



Meeting of the Board

Venue: South Tyneside College/Teams (T)

Date: Thursday 16 October 2025

Time: 3.30pm – 5.30pm

Present: Malcolm Grady (in the Chair)
Doug Cole
Jim Dafter
Joanne Fanning
Neil Henry (T)
Gary Hindmarch (T)
Michael Johnston
Nicola McCluskey
Rachael Taylor (T)
Mark Turnbull
Donya Urwin (T)
Lindsey Whiterod (LWh)

Apologies: Martin Alexander
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)
Craig Scott (Executive Director of Digital and Projects)
Simon Ashton (Principal South Shields Marine School)
David Gardner (Interim Principal)
Richard Spencer (DCO – Strategy, Infrastructure and Transformation)
Emilia Porter (Student President)

ACTION TRACKER

Item	Summary of Action Required	By whom	Status	Comment/Update
Meeting of the 17 October 2023				
3.	<u>Presentation</u> presentation at the beginning of a Board meeting - feedback from Careers Advisers on students' readiness for work.	Chair		Scheduled for July 2024 <u>As at 16.7.24</u> Deferred until Autumn 2024 <u>18.12.25</u> Deferred to the Governor Development Event in Jan 26
Meeting of the 3rd April 2025				
7.2	<u>Student Union Report:</u> Activities ran by the Student Union to be shared with the Governors.	EP		16.10.25 – Presented
Meeting of the 17th July 2025				

4.4	Report of the Chief Executive: To be included in the HR update to Board the evolving Marine Levy 4	AE/LWh		
7.4	Student Union Report: Freshers' week activities to be shared with the Board	EP		16.10.25 - Presented
	The Board to write to both Student Presidents to acknowledge support and hard work.	MG		16.10.25 - Complete
Meeting of the 16 October 2025				
4.1	Presentation – Social Value Exercise: Quarterly Report to Board	LWh		
8.2	Chair Engagement Proposal: Gov's to be invited to Marine School Open Day 8/11/25	LL		Complete

Minutes

ITEM NO.	ISSUES	ACTION
1.	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>The Board received and approved apologies for absence from those identified above after having first considered the reasons for their absence.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed David Gardner to the meeting as the newly appointed Principal of Tyne Coast College.</p> <p>The Chair also welcomed Emilia Porter, the newly appointed Student President to the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations</p> <p><u>2.1 Declarations of interests</u></p> <p>The Chair reminded members to declare any conflicts of interest as they arose on the agenda.</p> <p>There were standing declarations for links to Tyne Coast Academy Trust for the following: MG, LWh, GH, JD and JF.</p> <p><u>2.2 Business to be raised under Item 11</u></p> <p>None</p>	
3.	<p>Confirmation of the minutes of the Board</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on the 17 July and 25 September 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda</p> <p>As shown on the Action Tracker</p>	
4.	Strategic Matters	

	<p>4.1 Presentation – New Build Social Value Exercise</p> <p>Liz Burne from Believe presented the social value exercise for the new build project. It outlined the importance of integrating social value into the procurement process, the desire to maximise economic returns for South Tyneside and then provided examples of successful initiatives in Hartlepool and Richmond.</p> <p>The presentation emphasised the need to focus on community needs and create long-lasting impacts through collaboration with businesses and voluntary sectors. LB's approach involved analysing supply chains, engaging with local businesses, and developing programmes tailored to the specific needs of the community. The Board appreciated the detailed insights and agreed to regular updates on the project's progress.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted that 47% of the population in South Tyneside were aged over 55 and the College needed to be mindful how the new facility could assist and support that demographic as the new build was not just catering for 16–18-year-olds.</p> <p>Q. When would the students contribute and respond to plans of the new build? LB stated that she would build on what had already been started and continue the work with the students.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board appreciated the detailed insights and agreed to regular updates on the project's progress.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>With agreement from the Governors the Chair changed the order of business</p> <p>Quality, Curriculum and Standards</p> <p>5.1 Student Union Report</p> <p>EP provided an overview of the recent freshers' events, which were well-attended and had received positive feedback from students. She highlighted the inclusivity efforts, such as tailored offerings for students with additional needs. EP also discussed the establishment of a separate student union for the Marine School students to better cater to their unique needs. It was noted that HE had a low uptake, however, it was felt that their timetable differed and this impacted the attendance.</p> <p>EP highlighted the word for the year used by the Student Union was 'Belonging' which linked with the word Governors had chosen for 2025/26 i.e. 'Engagement'.</p> <p>EP reported that the elections for the Student Vice President(s) were imminent. The Chair explained that he, along with the Chair of G&S and Director of Governance had met with EP and this would be a termly meeting to receive feedback and updates.</p> <p>EP included a calendar of up-and-coming events, which she invited governors to attend. The governors complimented EP on her comprehensive report.</p> <p>Resolved: That the governors accept the report acknowledging the information provided.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Strategic Matters (Continued)</p> <p>6.2 Chair's Update/Actions Confidential item</p> <p>6.3 Report of the Chief Executive incl. Strategic Priorities Update and Academy Trust Update</p>	

