

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION OF MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE
CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EMPLOYER VOICE COMMITTEE
26 JUNE 2024**

PRESENT: S Lane (Chair) (CG), R Anderson (CG), I Anwar (CG), D Lusardi (CG), R Davies (CG), Z Lewis (Principal/CEO).

Employer Rep: D Dodds (Esh)

Officers: P Blewitt (AP), P Donnelly (AD), Z Foster (Head of Governance), R Gray (AP), K Hawking (Head of Work Experience), G Potts (VP), B Robinson (Deputy Principal), M Telling (Group Business Development Director), P Watt (AP), C Yule (AP).

KEY: CG College Governor VP Vice Principal AP – Assistant Principal
AD Associate Director

1. Apologies for Absence – J Barwell.

2. Declarations of Interest

R Anderson declared in respect of LSIP.

3. Terms of Reference

S Lane and Z Lewis gave an overview of the purpose of this new committee and its members who represented key industry sectors. It was hoped that in the future a governor from the Health sector would also be represented.

Terms of reference had been drafted by Z Lewis and Z Foster for this new committee, as per the usual requirements upon sub committees to ensure they act appropriately, do not encroach or duplicate the work of other committees, act within appropriate perimeters, and can be effectively monitored by the Governing Body.

Gary Potts, newly appointed VP Business Innovation, and Community Partnerships was welcomed and general introductions (including sector specific information) were given by all.

The Committee **agreed** to recommend the Terms of Reference for approval by the Governing Body at its 11 July 2024 meeting.

4. VP Update

4.1 Overview of Apprenticeship Recruitment

M Telling gave a synopsis of apprenticeship performance, growth, greater network collaborations and development over the year for the Committee.

He also detailed plans for the training and recruitment service team to strengthen engagement with students and the launch of the refreshed Client Management Process.

Z Lewis outlined the history behind the Chamber of Commerce acquisition, challenges and how this has developed.

4.2 Overview of Work Experience Placements

K Hawking gave a comprehensive account of continuing and completed work experience placements across all areas. General feedback from both students and employers had been positive.

She also updated on developing consistency with employer engagement and work placement team restructure to best support students and employers as two of the focussed areas for 2024-25.

4.3 Strategic Employer Developments

M Telling detailed developments over the year to strengthen partnerships with a variety of employers (including SMEs). He outlined the benefits of key events organised and attended and highlighted the new engineering scholarships for Engineering.

4.4 Overview of CRM and Client Management Process

P Donnelly gave an update to the ProEngage system developments within its first full year of operation and the links with the CRM process. He outlined the plans to refresh the client management process with clearly defined levels and accurate information on employers to ensure better analysis and reporting.

4.5 Employer Survey Results

M Telling detailed the QDP employer satisfaction surveys results of which remained strong (and had impacted positively on the Ofsted grading). There was ongoing work to develop the current 'good' rating on the Government website to 'excellent' over time.

4.6 Governor feedback and discussion included: the value of knowing the sales cycles of sectors/local businesses; social media advertising and timing (balancing both employer responsiveness and student/College practicalities); the scholarship initiative; employer survey progress and how feedback was being developed into a plan/actions and Governor monitoring of this (primarily through Employer Voice and CSC committees); awareness building for apprenticeships with new employers (particularly through the Levy) and other methods of gathering relevant intelligence to further new business; the adaptability of the CRM to capture sector specific opportunities; clarification on work placements and sector split; barriers to offering work experience placements by employers and what the College can do to mitigate these and how this information is shared (e.g. PR, marketing); the range of methods used to ascertain the quality of experience for T Level placements both from employer and student perspectives; website and wider information for students and employers (including expected timeline of activity from enquiry).

Z Lewis gave some of potential benefits of the College involvement with Project S which might in the longer term support the administration behind recruitment of apprenticeships etc.

Action by P Donnelly and M Telling – to bring an action plan based on employer feedback for areas for improvement to the next meeting for consideration

Action by K Hawking – to further analyse sector split on work experience, in order to understand key areas of risk in high priority sectors

5. AP Update

B Robinson gave a brief overview of the structure of the following reports on how the College was responding to employer voice through the advisory boards.

5.1 Advisory Board Updates

As the main reports had already been shared prior to the meeting, each area detailed their varying approaches to employer boards/employer voice.

C Yule detailed the different approach with MC6 which did not have explicit advisory boards but outlined the stakeholder engagement processes utilized (including guest speakers, liaisons with HE etc). She confirmed that MC6 would be introducing an advisory board to assist with students wider skills sets in key areas such as STEM, health and professional services along with softer skills which employers were expecting from graduates.

Z Lewis confirmed that the appointment of G Potts would allow for greater development and cohesion with employers across the variety of communication streams and activities (including advisory boards).

I Anwar left the meeting at 5.30pm

Governor feedback and discussion included: how employers received feedback from the advisory boards (and when/to whom); how the format of the advisory boards might be developed with a greater focus on discussion and listening (and less detail from the College) with a four part model suggested and a potential (voluntary) half hour teams catch up between advisory board meetings; the beneficial role of the boards in developing professional networking opportunities; recruitment and competition for staff and how a refocus on businesses creating their own staff with the right skills/developing skills (with the College) could be shared/encouraged; the benefits (and drawbacks) of One Stop Shops; the percentage of marketing which was directed at employers and how this could be developed; raising wider awareness of College offer within adult provision (bootcamps); the PR to employers around the Sixth Form's work on developing softer skills (e.g. alumni; using the CRM resource; involving employers with masterclasses etc); and the unique benefits of Sixth Form at MC6.

Governors fed back on the reports presented under this item agreeing that these should be slimmed down and with a greater employer focus ('you said, we did'; employer concerns; issues from employers etc).

R Davies left the meeting at 5.40pm

Action by G Potts and Marketing team - further analysis on marketing to employers (B2) and cohesive development of brand under the umbrella of Middlesbrough College (incorporating TTE, Northern Skills and Middlesbrough College).

Overall actions to develop the Committee approach ahead of the next meeting (January/February 2025):

- 1) Sector governors to feed back on specific cycles/intel/projects in different sectors to G Potts
- 2) Develop the customer experience model
- 3) For the College to develop an enquiry timeline and guidance, for website to help employers
- 4) Governor feedback on employer advisory boards

6. Date of Next Meetings

Agreed there would be two meetings a year – one in January/February (first half of second term) and another in June. These would be confirmed in due course.

7. Any other Urgent Business

None taken

The meeting closed at 6pm