



TyneCoastCollege

Meeting of the Board

Venue: South Tyneside College/Teams

Date: Thursday 19 December 2024

Time: 3.30pm – 5.50pm

Present: Malcolm Grady (in the Chair)
George Clark
Kimberley Ellis (Student Governor)
Joanne Fanning
Neil Henry
Gary Hindmarch
Surajah Hunter (Teams)
Clive Johnson
Nicola McCluskey (Staff Governor)
Donya Urwin (Teams)
Jackie Watson
Lindsey Whiterod (LWh)

Apologies: Martin Alexander
Doug Cole

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)
Mandy Morris (TCC Principal)
Dominique Cooper (Student Union President)
Sarah Bartlett (Head of Estates and Internal Project Manager)
Richard Spencer (Deputy Chief Officer (Strategy, Infrastructure Transformation))
Craig Scott (Director of IT)

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
Meeting of the 24 th October 2024				
7i	<u>Finance & Resources:</u> A message from the governors to the Senior Leaders and Managers highlighting	LWh/ JC		This will be provided after the Christmas break.

	the college financial objectives in order to improve the financial position of the college			03.04.25 – Email sent to all Budget Holders with a message from the Chair of the Board
8.1	<u>Report of the CEO:</u> Exploration work to commence at Monkseaton School.	LWh		Ongoing
8.2	<u>Strategic Priorities and Short-Term Objectives:</u> Short update on progress at Board meetings around one of the 7 short term objectives.	LWh		Ongoing new draft Strategic plan to be presented
Meeting of the 19 th December 2024				
7v	Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024 including Regularity Audit Opinion and Representation Letter: That the annual report and accounts for Tyne Coast College for the Year Ended 31 July 2024 are approved and that the appropriate persons, as identified in the papers, are authorised to sign the relevant sections of the documents (as detailed above) on behalf of the Board.	LWh		
	That the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2023-24 was to be approved and signed by the Chair of Governors and the Chief Executive.	LWh/ MG		
	That the Chief Executive is authorised to sign the Letters of representation from auditors.	LWh		

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>NL informed the Board that Kimberley Ellis had been elected as Student Governor and her appointment was to be endorsed by the Board. KE was asked to leave the meeting whilst this was deliberated.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board endorse the appointment of Kimberley Ellis as Student Governor.</p> <p>KE was welcomed back to the meeting.</p>	

	A round of introductions was made.	
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, LW, JF, GC and CJ.</p> <p><u>2.2 Business to be raised under Item 12</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
3.	<p>Confirmation of the minutes.</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 24 October and 21 November 2024 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.	<p>Strategic Discussion – T Level Confidential item</p> <p><u>4.1 DfE Funding T Level Engineering – Sarah Bartlett (Head of Estates and Internal Project Manager)</u> Confidential Item</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</p>	
5.	<p>With the agreement of the Governors, the Chair changed the order of business as follows:</p> <p>Student Union Report</p> <p>The purpose of the report provided an update on Student Union activities, progress made, and areas requiring support by the Board. It aligned with the college's strategic goals by focusing on student engagement, community development and support for learners.</p> <p>A key priority was promoting student engagement through a range of activities and initiatives that catered to diverse interests and needs. Notable accomplishments included the successful organisation of themed awareness weeks, such as Children in Need and White Ribbon Awareness Day, which aimed to raise awareness, provide resources, and encourage open dialogue among students. Additionally, the introduction of new clubs and societies, coupled with workshops on student life skills, contributed to enhancing the overall college experience.</p> <p>DC noted that herself and the other Student Union President had met with the Chair of Governors to discuss the Dr Winterbottom fund and had found it most useful.</p>	

