

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2022

Chaffron Centre

17:00 – 19:10

| Board Members | Category of Governor | Attendance 2021/22 | Present at this meeting |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Richard Bartlett-Rawlings | Independent | 9 of 9 | Yes |
| Rebecca Carrington | Independent | 6 of 9 | Yes |
| Alan Cook | Independent | 8 of 9 | No |
| Peter Cox | Independent | 8 of 9 | Yes |
| Kaye Dwight | Staff | 9 of 9 | Yes |
| Mat Gotkowski | Independent | 8 of 9 | Yes |
| Shalom Lloyd (joined 14/12/21) | Independent | 5 of 7 | Yes |
| Liz Marr | Independent | 7 of 9 | Yes |
| David Meadowcroft | Independent | 9 of 9 | Yes |
| Julie Mills | CEO | 9 of 9 | Yes |
| Ruby Parmar | Independent | 7 of 9 | Yes |
| Charlyne Pullen | Independent | 9 of 9 | Yes |
| Ian Revell | Independent | 9 of 9 | Yes |
| Neil Sainsbury | Independent | 8 of 9 | Yes |
| Sufian Sadiq (joined 31/1/22) | Independent | 3 of 6 | No |
| Gwynneth Tan | Independent | 6 of 9 | Yes |
| Manish Verma | Independent | 5 of 9 | No |
| Kyle Wilson (joined 17/03/22) | Student | 1 of 4 | No |
| Arran Ashmore (28.4.22 - 27.5.22) | Staff | 0 of 1 | |
| Adam Rixon (10/11/21 – 21/1/22) | Student | 1 of 2 | |
| Marcela Grabowski (10/11/21 – 10/02/22) | Student | 1 of 4 | |
| Stephen Norrish (retired 23.3.22) | Independent | 5 of 6 | |
| Aniesa Shah (resigned 23.3.22) | Independent | 4 of 6 | |
| Attendance % this meeting | | 78% | 14/18 |
| Attendance % year to date | | 79% | 135/170 |

Regular attendees: Sally Alexander (Deputy CEO), Annie Allen (CPO (Chief People Officer)), Alex Warner (Principal), Jason Mansell (Principal: Quality and Student Experience), Gavin Teasdale (Interim Chief Operating Officer) (via Teams), Fiona Chalk, Interim Head of Governance

Other attendees: Lindsey Styles (Group Director Inclusion) (in part), Amy Langford (Executive Head: Inclusion and Personal Development (in part), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner)

1.0 PROCEDURAL

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Alan Cook and Sufian had sent apologies.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

Rebecca Carrington, Principal of Arts1 (item 2.3B)

2.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2021/22

2.1 CEO's Report (incl. Strategic update, prison education, and progress against the strategic plan) (previously circulated as Paper 2.1)

Julie Mills referred to her report.

The 2021/22 Strategic Objectives analysis was noted by the Board. SLT has concluded that good progress had been made and the six strategic aims remain relevant, and they need to continue to be reviewed during the coming year. Each core objective is underpinned by contributory objectives which include specific operational activities or targets.

The Board strategic priorities for 22/23 were discussed, with particular focus being:

1. Drive aspirational, innovative, and student-focussed educational experiences
2. Deliver the skills needed by employers to aid productivity
3. Develop meaningful partnerships to grow our influence and create opportunities
4. Promote and live fairness, equality diversity and inclusion
5. Achieve and maintain financial and operational sustainability
6. Create organisational Unity around our Shared vision and purpose

Governors noted the CEO report and commented:

What are the reasons for staff leaving – is there a retention issue.

Exit interviews are undertaken and information gathered through PEAKON. Reasons for leaving are noted as, wellbeing, workload, pay, context in which the staff member is operating. The College is looking at teaching workload and more creative on ways of working. Some staff members are changing sector for better pay and life/work balance needs. Coming out of Covid, this is constantly being reviewed by the College, and it is a sector-wide issue.

Under Ofsted, is there an increased focus on curriculum?

Yes, particularly following Covid – the quality of education is under scrutiny.

It is good to see the college progressing sustainability matters, such as the FE Climate Road Map.

This features in the revised Code of Governance too and is an area of focus for the College.