	<p>The CEO introduced a new addition to the report, a dashboard to track progress against strategic objectives. It was noted that performance objectives from the senior team were linked to the Strategic Aims. The dashboard used colour coding to indicate the status of various initiatives, with a focus on making the strategic plan a live document. The Board discussed the idea of using a numerical scale to provide more detailed insights into progress over time. Recent government announcements were highlighted and changes in departmental responsibilities, emphasising the impact on the College's operations and the focus on skills and employment.</p> <p>The synthesis of work with the Department for Education (DfE) was discussed and the challenges associated with realigning efforts around adult education, combined authority work, and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The CEO highlighted the introduction of a new improvement body for further education, which would work alongside the FE Commissioner and their team.</p> <p>The new Ofsted inspection framework was discussed and how the College was working toward meeting all areas. The CEO stated there was a lot of change in the industry at present with a lot of challenges to be faced.</p> <p>The importance of hitting student numbers to avoid financial pressures and the successful recruitment efforts already achieved in certain programmes was reported and noted. The Marine School was discussed and the need for additional space in the future as the area thrived.</p> <p>Q. How were the Marine School going to increase space in line with the predicted numbers? The Marine School Principal was already working on plans. Funding was proving to be a challenge, however this was being addressed. The need for strategic partnerships and leveraging commercial interests was discussed, with a focus on finding suitable matches for collaboration albeit the Marine School indirectly created employment, which was a stumbling block when it came to apply for funding.</p> <p>A governor raised concerns about the Gorse Academy's meeting with the TCAT Board and the implications for the College's role as a sponsor. The need for further discussions and reassessment of the College's position was noted. The discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining clear communication and strategic alignment with partner organisations.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</p> <p>6.4 Capital Build Update Confidential item</p> <p>6.4i College Campus Relocation Update Confidential item</p>	
7.	<p>Audit/Risk</p> <p>7.1 Committee Chair Report No update as no meeting had taken place.</p> <p>7.2 Corporate Risk Register Confidential item</p>	
8.	<p>Finance/Resources</p>	

8.1 Committee Chair Report

The Chair provided a written commentary, which was read out by the Chair of Governors in his absence.

Areas to note:

- Praise to the senior management team for progressing the project under challenging times.
- Staff Restructure – Benchmarking suggested improvements/savings could be made.
- Update on Readheads Building and proposal to pause.
- Cashflow was becoming critical until the first land sale receipt.
- Financial health was good (almost outstanding) however, this was supported due to the delay in the New Build. This needed to be monitored as it could slide again.
- Savings made in 2024/25 would need to be repeated, and increased, in the future to ensure financial stability.
- The financial position continued to be supported by Marine, in part, and this was set to continue.
- HR Directors report was positive and pleased with the improvements made.
- Estates was a continuing challenge with a permanent solution to be found for TyneMet.

8.2 Management Accounts and Commentary

Confidential item

8.3 Annual Review of Financial Regulations

The purpose of the report was to review, agree and approve the financial regulations.

The financial regulations were reviewed and updated. The review included any guidance updates reflected within the College Financial Handbook, which was updated on 23 July 2025 and was effective from 1 August 2025.

Changes were primarily within the expenditure process, naming conventions and an addition within fixed assets to ensure the most up to date guidance was followed.

The F&R Committee had reviewed the regulations and recommended to Board for approval.

Resolved:

- That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.**
- That the Board approve the Financial Regulations.**

8.4 Annual Estates Update

JC provided the annual estates update, detailing the work undertaken to maintain existing premises and ensure a safe environment for students. The report highlighted significant improvements and practical teaching area relocations. The focus was on non-essential work and cost capital projects. The discussion emphasised the importance of maintaining high-quality learning environments and addressing ongoing needs within the constraints of available resources. The estates team continued to play a crucial role in supporting the College's strategic objectives.

Resolved: That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.

9. Governance/Link Report

9.1 Committee Chair Report

No update from the Chair.

9.2 Chair Engagement Proposal

The Chair outlined the engagement proposal, aiming to enhance governors' interaction with the college and its students. Several initiatives were proposed, including attending student events, developing a framework for student and staff voices, and arranging visits to different college sites. The importance of broadening governors' knowledge by attending committees they are not members of was also highlighted. Additionally, the Chair mentioned increasing the number of governor development days and ensuring all governors attend graduation ceremonies. The proposal aimed to foster a positive feedback loop between governors and students, enhancing the overall governance experience.

Resolved:

- i. **That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.**
- ii. **That governors feedback at the next Board meeting on the proposals**

9.3 Governance Update

NL provided an update on governance matters, noting the interview with a potential new governor and the ongoing efforts to recruit more governors. The importance of finding capable and experienced individuals to support the College's strategic direction was emphasised.

NL also noted the pending resignation of Nicola McCluskey as a Staff Governor due to her commitments elsewhere. The Board expressed gratitude for NMCC contributions should she step down, particularly in her support with developing the new governor training programme. The discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining a strong governance structure and ensuring ongoing development and recruitment to support the College's growth and strategic objectives.

The following was highlighted:

- The current composition and membership of the College Board, which showed three College Governor vacancies and an imminent Staff Governor vacancy.
- The resignation of the student governor, Kimberly Ellis, along with her appreciation for the support she received during her tenure. Student Governor Elections were ongoing.
- The membership of Committees was presented for review owing to recent resignations from the Board.
- A revised Terms of Reference for the Business Development Committee was being presented for consideration.
- The Board was reminded of the Link Governors currently in post and the current vacancies.
- The Board was made aware of the outcome of the FE workforce governor data collection 2022 to 2023 and deadline for 2024-25 returns.
- Governors were asked to complete their annual return surveys.
- Governors were reminded to use their College email accounts for all college activity/communication(s).

It was noted that there was a Marine School open day scheduled for 8 November from 10-2pm and all governors were invited to attend. Neil Henry agreed to attend the North Tyneside Business Awards on 20 November 2025.

	<p>NL explained that a new Scheme of Delegation was being produced with hopeful completion and sign off at December Board meeting.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented. ii. That the Board approve the appointment of Alan Nixon as a College Governor with immediate effect on an initial one year term. iii. That Doug Cole is to take on the role of Careers/Skills link governor. 	
10.	<p>Consent Agenda</p> <p><u>10.1 Policies/Procedures/Documents</u> None to present</p> <p><u>10.2 Minutes of the Committees of the Board</u> The following Committee/Task Group minutes were received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Capital Project Board – 28 July, 28 August and 15 September 2025 ii. Business Development Committee – 18 September 2025 iii. Finance & Resources Committee – 25 September 2025 </p> <p><u>10.3 Application of the College Seal</u> NL reported on the occasions where the College seal had been applied. These included grant funding agreements, development agreements, clawback and legal charges, exclusivity agreements, and pre-construction services agreements.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board accept the report and acknowledge the information as presented.</p>	
11.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>The meeting concluded with a positive note on the recent communication from the Department for Education regarding the land transfer and funding for the new college site, which was subject to the Council agreement and contract exchange by 24 October 2025.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the Board accept the verbal report acknowledging the information as presented. ii. That the Board agree to continue with the New Build Plans. 	
12.	<p>Dates and Times of Future Meetings</p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for 18 December 2025 at approx. 2.00pm with Christmas Lunch from 12.30pm.</p>	
8.	<p>Identification of confidential items</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board agree that the following items should remain confidential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 6.2 – Chairs Update/Action • Item 6.3 – Chief Executive Report (part) • Item 6.4 – Capital Build Project Update • Item 6.4i – New Build Project Update (PCSA) • Item 7.2 – Corporate Risk Register • Item 8.2 – Management Accounts & Commentary • Item 9.3 – Governance Update (Governor Application) 	

Chair:

Date: