchmarking activities were underway to ensure efficient operations and effective structures. The College aimed to develop a long-term plan and required new skill sets for upcoming capital works. The Committee would need to address these points and consider reviewing the leadership team structure. The continued improvement of the College's financial position was noted, with significant performance improvements needed for future success.</p> <p><u>6.2 Management Accounts and Commentary</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>6.3 Budget 2025-26 and 2-year financial forecasts</u> JC presented the budget for 2025-26 and the two-year financial forecast. The budget was developed using a new approach adopted from East Kent College, resulting in a more efficient allocation of resources. The College aimed for an 8% EBITDA in both financial years to ensure adequate financial health and had achieved an additional 30 points to the target.</p> <p>A benchmarking exercise was underway against this budget to ensure money was being spent in the right areas. The capital profile was being managed by RS however it was felt that this would not affect the health score or the cash flows.</p> <p>The Board discussed the assumptions and risks outlined in the paper and the importance of benchmarking against the budget. The Board noted the need for continued efficiency and improvement.</p> <p><b>Q. If the 16-19 numbers increased would this increase the Budget?</b> Yes, the College had increased individual student funding, as other avenues became available the budget would be adjusted. It was noted there was more funds in FE now.</p>	

	<p>JC added that it was a very good budget but could not become complacent, the College must continue to operate efficiently.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the College was in a good financial position and added that GR (NLFE) was very complimentary of the finance team.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></li> <li>ii. <b>That the Board approve the Budget 2025-26 and 2 year financial forecasts.</b></li> </ul> <p><u>6.4 Student Union Budget 2025-26</u></p> <p>KR presented the Student Union budget, which proposed an increase to accommodate the Student Union President's role. The Board discussed the emphasis on the Student Union generating its own funds and the historical underspend.</p> <p><b>Q. Was the salary enough for the position?</b> It placed more of an emphasis on the Student Union to go out and fund raise for themselves.</p> <p><b>Q. Was there any way of incentivising the Student Union to generate more money and could we match fund?</b> Yes, this was a possibility and would be looked into.</p> <p><b>Q. What happened to the underspend?</b> It was transferred into the Dr Winterbottom Fund.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></li> <li>ii. <b>That the Board approve the Student Union Budget for 2025-26.</b></li> </ul> <p><u>6.5 Pay Award</u> Confidential item</p>	JC
7.	<p><b>Quality/Curriculum/Standards/Students</b></p> <p><i>With agreement from governors, the Chair changed the order of business as follows:</i></p> <p><u>7.1 SSMS Quality Report</u></p> <p>SA provided a brief update on the SSMS Quality Report, noting positive developments and achievements. The capital work for the Marine School had started and the students had won the National Young Persons Award for Seaways. The Board discussed the positive impact of these achievements and the importance of continuing this progress.</p> <p><b>Q. How were the enrolments going?</b> Very well, the overseas markets were the driving factor.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></p> <p><u>7.2 Committee Chair Report</u></p> <p>GH noted that the Committee meetings were going well and the reports received were comprehensive, which gave governors all the information required to challenge management. He highlighted governors' availability for the meetings and that it would be advantageous to have flexibility around the dates of the meetings to allow all governors to attend.</p> <p><u>7.3 Quality Report Overview</u></p>	

	<p><u>Confidential item</u></p> <p><u>7.4 Student Union Report</u>  The Student Union report was presented, which highlighted various activities and initiatives undertaken by the Student Union. Key achievements included successful student events, increased student engagement and the introduction of new student support programs. The report emphasised the importance of these activities in enhancing student life and fostering a sense of community within the College.</p> <p><b>Q. When was Freshers Week?</b> 3/4 September 2025  <b>Q. What support have you had from marketing?</b> They were always available; at present KE was looking into taking over the control of the Instagram account. However more development was to be made.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></li> <li>ii. <b>That the Board is to be informed of activities organised for Freshers Week</b></li> <li>iii. <b>That the Board was to formally write to the Student Presidents to acknowledge their hard work.</b></li> </ul> <p><u>7.5 HE Fees</u>  The discussion on HE fees focused on the proposed changes to the fee structure for the upcoming academic year. The Board considered various factors, including market competitiveness, affordability for students and the financial implications for the College.</p> <p>The importance of balancing these aspects to ensure accessibility and sustainability was emphasised. It was noted that the HE Fees paper was scrutinised by the Senior Executive Group and the QCS Committee.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></p> <p><u>7.6 Stakeholder Engagement and Client Management</u>  DG provided a verbal update on stakeholder engagement, noting the integration of the plan into the Strategic Plan. The Board discussed the importance of working with local authorities and other stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></li> <li>ii. <b>That a paper is to be presented to the Board on the insights working with the Mayoral Authority.</b></li> </ul> <p><u>7.7 Curriculum Strategy (3 year and 1 year action plan)</u>  DG outlined the curriculum strategy, noting the need for an industrial strategy to align with government expectations. The Board discussed the importance of adapting to changes and ensuring the curriculum strategy supported the College's goals.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</b></p>	<p>KE ALL</p> <p>DG</p>
8.	<p><b>Governance/Link Report</b></p> <p><u>8.1 Committee Chair Report</u></p>	

JF highlighted the importance of succession planning within the Board and that an advert had been shared with governors to send to their own personal network to hopefully gain interest. JF emphasised the need for a skills audit to be updated, which would be beneficial during development conversations scheduled for September.