The Board approved the CEO Report including the areas of Board strategic focus for 22/23

2.2 Student Experience (previously circulated as Paper 2.2).

Jason Mansell led on this item

Project September & Campus Predictions

Governors noted the overview of Project September providing the context, headlines from the Project September Action Plan and how communication and accountability will be managed. There is a noted growth in student numbers of up to 30% across Milton Keynes. Alongside this growth, the College has been looking at study programmes to see how they meet the needs of students and stakeholders, whilst addressing staff workload. The purpose of the project is to reform curriculum, address staff workload, and improve the student experience against a backdrop of needing to grow. The current predicted student numbers show a 13% increase in student numbers. At this point in time, the college has a 22% increase in applications, including a 16% increase in 16-18 years, so this increase needs to be very carefully managed to maximise the opportunities on offer. The College is running discovery days over the summer, which are also showing increased student attendance. Clear accountability and decision making is key for this project to succeed, and there is a weekly monitoring group to monitor progress against the plan, which will become daily monitoring in September. The key principles of Project September being:

- Managed growth is an imperative
- Focus on staff experience and wellbeing
- Existing students should have a good progression experience

Previously, it has felt like the first 42 days are a probation period for the students. This is no longer the case. Students are part of the MK family from day one and will be supported to find the right course.

This programme is key to achieving the 6 key strategic objectives.

Governors asked:

If the college is recruiting more students, do we need more staff and how are we going to measure the success of project September?

Success will be measured by the number of applications, the number of students starting on 12th September, and the number of students who are retained by day 42. We will deliver the growth as detailed in the budget.

What about a measure for retaining staff?

That will be part of the success - where significant growth is planned, the college has enough staff in place. In the budget, there are resources to meet the increased student numbers. The strategy of having new student champions recruited and in place, is that they will support teaching staff, so they are not distracted with non-teaching issues. Project September is planning the September start at a much earlier point in time, with increased activity, managed in a more efficient way.

Increased class sizes – does this impact on mental health of students and is there sufficient focus on risks and what are the mitigating actions?

Within the action plan, the final column of the plan covers risks and contingencies, which identify the mitigations to address this and other issues.

Staff are reviewing the qualification mix of long study programmes and shorter ones with greater enrichment, particularly with L1 and L2 progression courses. This is one of the first interventions coming from this project work.

Can Project September be sustained and what is the impact on staff after the October half-term?

The Champions may be retained if they aid retention for example, in which case they will pay for themselves and more, and the team will be looking at how this project can be adapted throughout the year to ensure it is sustainable.

Does the teaching population buy into this energy as demonstrated by SLT?

Yes, there is a buy-in across the teaching staff to the project, a keenness to really retain students, and the different approach to the first 42 days is supported. There is concern and nervousness about increased workload coming from recruiting more students – this is to be expected. Staff appreciate the support that comes from having a whole team involved in the recruitment and enrolment process.

Why are 6th form places in MK declining?

Some schools are closing their 6th form provision, in order to address performance levels within their schools.

Campus Achievement predictions for 2021/22:

- 16-18 Overall Achievement (including English & Maths) is predicted to improve by 10 percentage points when compared with 2020/21.
- All Ages Overall Achievement is predicted to improve by 5 percentage points when compared with 2020/21.
- Adult Overall Achievement is predicted to remain comparable with 2020/21 – there is lower Functional Skills achievement and a 3% reduction on distance learning which is negating improvements elsewhere.

Governors asked:

Was the drop last year in vocational achievement in 20-21, which was lower than 19-20 but is now seeing a bigger increase, the same across the sector?

No, it was an E&M 5% swing that affected this. Lower-level learners were disproportionately affected by Covid, of which we have significant numbers, affecting the overall performance figures.

The Board noted updates on the Student Experience (Project September)

2.3 Financial Health

Gavin Teasdale led on this item

2021/22 Board Strategic Priority 2

a) Management Accounts Period 10 (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A)

Governors noted the Group Contribution for the first ten months of the year was £1,301k, £525k behind budget. Campus activity generated a surplus of £1,075k and Prison Services £302k. There was a deficit of £75k in the IoT. The estimated Group contribution for the year remains at £480k, £59k lower than the original budget. Pay

and non-pay costs are being carefully managed to ensure significant savings against budget are generated.

ESFA Financial Health data was noted, with Financial Health due to remain 'Good' for the 2021/22 year, and current estimates show that the year-end balance will be £5,528k, £254k lower than the budget of £5,782k. The college has no borrowings, which supports the Good grade.

Cash days at the end of May were 33, 12 below the 45-day target. Current estimates show that they will dip to 25 at the end of July due to the timing of capital expenditure, before increasing again in future months.

The Board thanked Gavin for all his input as this is his last meeting, having been an interim.

The Board noted financial position up to May 2022

2022/23 Board Strategic Priority 2

Rebecca Carrington left the meeting for this item due to a conflict of interest

- b) **Sub-contracting plan 22/23 & Strategy** (*previously circulated as Paper 2.3B*).
(minuted as confidential)

Rebecca Carrington re-joined the meeting

- c) **2023 Budget approval and Pay Award Recommendation / Capital Expenditure** (*previously circulated as Paper 2.3C*)
(minuted as confidential)

3.0 GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE

Lindsey Styles and Amy Langford were welcomed to the meeting

3.1 Safeguarding Board – Governor Development Item / Annual Report 2021/22 (*previously circulated as Paper 3.1*)

Governors noted that as previously discussed with the Board, there was a rise in the number of safeguarding issues in September and governors had noted the capacity concerns. TAs were recruited and extra staff were recruited to the Safeguarding Team. The College has seen an increase in mental health issues in students and expected it to be a challenging year for Safeguarding, with over 1000 young people on the register this year, which is a significant increase year on year.

The Board was pleased to note that:

- The College is compliant with all statutory duties including those which were added to guidance issued in September 2021 and updated in May 2022.
- An internal audit was carried out in May 2022, and the opinion was that the systems and controls provide 'satisfactory assurance' (highest level of assurance). The Local Authority conducted a S175A Audit of safeguarding at the College in June, which commended how the College is supporting referrals.
- (see confidential minute for further reporting)

The Board

- ***Approved the Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Report 2021/22***

- **Delegated authority to the CEO and Link Governor for Safeguarding & Prevent to approve revisions to the Safeguarding and Prevent Strategy, Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

The Board thanked Lindsey for her work as she is retiring from the College in September.

Lindsey and Amy were thanked for attending and they left the meeting.

3.2 Health & Safety Annual Report 2021/22 / Health & Safety Policy Statement & Procedures / Health & Safety Policy Statement (previously circulated as Paper 3.2A and 3.2B)

Gavin Teasdale led on this item

Governors noted:

1. There are high levels of safe working practices at the College.
2. The reported number of accidents and incidents has increased since last year, although this is expected having full numbers back on college sites. Comparison with 19/20 figures shows no significant increase overall and where there are increases these are reflected by improved CCTV coverage in corridors and improved reporting.
3. The figures for this academic year (last year in brackets) are:
 - a. 102 accidents (76)
 - b. 1 accident reportable under RIDDOR (1)
 - c. 94 incidents (26)
 - d. 194 student visits (26). Although not quite back to pre-pandemic levels visits have increased back to more standard levels. All student visits are subject to robust scrutiny and appropriate controls are in place to ensure the safety of staff and students when off site. There have been no serious accidents or incidents.
4. The College has a clear focus on improving policies and procedures, which are reviewed and approved by the College H&S Executive Group (HSSEG).
5. These Policies and Procedures have been reviewed and (where necessary) updated to ensure a suitable and sufficient response to COVID-19.

The Board:

- **Approved the Annual Health & Safety Report**
- **Approved the Health and Safety Policy Statement for signature by the Chair / CEO & Group Principal**

The Health & Safety Policy and Procedures will be presented for approval at the November Board meeting.

3.3 Contracts for Approval (1) (minuted as confidential)

3.4 CQG 27th June 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 3.4)

Liz Marr led on this item

Governors commended the staff who contributed to the Beacon of Excellence award.

The Board approved the report from the CQG meeting on 27th June

3.5 Search & Governance 7th June 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 3.5A and 3.5B)

Charlynn Pullen led on this item.

The Board is seeking to appoint a new CEO and looking to maintain stability through the continuity of Chair and Vice-Chair. David Meadowcroft was previously elected as Chair until July 2022 but he is willing to continue as Chair until at least March 2024 when his current term of office (as a Governor) expires. The S&G Committee is recommending electing two Vice-Chairs for 2022/23 (which the Standing Orders allow); the Vice-Chair role is not necessarily a successor role. The Committee will be addressing succession planning in the next cycle.

The Board approved the report from the S&G meeting on 7th June including the following recommendations:

- ***Charlynn Pullen be appointed for a third term of office***
- ***Manish Verma, Mat Gotkowski, Richard Bartlett-Rawlings, Neil Sainsbury and Alan Cook be appointed for a second term of office (Alan Cook one year only)***
- ***The election of David Meadowcroft as Chair until March 2024***
- ***The election of Alan Cook and Ruby Palmer as joint Vice-Chairs for 2022/23***
- ***Engage a third-party provider to undertake an external review of governance in Autumn 2023 and delegate authority to the S&G Committee and Head of Governance to secure the provider***
- ***Adopt the revised Code of Governance for English Colleges from 2022/23***

3.6 Audit & Risk 30th June 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 3.6 and 3.6A)

Richard Bartlett-Rawlings led on this item

Governors noted the IAS progress report - all areas had received satisfactory assurance (highest level of assurance) except IT Access & User rights (moderate assurance), with 1 medium and 2 low level recommendations for management. Governance performance management and Subcontracting are still outstanding but will be completed shortly. The Annual Report will be produced in August and the new IAS will produce an audit plan by the end of July. The Board will be asked to approve this by written resolution.

The Board approved the report from the A&R meeting on 30th June including the following recommendations:

- ***The External Audit plan for 2021/22 provided by Buzzacott.***
- ***Approval of the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 by written resolution¹***

3.7 PDMG 2nd June 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 3.7)

Peter Cox led on this item.

Bletchley – no extra funds are available from the DfE, so contingency is low at present. Through implementation of a contract, the risk is now given over to contractor.

Oxford – the timeframe has slipped, and new start date is 4 weeks late. Committee discussions will focus on the impact on students. The college will open to students in time, but the official opening is likely to take place in October.

¹ Subsequently approved by written resolution on 15th August 2022

The Board approved the report from the PDMG meeting on 2nd June

3.8 CPMG 29th June 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 3.8)

Peter Cox led on this item.

Development is slightly behind the timetable, so the committee will be discussing this further to ensure the College meets the conditions in the grant.

The Board approved the report from the CPMG meeting on 29th June

3.9 Finance Group 4th July 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 3.9)

Mat Gotkowski led on this item.

The group had discussed the budget, as presented earlier in the meeting.

The Board approved the report from the Finance Group meeting on 4th July

3.10 CEO Selection Committee

Gwynneth Tan led on this item.

The recruitment advert is to be released tomorrow as commencement of the process – the dates are as per the CEOs report, with the closing date for applicants being in late September.

The Board approved the verbal update from the Selection Committee

3.11 Items for the next meeting

- Board Workplan
- Financial Health
- Student Experience
- Reports for Committees
- CEO Appointment

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved without discussion:

4.1 Minutes of the last meeting (8th June 2022) (previously circulated as Paper 4.1A)

The minutes were approved and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

4.2 Contracts for Approval (2) (previously circulated as Paper 4.2A and 4.2B)

- Security – PACE Security Service Ltd (£375,627.18 (ex VAT for 3 years with option to extend for further 2 period of 12 months (2022-25)
- Cleaning – Kingdom Services (£1,243,504 (ex VAT for 3 years with option to extend for 2 periods of 12 months (2022-25)

The Board approved the contracts.

4.3 Annual SEND report (previously circulated as Paper 4.3)

The Board approved the annual SEND report.

5.0 NEXT BOARD MEETING 5TH OCTOBER 2022

The Chair thanked governors who were leaving the College at the end of this academic year i.e. Rebecca Carrington, Liz Marr, and Julie Mills; small presentations were made.