

**Agenda No: 4**



**CURRICULUM AND QUALITY STANDARDS COMMITTEE – MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL 2026 2.30PM TO 3PM – Gateshead College**

<b>Governors</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Peter Francis	Chair / Independent Governor	PF	X	
David Alexander	Principal / CEO and Ex-officio Governor	DA	X	
Michael Williams	Independent Governor	MW	X	
Aneela Ali	Independent Governor	AA		X
Carol Davenport	Independent Governor	CD		X
Ryan Gibson	Independent Governor	RG	X	
Katy Malia	Staff Governor	KM	X	
Dylan Smith	16-18 Student Governor	DS		X
Anthony Gibbon	19+ Student Governor	AG		X
<b>Clerk</b>				
Nicola Taylor-Mosley	Director of Governance & Compliance	NTM	X	
<b>Presenters</b>				
Chris Toon	Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality	CT	X	
Vicki Cross	Interim Director of Curriculum & Skills	VCr	X^	

\*Attended via Teams / ^Attended for part of the meeting

**1. Initial Governance**

**CQ/324 1.1 Chair's Welcome / Apologies / Conflicts of Interest**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees.

Apologies had been received from AA, CD, DS and AG. The Committee **agreed** the meeting was quorate.

There were no conflicts of interest declared. Members were reminded to declare any conflicts that arose during the meeting.

## 2. Strategy

### CQ/325 2.1 Accountability Agreement and Local Needs Duty

Feedback had been received by Committee members in advance of the meeting relating to the following key points:

- Overall direction was positive, with strong progress in digital, T Levels and ESOL. The proposed next steps would be to sharpen impact and narrative.
- In relation to HE and HTQs, lower than target recruitment needed deeper analysis (demand, offer, awareness, pathways) and clearer alignment to progression and local skills needs.
- 2026/27 aims would benefit from being more outcome-led, moving from activity/process to clear measures of success for learners and employers.
- HTQs, maths, V Levels, adults and apprenticeships are supported in principle, but outcomes (jobs, progression, skills gaps filled) need to be clearer.
- EDI is strong but underplayed. There is an opportunity to be more explicit about who benefits and how inclusion improves outcomes.
- In relation to the Local Needs Duty, there was strong support for an independent external review to bring challenge, credibility and fresh perspective.
- Overall, there is a desire for a clear line of sight between strategy, delivery and impact, particularly around skills, progression and access.

This feedback had been shared with Committee members in advance of the meeting.

*VCr joined the meeting.*

CT presented the report and highlighted the following:

- The Accountability aims needed to be Board approved by July 2026. This meeting was to present the initial intent to the Committee ahead of sharing with the Board. A finalised document would be drafted for Committee recommendation in June 2026 ahead of seeking Board approval in July 2026.
- The report set out a RAG rated progress update of the aims agreed for 2025/2026. CT noted that targets remained ambitious. Business planning targets were felt to be aspirational. One aim had been RAG rated red which related to growing higher skills learning in key sectors. Based on outcomes, the College was looking to collaborate with schools to raise awareness of HTQ pathways to increase demand.

The Committee **noted** the increase in HE learner numbers compared to 2024/2025, however this did not achieve the target.

DA confirmed that the Accountability Agreement would be a key discussion item with the DfE as part of the College's annual strategic conversation, planned for May 2026.

In relation to the proposed aims for 2026/2027, the Committee **discussed** and **queried** the following:

- The likelihood of success of the proposed expansion of higher technical provision based on performance – CT provided his confidence of this, reiterating links with the College's ethos of Employment Edge. The Committee challenged the financial viability of this, and CT provided reassurance of the funding of these qualifications.
- The impact of decisions on HTQs on the curriculum intent of the future – CT noted there was hope for further demand of this provision in the future, offering alternative pathways to university education. CT set out potential benefits to

learners with delivery models similar to PlanBee provision, working with key employers to build strong relationships. The Committee **requested** an understanding of how this provision would be developed into a formal pathway for progression, demonstrating a learner journey to further education or employment, alongside what strategic business development activity may be needed.

- The Committee sought clarity of what was meant by “green careers” and for this to be made explicit in the statement.
- A potential objective around digital, and technology more generally, linking with the recent Digital CTEC bid, whether the College would be successful or not.
- Consideration of any further targets associated with regional skills priorities, such as in construction.
- The first objective relating to college-wide professional development being a matter of operational practice and therefore potentially not needed as part of the agreement.
- The third objective including reference to English, as well as Maths. CT noted that Maths was the biggest challenge.
- The inclusivity of Digital in relation to adult and ESOL learners. CT provided reassurance that most ESOL learners had a device as were already using this for translation purposes but agreed there needed to be progression pathways in place to ensure inclusivity.
- Consideration of how the College might support the poverty agenda, improving those classified as NEET and those in the areas of highest deprivation.

The Committee **asked** CT to consider their comments when further drafting and finalising the accountability aims, subject to further Board discussion which was taking place later in the day. The Committee **also requested** outcomes and measures to be included within the final document and for these to be set out in a separate column to allow the measurement of progress and impact to be clearly seen and measured.

**Action: CT to consider committee feedback on the proposed accountability agreement aims and to present a finalised version at the June meeting (June 2026).**

The Committee **discussed** the suggested approaches of the Local Needs Duty with the support to proceed with an option including independent external review, as well as collaboration with other colleges. The Committee **reiterated** the importance of including staff voice as part of any approach agreed.

DA noted an upcoming North East Principals group included a discussion item on colleges’ approach to this.

***The report was noted.***

### **3. End of Meeting Governance**

#### **CQ/326 3.1 Any Other Business**

N/A

#### **CQ/327 3.2 Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 11 June 2026 at 4.00pm.