#### 8.2 Governance Update incl. Succession Planning

NL summarised key points and decisions, including the recommendation from the Governance and Search Committee regarding Margaret Savage (MS). It was suggested that MS be appointed as an External Member to one of the committees of the Board (QCS Committee) for an initial one-year term. NL also referred to an application received through LinkedIn following a College advert post seeking new governors. The application would be reviewed by the Governance and Search Committee.

The reaffirmation of GH as Vice Chair of the Board was discussed, Committee reshuffles were proposed by G&S Committee, including the appointment of George Clark as an External Member to the Capital Project Board, Jim Dafter as Chair of the Audit Committee (directly linked to a members position TCAT), Mark Turnbull as Chair of the Capital Project Board and Joanne Fanning to take on the role of Chair of the Performance, Appraisal & Review Committee. These changes aimed at matching governors skills and experience with the needs of the committees.

Training sessions around the Code of Good Governance principles were discussed and it was highlighted that these were now linked to the draft Annual Business Planner. There was to be a shift from online training to face-to-face training and days had been set aside in the calendar for these sessions to take place.

#### **Resolved:**

- i. **That the Board accept the verbal report and acknowledge the information as presented.**
- ii. **That GH is confirmed as Vice-Chair of the Board with effect from the 1 August 2025, which automatically appoints him as a Sponsor Trustee on the Tyne Coast Academy Trust Board.**
- iii. **That Margaret Savage is appointed as an External Member to the Quality Curriculum and Standards Committee for an initial one-year term commencing 1 September 2025.**
- iv. **That the recommended changes to the Committees and Task Groups are agreed, as presented.**

#### 8.3 Annual Review of Governance arrangement

NL presented the following documents for approval as recommended by Governance and Search Committee:

- Governance Structure
- Instrument and Articles of Government
- Standing Orders and Code of Conduct
- Terms of reference of committees
- Business Planner 2025-26
- Link Governor Protocol, Roles and Latest Report(s)

NL highlighted changes in the annual review of governance arrangements, including the voting rights of students and the reshuffling of lead governor roles. Specific days were assigned for link governors to meet staff (3 per year), ensuring a structured approach to governance reviews. t

Applications of the College Seal were noted as:

- Section 106 Agreements
- Second and Third exclusivity agreement extensions for AVANT
- Pre-Construction Services Agreement



	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</li> <li>ii. That the Board approve the above-mentioned documents and the assigned Link Governor Roles.</li> <li>iii. That the Board endorse the use of the college seal on the Avant Contract</li> <li>iv. That the Board endorse the use of the College seal by the Chair.</li> </ul> <p><u>8.4 Review of Chair's Performance</u> MG withdrew from the meeting</p> <p>The review of the Chair's performance was discussed. A survey was sent out to all governors and the feedback was positive, with no concerns raised.</p> <p><b>Resolved: That the Board, having considered the performance review of the Chair of the Board, agree that Malcolm Grady can continue into his third year of office.</b></p> <p>MG returned to the meeting and was informed of the Board's decision.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Consent Agenda</b></p> <p><u>9.1 Policies/Procedures/Documents</u> Governors received the following documents for formal approval, which were deemed not to require further Board discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Review of Senior postholders Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (from F&amp;R)</li> <li>ii. Review of Redundancy Policy (from F&amp;R)</li> <li>iii. HE Quality Policy</li> <li>iv. Bursary Policy</li> <li>v. External Speakers Policy</li> <li>vi. Conflicts of Interest Policy</li> <li>vii. Complaints Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolved: That the Board agree the above-mentioned reports/policies.</b></p> <p><u>9.2 Minutes of the Committees of the Board</u> <u>The following Committee/Task Group minutes were received:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Audit - 5 June 2025</li> <li>ii. Finance &amp; Resources - 19 June 2025</li> <li>iii. Quality, Curriculum &amp; Standards - 26 June 2025</li> <li>iv. Governance &amp; Search - 22 May 2025</li> <li>v. New Build Task Group/Capital Project Board - 12 May, 2 June, 16 June, 30 June 2025</li> </ul>	
10.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p><u>Staffing update</u> Confidential item</p>	
11.	<p><b>Dates and Times of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>The meeting schedule for the forthcoming academic year was presented for approval. It was noted that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for <b>16 October 2025 at 4.00pm.</b></p>	

8.	<b>Identification of confidential items</b>  <b>Resolved: That the Board agree that the following items should remain confidential:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 4.2 – Chairs Update/Action</li> <li>• Item 4.5 – Estates Update incl New Build</li> <li>• Item 6.2 – Management Accounts &amp; Commentary</li> <li>• Item 6.5 – Pay Award</li> <li>• Item 7.3 – Quality Report Overview</li> <li>• Item 10 – AOB (Restricted)</li> </ul>	
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Chair: ..... Date: .....