

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2023

Room 1, Chaffron Way Business Centre

17:00 – 19:05

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance Record 2022/23	Present at this meeting
Maria Abbas (joined 25/11/22)	Student Governor	2 of 2	Yes
Sally Alexander	CEO	5 of 5	Yes
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	3 of 5	Sent apologies
Alan Cook	Independent	5 of 5	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	5 of 5	Yes
Kaye Dwight	Staff	5 of 5	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	5 of 5	Yes
Sean Hainsworth	Staff	4 of 5	Yes
Jacob Jempson (joined 25/11/22)	Student Governor	2 of 2	Yes
Shalom Lloyd	Independent	3 of 5	No
David Meadowcroft (Chair)	Independent	5 of 5	Yes
Angie Novell (joined 28/10/22)	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	4 of 5	Sent apologies
Charlynn Pullen	Independent	5 of 5	Yes (via Teams)
Ian Revell	Independent	4 of 5	Yes
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	3 of 5	Yes
Sufian Sadiq	Independent	4 of 5	Yes (via Teams) (in part)
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	4 of 5	Yes (via Teams)
Manish Verma	Independent	2 of 5	No
Jeremy Wilsdon (joined 28/10/22)	Independent	1 of 2	Yes
Attendance % this meeting		80%	16/20
Attendance % year to date		83%	74/89

Attendees at this meeting: Annie Allen (Chief People Officer), Alex Warner (Principal: Curriculum Innovation and Pedagogy), Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Miranda Coles (Chief Financial Officer), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner), Karen Brown (Head of Governance) (clerk)

Other attendees: Arv Kaushal (EDI Manager) (in part).

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

- Richard Bartlett-Rawlings and Ruby Parmar had sent apologies.
- Jez Wilsdon was welcomed to his first Board meeting
- Arv Kaushal was welcomed to the meeting.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

Ian Revell is a Member of the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Deal Board (agenda item 2.5 below)

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2021/22

2.1 CEO's Report (*previously circulated as Paper 2.1*)

Sally Alexander highlighted some key points from her report.

Accountability Frameworks

- This new initiative will hold colleges to account for meeting national skills. Following the publication of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), by Chambers of Commerce, in March 2023, the College will complete and publish a new Accountability Statement which must be signed by the Board and submitted to the ESFA by the end of May.
- Anna Clarke (who will attend the next Board meeting) sits on the Chamber Board.

ESFA Annual Strategic Conversation

- The positive meeting was held on 30th January. Members of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT, the Chair of Governors, regional ESFA representatives and an advisor from the FE Commissioner Team all attended.
- It was an informal conversation (the College set the agenda) and an opportunity to discuss ONS, Accountability Frameworks and the proposed changes to Financial Health scoring (which may not be going forward).

Mind the Skills Gap 1st March 2023

- Colleges are being encouraged to lobby the government about funding. We are not supporting the campaigning activities in London on 1st March, but we are lobbying through our MPs with whom we have a good relationship.

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2026

- The SLT is commencing a review of the Strategic Plan; proposals will be brought to the Board's Awayday on 7th of June for governor input.

College in the Community (CiTC) day 21st February 2023

- A key priority for the College is to drive Inclusion through engaging more widely with College communities and supporting staff and students to become 'Fairer Futures Activists', in line with the Strategic Plan.
- The College is launching this through a 'College in the Community' day on Tuesday 21st February, when timetables will be collapsed and students and staff are being encouraged to engage in community projects.

Governors asked questions:

The Accountability Framework requires colleges to undertake and publish a review of local skills needs every three years. Will there be interim reviews as three years is a long time?

Yes. The ESFA has advised us that it is a light touch this year. We constantly review the skills needs / curriculum and will update the statement as necessary.

What could change in the Strategic Plan?

We are revisiting the enabling objectives to ensure they are still relevant.

Congratulations to the student who achieved English GCSE grade 9 in November. What subject are they studying?

Yes, we were all delighted. The student is from Creative Arts & Media.

Can more information about the College in the Community activities be shared with students? There has been very little communication with Digital & Business and Creative Media students.

We will follow this up to ensure that students in all Schools are fully aware of all the opportunities.

Action 1: Alex Warner

In Engineering, 120 students have planned activities for the day.