	<p>LWh commented that the report presented today was excellent and showed the range of activities that were on offer were rich and diverse. It was also noted the £4k contribution to the Dr Winterbottom fund.</p> <p>Another governor highlighted that the Student Presidents were visible around the college and attended events, which was excellent to see</p> <p>Resolved: That governors accept the report acknowledging the information, as presented.</p> <p>KE and DC left the meeting.</p>	
6.	<p>Strategic Matters</p> <p><u>6.1 Chairs Update/Actions</u> The purpose of the report was to update on the occasions where the Chair (or in his absence the Vice-Chair) had exercised urgent action since the previous meeting.</p> <p>The following contracts were approved via Chairs Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sodexo • Analysis of main MIS software options and contract award • Newcastle Rugby Foundation Contract <p>Resolved: That the report is received and the Chair's urgent action is endorsed.</p> <p><u>6.2 Report of the Chief Executive incl Union Update/ New Build / Academy Trust Update</u> Confidential item</p> <p><u>6.3 Performance Review feedback of Senior Post Holders</u> Restricted Confidential Item</p>	
7.	<p>Audit/Risk</p> <p><u>7.1 Committee Chair Report</u> The Chair confirmed that the committee had met with the internal and external auditors, and both were very happy with the working relationship. He explained the external auditors would be joining the meeting in due course to offer their unqualified audit opinion. Statutory reports were scrutinised at committee and recommendations had been brought forward to the Board for approval contained in the reports presented today.</p> <p><u>7.2 Internal Audit Annual Report (Internal Audit Opinion)</u> The internal audit annual report had been presented to and discussed with the Audit Committee where RSM (internal auditors) were in attendance and confirmed that overall, they were happy that the college had an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control.</p> <p>Some recommendations had been made to further enhance frameworks where applicable which the college agreed to implement.</p> <p>The Internal Audit Annual Report was attached to the papers for information.</p> <p>Resolved: That the report is received and approved.</p> <p><u>7.3 Annual Report to Board from Audit Committee</u> The Chair of the Audit Committee introduced the Annual Report for the College highlighting key areas for governors' consideration.</p>	

	<p>It was explained that the Board was required to receive a report on the work of the Audit Committee (audit functions) on an annual basis before the signing of the statutory accounts.</p> <p>The Audit Committee had received the report and concluded that the information provided allowed them to recommend the signing of the statements of governance and internal control by the Chief Executive and Chair as part of the College's annual reports.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board agree to receive the report and acknowledge the information provided.</p> <p><u>7.4 Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2023-24</u> This report was to inform governors of the work and evidence the College provided to the external auditors in order to carry out their work on regularity.</p> <p>The Regularity Audit checked that the College had used funds provided by the government for the purposes intended in the grant contract.</p> <p>This was carried out as part of the external audit process and the College provided the information to the auditors in the form of the completion of standard questionnaires. The ESFA requested that this was formally approved by Board and signed by the Chair of Governors and Accounting Officer.</p> <p>The questionnaire had been discussed with the Audit Committee who recommend the questionnaire was approved.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board approves the questionnaire and that the Chair of the Board and Chief Executive are to formally sign the completed questionnaire.</p> <p><u>7.5 Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024 including Regularity Audit Opinion and Representation Letter</u> DH was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>The Board received the accounts for Tyne Coast College, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was reported that the accounts had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee, recommending their approval to the Board.</p> <p>Mazars, the external auditors, confirmed they were happy with the accounts and had issued an unqualified audit opinion.</p> <p>There were a number of areas in the report that required the Chair's and Accounting Officer's signature; these were highlighted for information.</p> <p>Reference was also made to the Regularity Audit Opinion and Management Letters. Members recommended that the Letters of Representation from auditors (Management Letters) be signed on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>The SOCI showed the total financial activity which had occurred in the college for the financial year not just the information reported in the management accounts.</p> <p>The main income streams reflected were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £21m Funding body grants (ESFA and OfS) and • £18m Tuition fees and Education contracts <p>Governors' attention was drawn to the adjusted earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation which was £870k. In the previous year this was a negative £62k, which</p>	<p>MG/LWh</p>
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	<p>was a £932k improvement and was reflective of the strategic decision making to undertake two restructures in order to improve the college performance, which could be demonstrated here as a positive output from a difficult year.</p> <p>The college had improved the Performance score by 20 points as a result of the in-year decision making and greater focus on efficiency. It was stated that this was not an easy year for the college in terms of change management but it was necessary and had put the college in a good position to progress in its journey to greater efficiency.</p> <p>As detailed in the SOCI current year income was in line with the previous year.</p> <p>Expenditure was £500k less than the previous year. The most notable changes within college expenditure were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • c£1m reduction in pay costs, reflected the in-year strategic decisions to embed more efficient structures and drive the savings required by the DfE. No pay award was given in-year which supported the college in stabilising its position. • £532k increase in restructuring costs in order to achieve the efficiencies discussed. <p>The college's operational performance as assessed via the ESFA Adjusted Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation calculation (i.e. the Adjusted EBITDA calculation) and demonstrated the £932k improvement referred to earlier.</p> <p>The Balance Sheet was a key statement of position showing the Assets and Liabilities of the College.</p> <p>It was to be noted that regarding Fixed Assets there had been a full physical verification exercise carried out in year as well as a revaluation of heritage assets. At the Auditors request the ST Campus new build has been reclassified as "under construction". Results of this work were reflected within note 10 of the accounts.</p> <p>The cashflow report detailed all the cash inflows and outflows during the reporting period. This report showed that the college's cash increase in the year was £372k which was extremely positive when measured against the previous year's performance of a £4.471m reduction in cash balances.</p> <p>The college remained on the path of improvement in operating more efficiently to further improve its cash position and solvency. The college was doing this at the same time as balancing the cash flows of the South Tyneside Campus relocation project to ensure there was no impact on operational performance.</p> <p>The notes to the accounts provided additional details which supported the figures presented in the primary statements.</p> <p>DH introduced the Audit Completion report for the year ended 31 July 2024, which covered the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive summary • Status of the audit • Significant findings • Internal control recommendations • Summary of misstatements • Various Appendices incl draft representation letters <p>It was reported that the Audit was now substantially completed and auditors anticipated being able to report that, in their opinion, the financial statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give a true and fair view of the state of the College's affairs as at 31 July 2024 and of its' surplus of income over expenditure for the year then ended; 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> had been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. <p>At the time of issuing their report and subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the remaining audit work, Mazars anticipated issuing an unqualified opinion, without modification.</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit Committee thanked both the Internal and External Auditors for their work.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That the Board agree to receive the report and acknowledge the information provided. That the annual report and accounts for Tyne Coast College for the Year Ended 31 July 2024 are approved and that the appropriate persons, as identified in the papers, are authorised to sign the relevant sections of the documents on behalf of the Board. That the Chief Executive is authorised to sign the Letters of representation from auditors. 	<p>LWh/MG</p> <p>LWh</p>
8.	<p>Finance/Resources</p> <p><u>8.1 Committee Chair Report</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee highlighted three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A key control that the Statutory Accounts had been reconciled. Implementation of management actions – moving in the right direction however, the pressure was still on to continue. Risks were identified at committee and they were reducing. Focus had been on the health & safety maintenance of existing buildings and that focus needed to align to the new build. <p><u>8.2 Student Union Accounts 2023-24</u></p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide governors with details of the Student Union accounts results for 2023/24 and an overview of activity for the year.</p> <p>Governors noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net Budget £18,154 Actual Net Expenditure £14,022 Variance: £4,132 <p>Further details were included in the report.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</p> <p><u>8.3 Management Accounts and Commentary</u></p> <p>Confidential item</p>	
9.	<p>Quality/Curriculum/Standards/Students</p> <p><u>9.1 Committee Chair Report</u></p> <p>The committee Chair reported that 2-3 years ago the college was performing below national average and was pleased to inform the Board that the data had improved significantly and the college was now in a strong position – excellent performance. Attendance was still a concern, however, it was acknowledged this was a national issue and the college was doing all they could to support students attend.</p>	