The Board received the CEO Report

2.1A Headline Vision from the newly appointed COO

The Chair of Governors congratulated Jason Mansell on his recent appointment; the COO role is a designated senior post holder. Jason outlined his vision (minuted as confidential).

2.3 People Strategy / Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report

Annie Allen reminded governors that:

- Arv Kaushal is the EDI Manager and has been in post two years. Sufian Sadiq is the new EDI Link Governor.
- 'Building Fairer Futures' is at the heart of the College's Strategic Plan (2021-2026). 'Promoting and Living Fairness, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' is a Board Strategic Priority.
- 'Belonging' is the most recently added College value which aligns to EDI.
- The Equality and Diversity Strategy / Equality Strategy Action Plan (ESAP) has three stakeholder groups:
 1. Colleagues (Workforce)
 2. Communities (Internal, external, stakeholders)
 3. Students (Learners).

The EDI Annual Report and EDI Manager primarily focus on areas 1 and 2. Whilst area 3 is monitored by the ESRG (Equality Strategy Review Group), it is reported to governors through student experience reports with additional scrutiny by the CQG.

- The College is obliged to report (and publish) data on gender pay gaps but chooses to also report on ethnicity pay gaps (having signed up to this commitment as part of the Race at Work Charter). The report for 2021/22 was circulated to the Board in December 2022 (as a consent paper) and the report for 2022/23 will be brought forward to May 2023.
- All governors complete mandatory training in EDI on appointment and reappointment.

Arv Kaushal presented headlines from the EDI Annual Report (*previously circulated as Paper 2.3*) and the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2021/22 (Consent Paper 4.1, 14th December 2022):

- Key Priorities
 - Good progress has been made against the seven key priorities identified for 2022 and MKCG was reaccredited with Leaders in Diversity in September 2022.
 - EDI priorities for 2023 will build on the 2022 priorities and achievements:
 1. Further develop data to inform EDI actions
 2. Produce and respond to the College's Community Impact Report and MK Community Foundation's Vital Signs Report.
 3. Further develop Employee Networks
 4. Review and update the Inclusive Language Guide
 5. Produce an Interactive EDI Calendar (Academic Year)
 6. Community action - FEVoices, series 3 campaign, involving articles and recommendations to the sector.
 7. Refine the inclusive approach to risk and launch the new EIA (Equality Impact Assessment) process
 8. Complete the Student Commission on Racial Justice programme and start the process of implementing the recommendations from the report produced.
 - Board of Governors priorities include:
 1. The EDI Link Governor (with the support of the EDI Manager) will develop a mechanism for improved EDI scrutiny at Board level.
 2. Receive the Student Commission on Racial Justice Report.
 3. Actively support and promote a FEVoices podcast with their networks.
 4. Support recruitment activities by seeking out diverse talent in their own networks, especially at Board and senior levels.
 5. Annual EDI training
- Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report 2021/22
 - The mean pay gap between men and women decreased (from 7.9% to 5.2%)
 - The mean pay gap between non ethnic and ethnic increased (from 0.6% to 2.8%)

- Representation
 - The campus-based workforce and leadership is not representative of the MK Community in terms of ethnicity (currently c.13% of the workforce is Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority against a target of 20%).
 - c.70% of the workforce is female. Women from ethnic minorities are underrepresented in senior positions (overall gender representation is improving).
 - The College is focusing on Allyship and EDI training to ensure the student experience is not compromised due to staff underrepresentation.

Governors asked questions to which Arv, Annie and Jason responded:

In terms of student achievement and gaps, does this analysis exist?

Yes, the College is aware of the gaps which are reported in the College SAR (Self-Assessment Report) at a headline level, and in department SARs and QIPs (Quality Improvement Plans). The leadership team holds curriculum teams to account at 360 meetings for QIP actions and reviews the impact of interventions.

Given the changing population in MK (52% of young people in MK schools are ethnic minority) is the College taking action to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the changing population? Does the student body reflect the young people population and its diversity in MK?

We will bring a report to the Board / CQG to respond to these questions and update governors on interventions to address student achievement and gaps.

Action 2: Alex Warner

The College appears to be leading on EDI, but can more be done e.g., to track all the protected characteristics and learning capabilities in the workforce? Is there an Equity Action Plan?

Yes, all the protected characteristics are embedded across our activities, and we are confident that other protected characteristics are well represented in the workforce.

The actions arising from Equality Impact Assessments represent Equity Plans.

Why are fewer staff sharing ethnicity data (90% reduced to 85%)?

Staff are willing to share but there has been a technical problem with some prisons staff accessing I-Trent/Buddy. We are proactively following up where ethnicity has not been shared. It is more often a technical obstacle for some and inertia rather than concern about sharing.

Is the Board and College doing enough to support EDI?

We could always do more subject to capacity and investment, but we must prioritise. We are doing much more than many colleges and have made very

good progress in the last two years. The aim is to embed EDI in our culture and ensure that EDI is owned and driven by everyone and not just the EDI Manager e.g., employee networks, FE Voices and FAN are engaging staff and the community. We are developing a reputation and are being approached to support national events. The Board can lead by example e.g., supporting EDI events and development opportunities such as attending Allyship training.

The Board received the update and approved the EDI Annual Report

Arv Kaushal was thanked for attending and he left the meeting

2.2 Student Experience

a) Academic KPIs 2022/23 (previously circulated as Paper 2.2A)

Jason Mansell reminded governors that in 2021/22, the College delivered improved achievement rates and KPIs compared with 2020/21 and the 2021/22 headline Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR) data demonstrates that the College is at or just above national rates in most areas. However, several College stretch targets were not achieved.

At the meeting on 9th November 2022, the Board had challenged the proposed academic KPIs for 2022/23 in the context of the current student cohort. This year, like many other colleges, the College has seen a difference in the balance and mix of the student cohort with a significant increase in Project One, an increase in Adult English and Maths, a doubling of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), a large increase in High Needs students, increased incidences of SEND, increased behavioural issues, and lower student self-confidence.

Since November, the KPIs have been scrutinised by the Leadership Team with the Heads of Schools and further challenged by the CQG. Nine targets have been revised; these will still be stretching but are realistic (except attendance which has been retained at a very aspirational level of 90%). A detailed justification for each revised target is included in Paper 2.2A.

The Board was assured that the Heads of School are being held to account to deliver the targets.

The Board approved the academic KPIs for 2022/23

b) Prison Education – Serco Partnership (previously circulated as Paper 2.2B)

Jason Mansell gave an update on the new prison contracts:

Strategic partnership with Serco / mobilisation of HMP Fosse Way

- The plan is on track.
- The framework agreement (including a Statement of Work) was signed in October 2022. Maxine Bennett is leading on mobilisation.
- The 'go live' date is 1st May but there is a six-week delay in handing over the building. This delay does not pose any risk to the College.

- There are 19 posts currently being advertised. A Head of Education (who has experience of the private prison estate), and three deputies, have been appointed.
- Serco was unsuccessful (on price) in its bid for HMP Lowdham Grange and HMP Altcourse.

Lot 8 (Kent, Surrey and Sussex)

- The plan is on track. Mark Fisher is leading on Lot 8 mobilisation.

Governors asked questions to which Jason responded:

Are you confident that you can recruit successfully to fill the vacancies?

Yes. We have filled all the vacancies advertised so far and HMP Fosse Way is an attractive new site.

Lot 8 (Kent, Surrey, and Sussex) is a bigger challenge, and we are working with Weston College (the outgoing provider) on recruitment. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) knows that recruitment will take time.

After half-term, we will be reviewing capacity needs in the People Services team to support the additional prison workload.

Are we satisfied that our pricing model is correct, and we are not adding too many overheads?

Yes, we believe our model is correct which was proven through the PEF retendering. We cannot deliver quality provision at a lower price.

The Board noted the report

c) Report from the Curriculum and Quality Group (CQG) meeting of 23rd January 2023 (previously circulated as Paper 2.2C)

Charlynn Pullen, Chair of the CQG, referred to the report of the meeting (previously circulated as Paper 2.D) and highlighted:

- The CQG had fully scrutinised and agreed the justification for revising nine of the KPIs before recommending these to the Board for approval. The KPIs are now stretching but realistic.
- In the 2021/22 SAR (Self-Assessment Report), the Schools of Care and Engineering & Construction, had been assessed as 'Requiring Improvement'. At the request of the CQG, the respective Heads of School had attended the meeting to assure governors on progress in delivering their QIPs (Quality Improvement Plans) and that the actions were having a positive impact on the student experience and staff.
- The CQG had received assurance on English and maths i.e., that changes in line management and a focus on attendance, were having a positive impact. The November 2022 GCSE re-sits results were very good and placed the College above the sector norm.

The Board approved the report from the CQG meeting of 23rd January 2023

2.4 Financial Health (previously circulated as Paper 2.4)

Miranda Coles led on this item.

Management Accounts Period 5 (December 2022)

- Contribution is £411k deficit which is £103k better than the P5 budgeted position (£514k deficit).
- Income, pay costs and non-pay costs are all below budget.
- Cash is on target and supports going concern.
- As a consequence of the ONS reclassification, the College received additional capital funding (to improve the estate / increase energy efficiency) of £273k in January and will be receiving a further £685k in March.
- The P5 Financial Health score is 'Good' (i.e., on target).
- At the March Board meeting, the Financial Health report will include an analysis of the P6 (half-year) position, a budget reforecast and 'ragged' KPIs.

Student Numbers

- 16-19 recruitment is above allocation but below the College growth target.
- Adult recruitment is 20% higher than last year (mainly ESOL).
- Apprenticeship recruitment is on target.
- Higher Education (HE) recruitment is below target.

Governors asked questions to which Annie and Jason responded:

The Board has been assured that staff vacancies are being covered but what is the impact on the workloads of other staff?

There is a sub-committee reviewing actions to improve staff workloads and well-being and we are working collaboratively with the Unions (there are no planned strikes unlike other colleges). Staff wellbeing is a strategic priority and there are processes in place to track staff workloads. The number of vacancies has reduced since the autumn term and the figure includes staff working notice periods (which has no impact on colleagues).

It is a sector issue i.e., insufficient funding invested in Further Education so the College is exploring how to generate other funding (e.g., the prisons contract), smarter working and a better staff experience.

A Staff Governor added that there is no surplus capacity in the staffing model, which is lean, and other institutions are offering higher salaries to tempt our staff. However, staff enjoy working at the College. Good resources (e.g., in the Engineering Department), attract staff.

Are you confident you are capturing all upcoming vacancies e.g., there are three upcoming staff vacancies in Care which is an area identified as requiring improvement.

Managers encourage staff to share their plans as early as possible so that active recruitment can take place whilst existing staff are still serving their notice periods.

In the current economic climate, many people are looking for alternative employment. Has the College considered offering a retraining programme?

Yes, we have a number of programmes for suitable candidates.

FE Climate Roadmap / Environmental Sustainability

Good progress has been made and 7 of the 12 steps on the Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges have already been completed. Milton Keynes College Group is ahead compared to many other colleges. A more detailed update will be given at the next Board meeting.

Subsidiary Companies

At the meeting on 5th October 2022, the Board agreed to write-off a loan of £38,900 from the College to Milton Keynes Manpower Forum Ltd (MKMF). Unfortunately, the loan amount was incorrectly stated, and the correct figure should have been £42,329.20. This is a historic loan going back c.20 years and the subsidiary company is dormant.

The Directors of MKMF and Prison Education Training Services Ltd (PETS) resolved to wind up these two dormant companies at meetings held on 19th December 2022. At a meeting also held on 19th December 2022, the Audit & Risk Committee agreed to recommend this to the Board for approval.

The Board:

- **Noted the financial position as at Period 5**
- **Agreed to write off the loan to MKMF of £42,329.20**
- **Agreed to dissolve PETS and MKMF**

2.5 Tech Park Bletchley Funding (previously circulated as Paper 2.5)

Alex Warner referred governors to Paper 2.5. The Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Towns Deal Board has approved a grant of £306k for Tech Park Bletchley (subject to 100% match funding in kind over six years). Tech Park Bletchley (which will be delivered by the South Central Institute of Technology (SCIoT) and Milton Keynes College Group), will support engagement and outreach work e.g., with schools and community groups (which is part of the existing IoT vision). The grant will be used to kit out a space within the SCIoT at Bletchley and is subject to two outcomes:

1. 250 learner engagements / interactions per year, for the next 5 years (until 2025/26).
2. The creation of two new jobs

Governors were assured that the outcomes and match funding in kind were achievable and the cost of employing two members of staff was covered by funds already allocated for the IoT.

The Board:

- **Approved the recommendation to proceed with the Town Deal Funding to support delivery of Tech Park Bletchley**
- **Delegated authority to the Chair of Governors and CEO to execute the Funding Agreement under seal (subject to completing due diligence)**

3.0 Governance and Compliance

3.1 Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) Meeting of 18th January 2023

Peter Cox, Chair of the CPMG, referred to the report of the meeting (*previously circulated as Paper 3.1*) when the CPMG had received assurance on project progress, variations from budget and vision / design principles. After merging the CPMG and former PDMG, there are three capital projects in scope:

- South Central Institute of Technology (SCIoT) at Bletchley (the sites at Reading and Oxford are live)
- The ITC Extension at Chaffron Way. This is a £3.5m project funded by the 'Post 16 Capacity Fund' including 15% match funding. The project is close to completion.
- Chaffron Way refurbishment. This is a £7.4m project funded by the 'Capital Transformation Fund' including 50% match funding.

There was a confidential discussion relating to the SCIoT.

The Letter of Intent (LOI) relating to the Chaffron Way CTF project was approved by the Board by written resolution; the CPMG has requested that solicitors review the LOI before it is issued.

The Board:

- **Approved the report from the CPMG meeting of 18th January 2023**
- **Approved the revised Terms of Reference (Paper 3.1B)**

- **Ratified the written resolution relating to the Letter of Intent (T&B Contractors Ltd) (Paper 3.1C)**

Sufian Sadiq left at 18:40

3.2 Board Attendance Policy (previously circulated as Paper 3.2)

Following feedback from governors at the December Board meeting, the policy has been revised in relation to hybrid meetings. Although the contribution of governors attending virtually can be limited, the Board wants to encourage everyone to attend in whatever way they can. However, the technology challenges need to be addressed.

Action 3: Jason Mansell

The Board approved the Board Attendance Policy

3.3 Governor Engagement & Link Governor Report (previously circulated as Paper 3.3)

The Governance Partner reminded governors that she had circulated a link to an online form to enable governors to feedback on their spring term visits. The observations from governors are fed into the quality review process.

The Board noted the report of Governor Engagement & Link Governor visits

3.4 Items for the next meeting:

Student Experience

- In year student performance
- Meeting Local Needs

Financial Sustainability

- Management Accounts / KPIs
- 2022/23 Reforecast
- Budget Principles 2023/24
- Estates Strategy

FE Climate Road Map (Action Plan and KPIs)

3.5 Meeting Effectiveness

Governors gave the following feedback in relation to the meeting:

- There were some technical issues (sound) for governors attending via Teams
- Consider rotating the venue (Chaffron Way and Bletchley)
- Raise the profile / awareness of governors and governance with staff (e.g. more visibility)
- Arrange a tour of the ITC (Engineering) prior to the March Board meeting

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Minutes of the last meetings

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 14th December 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 4.1A, Confidential 4.1B and Confidential 4.1C)

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 20th December 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 4.1D and Confidential 4.1E)

Matters arising

Date Raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
20/12	Circulate reconciliation of P12 to the Financial Statements	MCC	Complete - circulated on 23.12.22
	Circulate a cashflow forecast confirming solvency to December 2023	MCC	Complete - agenda item 2.4 above
14/12	Add high reliance on the PEF contract to the strategic risk register	JM	Complete – discussed by Risk Management Group on 24 th January and actions agreed
9/11	Academic KPIs to be revisited by CQG and recommended to the Board	JM	Complete - agenda item 2.2 above

4.2 Financial Regulations (*previously circulated as Paper 4.2*)

As recommend by the Audit & Risk Committee on 30/6/22, the Board approved:

- **Section 1 – Introduction and General**
- **Section 7 – Reimbursement of Expenses**
- **Section 8 - Income**
- **Section 10 – Treasury Management, Banking and Cash**
- **Section 17 – College Companies and Joint Ventures**

4.3 **The Board approved the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy for publication** (*previously circulated as Paper 4.3*)

4.4 **The Board ratified the Written Resolution Delegation** (*previously circulated as Paper 4.4*) **delegating authority to the COO Selection Committee**

4.5 **The Board noted the 2121/22 Complaints Analysis** (*previously circulated as Paper 4.5*) (*which was scrutinised by the CQG on 17/10/22*)

4.6 **The Board reviewed and noted the People Data Report as of December 2022** (*previously circulated as Paper 4.6*)

Next Meeting: 22nd March 2023



Approved 22 March 2023
Vice Chair of Governors – Ruby Parmar