Two SARs had been presented internally to staff and to the committee and were now presented to Board for approval. The Chair explained that the committee agreed with the grades within the reports. Target setting for the forthcoming year had been informed from the SAR's.

Health & Safety had been discussed and acknowledged.

Resolved: That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.

9.2 Student Union Report

Discussed earlier in the meeting (Item 05).

9.3 Quality Update

Confidential item

9.4 College Self-Assessment Reports 2023-24 (Quality Improvement Plans 2024-25)

Confidential item

9.5 TCC HE SER 2023-24

The self-assessment process for Tyne Coast College (TCC) was structured in line with the Office for Students (OfS), including the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and QAA guidance. The Higher Education Self-Evaluation Report (SER) was robust and provided the opportunity for continual reflection and evaluation of in-scope provision at Tyne Coast College (TCC), including South Tyneside College (STC), South Shields Marine School (SSMS) and Tyne Metropolitan College (TM). The report format had been adapted to follow the OfS conditions and had been judged using the TEF standards (bronze, silver and gold).

SA reported the HE SER working task group met on the 19 November 2024 to consider the document and approved the following judgements:

Overall Outcome

B1: Academic Experience

B2: Resources, Support & Student Engagement

B3: Student Outcomes

B4: Assessment & Awards

Bronze

Bronze

Bronze

Silver

Bronze

SA noted that the bronze areas were being addressed and plans were in place to improve.

SA also informed the Board that pass rates were above average at 83% with a national average of 76% and attendance was excellent. It was also noted that outside Universities the college were the largest provider of higher education and this had to be celebrated.

Emma Douglas (HE Director) was praised for her hard work.

The Chair thanked SA and his team for a very successful year.

Resolved:

- i. **That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.**
- ii. **That the Board approve the Higher Education Self Evaluation Report (SER), as presented.**

9.6 Quarterly Safeguarding Report

	<p>The purpose of the paper was to provide an update to the Board on the safeguarding statistics/trends and concerns and in addition highlighting the challenges and successes in the colleges safeguarding procedures, referrals and processes. This report concentrated on the timeframe September 2024 – November 2024 and had been scrutinised by the Quality Committee.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Link Governor explained that the data looked quite raw until one could understand the context and background. Within the most recent Ofsted inspection Safeguarding was the first area to be reviewed and was seen to be very effective. MM informed the Board that capacity was manageable and weekly meetings had been arranged with the Safeguarding Lead for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Eamonn Murphy (Safeguarding Lead) for his hard work during the past year.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented.</p> <p><u>9.7 Equality & Diversity Report</u></p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide the Board with a report on the college's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The report had also been scrutinised by the Quality Committee.</p> <p>The report covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Data – 65% of staff were full-time. 41% lecturing staff with 48% business support. • White Ribbon – TCC were an approved organisation and had a clear 3-year action plan set to become accredited. • EDI Awards – planned for 2025 and categories were now in place. • Learner Voice – diverse ethnic groups overall satisfaction was above 90%. • Further information – TCC were one of twenty-one colleges to be approved to gain access to the Helena Kennedy Awards – Hardship funding and National Recognition Awards. LAC learner numbers had increased by 48% this year. <p>Resolved: That the Board approve the report as presented.</p>	
10.	<p>Governance/Link Governor Reports</p> <p><u>10.1 Governance Update</u></p> <p>The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the governance arrangements within the college and to plan for appointments in a timely manner.</p> <p>The following was highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current composition and membership of the College Board. • Current vacancies and were to consider the appointment of a College Governor, Michael Johnston. • The responses to the Board Performance Survey 2023/24. • The Board considered the membership of its committees and were asked to identify Vice-Chairs where not already appointed. • The governance position paper 2023-24 and the updated Governance Action Plan were being presented. • Governor attendance was highlighted at 75.2% which was a decrease from the previous year. Governors were reminded of their attendance target. • Governors were reminded of the forthcoming Development Event which was to be held on Thursday 23 January 2025 from 12 noon. This would incorporate a strategic discussion around the Code of Good Governance. 	

	<p>The Chair suggested a governor ‘get together’ outside formal meetings by means of a team building exercise, this was to be reflected upon and ideas brought to the development event in the new year.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> That the Board accept the report acknowledging the information as presented. That the Board agree to appoint Michael Johnston as a College Governor effective from 6 January 2025 initially for a 1-year term of office. That the Board accept the Governance Position Paper, as presented. <p><u>10.2 Application of the College Seal</u></p> <p>NL informed the Board that the College Seal had been utilised twice for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusivity Agreement – Avant Homes • Contract for Queen Alexander Land and Transfer of Title <p>Resolved: That governors accept the verbal report acknowledging the information as presented.</p>	NL/LL
11.	<p>Consent Agenda</p> <p><u>11.1 Statutory Reports/Policies/Reports for Information</u></p> <p>Governors received the following documents for formal approval, which were deemed not to require further Board discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Pay Award Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2024-25 Annual Report on Health & Safety and Action Plan Annual Data Protection Report Safeguarding Policy Risk Management Update Health & Safety Policy <p>Resolved: That the Board agree the above-mentioned reports.</p> <p><u>11.2 Minutes of Committees/Task Groups of the Board</u></p> <p>The following minutes were received by the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> New Build Task Group – 11 November 2024 Governance & Search – 14 November 2024 Quality, Curriculum & Standards – 4 December 2024 Audit Committee – 11 December 2024 Finance & Resources Committee – 12 December 2024 <p>Resolved: That the minutes of the above-mentioned Committees are received.</p>	
12.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>None</p>	
13.	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 03 April 2025 at 4.00pm (Note: Development Event 16 Jan 2025) 	

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 5 – Strategic Discussion • Item 6.2 – CEO Report (Union Update / New Build /TCAT Update) • Item 6.3 - Item Performance and Salary Review Feedback of Senior Post Holders (Restricted) • Item 8.3 – Management Accounts and Commentary • Item 9.3 - Quality Update • Item 9.4 - College Self-Assessment Reports 2022-23 (Quality Improvement Plans 2023-24) 	
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Chair: Date: