

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2023
Room F44, Chaffron Way Campus
17:00 – 19:10

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance Record 2022/23	Present at this meeting
Maria Abbas (joined 25/11/22)	Student Governor	4 of 6	Yes
Sally Alexander	CEO	9 of 9	Yes
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	7 of 9	Yes
Alan Cook	Independent	9 of 9	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	9 of 9	Yes
Kaye Dwight	Staff	9 of 9	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	9 of 9	Yes
Sean Hainsworth	Staff	8 of 9	Yes
Jacob Jempson (joined 25/11/22)	Student Governor	6 of 6	Yes
Shalom Lloyd	Independent	6 of 9	Sent apologies
David Meadowcroft (Chair)	Independent	7 of 9	Yes
Angie Novell (joined 28/10/22)	Independent	6 of 7	Sent apologies
Ruby Parmar	Independent	7 of 9	Sent apologies
Charlynn Pullen	Independent	9 of 9	Yes
Ian Revell	Independent	8 of 9	Yes
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	6 of 9	Yes
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	8 of 9	Yes (Teams)
Manish Verma	Independent	6 of 9	Yes (Teams) (in part)
Jeremy Wilsdon (joined 28/10/22)	Independent	3 of 6	Yes
Sufian Sadiq (resigned 6.6.23)	Independent	4 of 7	
Attendance % this meeting		84%	16/19
Attendance % year to date		84%	140/167

Attendees at this meeting: Alex Warner (Principal: Curriculum Innovation and Pedagogy), Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Miranda Coles (Interim Chief Financial Officer), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner), Amy Langford (Group Director: Inclusion and the Student Experience) (in part), Maxine Bennett (Lead Director, Prison Services)

1.0 Procedural

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

- David Meadowcroft welcomed Maxine Bennett and Amy Langford to the meeting.

- Angie Novell, Ruby Parmar, Shalom Lloyd, Annie Allen and Karen Brown had sent apologies.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

None

There was a change in the order of agenda items

3.1 Safeguarding & Prevent Annual Report 2022/23 (previously circulated as Paper 3.1)

Amy Langford advised that Safeguarding & Prevent will be a longer discussion item at the next meeting and highlighted some headlines from the report:

1. The College is compliant with all Safeguarding and Prevent statutory duties and works with the local agencies.
2. The Internal Auditors judged the controls relating to Health, Safety and Safeguarding to be 'Adequate' (June 2023).
3. *Safeguarding - harm to students, staff and members of the wider college community* (knife crime and gangs, suicidal contagion, extremist incident) is a Strategic Risk and rag rated red. Gang related incidents are increasing and have required more disciplinary action resulting in 12 student exclusions (5 in 2021/22).
4. Risk mitigation is reviewed at every meeting of the Risk Management Group including a revision to the Duty Manager role (more visible presence) alongside the introduction of Positive Behaviour Lead roles. The College is also planning to introduce knife arches in September 2023 as well as increasing the work with students and parents to build awareness and confidence that the College is a safe place.
5. The number of reported safeguarding incidents in 2022/23 reduced by 20% compared to 2021/22, in part due to changes in staffing and post-pandemic return of services. The complexity of incidents remains high and over 80% of incidents cited mental health as a primary or secondary reason. The number of Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) has increased (36 DSOs were trained in 2022/23).
6. Angela Novell and Ian Revell are the Link Governors for Safeguarding and Prevent and have termly meetings with the Safeguarding Lead.

Governors asked questions to which Amy responded:

How are you alerted to the possibility that someone is carrying a weapon (the Police estimates this applies to 1% of individuals across the Thames Valley region) and how can the College continue to engage with and educate students if they are excluded?

We may be alerted to this possibility by the Police, or a Social Worker and we have a stop and search policy and knife wands.

However, most our focus is on preventative and restorative work by raising awareness through the Personal Development curriculum. We do want to

engage and educate but through positive behaviour and in a way that everyone feels safe at College. A knife arch would deter individuals from carrying a weapon in College.

What are your plans to engage parents?

We will focus on students first (Freshers Fair and Student Inductions) and then host events, with Thames Valley Police, for parents. Parents were supportive and sought reassurance when there was a previous serious incident.

Will you advise students in advance that you introducing knife arches?

We will advise students at induction and then start to introduce knife arches so that students are not alarmed if they suddenly appear.

Have you engaged with the Local Authority as knife crime is an increasing problem across the city?

Yes, we have engaged with the appropriate Safeguarding agencies in MK.

At the next meeting, governors requested more discussion on the number and type of incidents, how the College is responding, resourcing, and the post-pandemic impact.

Action 1: Amy Langford

A Safeguarding Link Governor added that he had held several meetings with College Safeguarding Leaders and had received additional assurance.

The Board:

- ***Approved the Annual Report 2022/23 which provides assurance that the College is meeting its responsibilities for Safeguarding and Prevent.***
- ***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***

3.2 SEND Annual Report 2022/23 (previously circulated as Paper 3.2)

Amy Langford advised that SEND will be a longer discussion item at the next meeting and highlighted some headlines from the report:

1. The College is meeting its statutory responsibilities with regards to the SEND Code of Practice and is preparing for anticipated changes.
2. There are discussions taking place, led by the Council, on post 16 alternative provision which is stretched. The Council is looking to expand the provision.
3. In 2022/2023 there were:
 - 150 students with an EHCP
 - 76 students in receipt of High Needs Funding within the mainstream offer.
 - 139 High Needs funded students within Inclusive Learning and Subcontracted provision

4. Vocational achievement for High Needs Funded (HNF) students on mainstream programmes in 2021/22 was 85%, predicted achievement for 2022/23 currently sits at 86%. An update will be given at the next meeting.
5. The number of potential High Needs Funded students for 2023/24 is currently 124 of which 48 are progression students. This is higher than last year. Recruitment of staff is ongoing with some specialist staff required to meet specific medical needs.
6. Angela Novell and Ian Revell are the Link Governors for SEND and they attended a recent workshop on SEND facilitated by the FE Commissioner team with Sally Alexander and Sam Samuels.

The Board approved the Annual Report which provides assurance that the College is meeting its responsibilities for SEND

Amy was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2022/23

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

Sally Alexander highlighted some key points from her report.

SEND Workshop

As reported above, Sally Alexander, Angela Novell, Ian Revell and Sam Samuels recently attended a strategic and supportive workshop on SEND at West Herts College. This had been organised by the FE Commissioner following feedback from Ofsted that colleges were not receiving strong gradings relating to SEND (quality of provision, transition arrangements and student outcomes / progression).

South Central Institute of Technology

The building at Bletchley was officially opened in June with several successful stakeholder, staff, and community events.

Senior Appointments

Clare Hood has been appointed as Group Director: Quality and Teaching & Learning Improvement. Kaye Dwight was congratulated on being appointed Group Director: Funding, Data and Exams.

The Board reviewed and noted the CEO Report

2.2 Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026 / Board Strategic Priorities 2023/24 (previously circulated as Paper 2.2)

The Board reviewed and agreed the strategy (minuted as confidential).

2.3A Financial Health

1. Financial Health 2022/23 - 2022/23 Management Accounts Period 10 (May 2023) – Overview (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A1)

Jason Mansell led on this item.

The P10 Management Accounts were scrutinised by the Finance Group at the meeting on 3rd July 2023.

- Overall Group contribution is £58k better than budget. Campus and IoT contributions are £44k better than budget and Prison Services £14k better than budget.
- Income is £1,408k below budget, of which £8k relates to reduced activity in prisons and £1,400k to Campus and the IoT.
- Pay costs are £1,666k below budget which is £1,034k in prisons (77 vacancies) and £632k on campus (24 vacancies). Campus delivery is not being affected by vacancies nor are the vacancies / reduction in pay costs masking budget issues elsewhere.
- Non pay costs are £200k over budget which is £1,013k over budget in prisons and £813k under budget on Campus. The overspend in prisons will be recovered.
- Cash is on target and supports going concern. The cash balance at the end of P10 was £7,607k and cash days were 53 (target 45).
- The P10 Financial Health score is 'Outstanding' (i.e., better than target).

Capital Budget

- The Board approved a capital budget of £1.5m for 2022/23 of which £1,028k has been spent to date.

Bank Mandate

The new Director of Finance (Susan Akhtar) will replace Miranda Coles on the Bank mandate

The Board:

- ***Noted the financial position as at Period 10***
- ***Approved the addition of Susan Akhtar (Director of Finance) to the Bank Mandate (to replace Miranda Coles (Interim CFO))***

2. Budget 2023/24 (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A2)

The proposed budget was scrutinised by the Finance Group at the meeting on 3rd July 2023.

Jason Mansell highlighted:

- The budget and three-year forecast is focused on delivering financial sustainability for the Group i.e., to maintain Good Financial Health and delivering a 'Good' Ofsted outcome in 2023/24, whilst mitigating the investment in the CTF project.

- The budget projects a surplus of £803k (campus and IoT £367k / prisons £435k), in line with the three-year financial plan approved by the Board in July 2022.
- The curriculum planning process, underpinning the budget setting, has been rigorous and inclusive involving teams from Curriculum, Data, Finance and People Services.
- The budget is aligned to the operational plan discussed at item 2.2 including 16-19 growth (146 students); costs to deliver the growth are in the budget but there is no assumption that there will be additional in-year growth funding. Any growth in 16-19 student numbers will however be reflected in an increased allocation in the 2024/25 financial year due to the lagged funding model.
- The budget includes proposed Capex expenditure of £824k.

Staff Pay

The Board discussed staff pay and approved the recommendation.

Governors asked questions to which Jason, Miranda Coles and Maxine Bennett responded:

The budget principles state that income targets are realistic and achievable – how confident are you that this is correct given the experience in 2022/23?

Paper 2.3A1 includes an explanation of why income targets were not met this financial year i.e., due to student recruitment targets not being met.

On campus, the budget assumed a growth in student numbers and whilst we did recruit and retain additional students (due to Project September), we did not have the anticipated number of progression students (partly due to cost-of-living pressures and the need for students to leave College to find employment).

Income from prison services was below target because the College was paid on a 'costs plus' model so income was reduced when delivery was curtailed (due to a shortage of prison officers impacting learners' attendance and education staff vacancies).

Despite income targets not being met, the contribution target is expected to be met due to management of costs.

Is the College meeting commercial income targets and are there opportunities to increase non-ESFA income?

Several projects in the operational plan relate to projects which will generate additional income or enable us to develop our estate to generate additional income.

The Board:

- ***Approved the Budget for 2023/24***
- ***Approved the College Capex budget for 2023/24 of £824k***

- **Approved the College three year rolling plan 2023/24 – 2025/6**
- **Agreed that the Financial KPIs for 2023/24 will be brought to the next meeting for approval**
- **Approved the recommendation on Staff Pay Awards**

3. Sub-Contracting 2023/24 (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A3)

Jason Mansell led on this item and highlighted:

- The 2023/24 Strategy for Subcontracting is presented for Board approval (Annex 1) which is based on the recommendations and guidelines issued by the ESFA.
- The Internal Auditors are carrying the Subcontracting Standard audit which is on track for completion before the end of July 2023 (and will be reported to the Audit & Risk Committee in November 2023).
- There are regular performance reviews of sub-contracting provision.
- There are four proposed subcontracting arrangements for study programme students in 2023/24.

	Arts 1	SOFEA	MacIntyre No Limits	Walnuts Care Ltd
Type of Provision	Performing Arts	Education, employability and wellbeing programmes for vulnerable young people	Autism, Special Education Needs and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs	Autistic young people post 16 who cannot access mainstream education.
Contract Length	Final Year	One Year	One Year	One Year
No. of full-time students	53 (Estimate) (Year 2 only)	24 (Estimate)	48	7
Contract Amount	c.£339k based on 53 starts). Maximum Contract Value c.£288k paid to Arts1.	c.£156k (based on 24 starts). Maximum Contract Value c.£132.6k paid to SOFEA	£600k ESFA Funding plus £1,705k Local Authority Funding Total £2.3m	£87.5k ESFA Funding plus £177k Local Authority Funding Total £264k

Governors asked questions to which Jason responded:

Have MacIntyre No Limits and Walnuts Care Ltd been benchmarked for value for money?

No because they are the only providers in the area offering this specialist provision. However, the Local Authority is aiming to increase this type of provision for 2024/25 which may open up new suppliers. The funding for these students is based on their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

The Board:

- ***Noted the assurance on compliance with sub-contracting rules***
- ***Approved the Strategy, Policy, Fees and Charges for sub-contracting in 2023/24***

- **Approved the following subcontracting contracts for 2023/24:**
 - **Arts 1**
 - **SOFEA**
 - **MacIntyre No Limits**
 - **Walnut Care Ltd**

2.3B Finance Group (FinG) Meeting of 3rd July 2023 *(previously circulated as Paper 2.3B)*

Mat Gotkowski, Chair of the Finance Group, referred to the report of the meeting and highlighted:

- At the end of the financial year, the FinG have asked the ELT to analyse the financial performance in terms of what was proactively managed and what was the result of things outside the College's control. The FinG has also requested two separate KPIs next year relating to vacancies to distinguish between budgeted staff numbers / actual gaps in roles and additional reporting for the IoT.

Action 2: Jason Mansell

The Board approved the report from the Finance Group meeting of 3rd July 2023.

2.3C New Agreement *(previously circulated as Paper 2.3C)*
Minuted as Confidential

2.4 Student Experience *(previously circulated as Paper 2.4)*

Alex Warner led on this item and highlighted:

Student Success Predictions 2022/23

- The predictions are cautious as there are more externally assessed and examined qualifications this year which are subject to final validation / final results.
- Predictions are based on performance metrics where available (e.g., Retention, Attendance, BRAG-ratings, Vocational Tracker and mock exams). Every learner is tracked until the end of the academic year, and in a small number of instances, into the summer.
- Overall performance is expected to show a positive improvement compared to last year.
- Targets which are unlikely to be met are:
 - 16-18 Vocational Achievement
 - English (GCSE and Functional Skills). Governors were reminded that the target for English was set higher than maths based on previous performance.
 - Attendance – this is a sector issue post pandemic and has the potential to be a limiting factor for Ofsted. However, despite attendance being below target, outcome predictions are positive. East Kent College Group had

similar attendance when it was inspected by Ofsted in March 2023 and was judged to be Outstanding in all aspects.

- Industry Placements (non-T Level). Work Experience is a challenge where learners are struggling to undertake unpaid Work Experience as they favour part time work to support household income. In some sectors, e.g., engineering, employers are supporting work related activity e.g., guest speakers, visits to site etc, but we find it increasingly difficult to offer on-site work placements.
- The first draft of the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) should be available for Governors in September. Link Governors will be invited to department SAR validation reviews.

Manish Verma left the meeting at 18:45

Curriculum Planning 2023/24

- The 2023/24 curriculum responds to changes in the external and policy landscape at Level 2 and Level 3 (including the defunding of BTECS and the roll out of more T Levels).
- T Level Science is new and requires specialist equipment and materials which require new risk assessments e.g., potentially the storage of radioactive materials in Year 2 (2024/25). In order to engage a specialist consultant to develop the risk assessment, Board endorsement to proceed is requested. The risk assessment will be brought to a future meeting.

Governors asked questions to which Alex responded:

What is the predicted achievement in Health and Social Care and Construction as both Schools were identified as requiring improvement in the SAR last year?

The quality improvement actions, scrutiny and support have been successful as both Schools are predicting significant improvement in outcomes (predicted achievement 84/85%) compared to last year (70-75%).

Which areas have the lowest attendance?

English and Maths across all Schools but mostly at the lower levels (Entry and Level 1).

At the next meeting, can you update the Board on actions to address attendance.

We will be setting expectations at the start of the year and challenging attendance. The Retention Strategy will be reviewed to ensure that our approach to attendance is explicit, and we are exploring a range of other interventions.

Action 3: Alex Warner

The new Skills Academy, aimed at lower-level students, may assist.

The Board:

- **Noted the campus predictions for 2022/23 and curriculum plans for 2023/24**
- **Agreed the College may proceed to work with advisors to develop the Risk Assessment for storing and handling radioactive substances; a recommendation will come to the Board for approval next cycle.**

2.4B Curriculum & Quality Group (CQG) Meeting of 26th June 2023 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4B)

Charlynn Pullen, Chair of the CQG, referred to the report of the meeting. The Group had received assurance on apprenticeships, work experience and the SAR review process. Governors had the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the predicted campus achievement discussed by the Board above. An updated Access & Participation Plan (APP) for Higher Education will be submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) by the end of July.

The Board approved the report from the CQG meeting of 26th June 2023.

3.0 GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

3.1 Safeguarding & Prevent – minuted above

3.2 SEND – minuted above

3.3 Audit & Risk Committee Meeting of 22nd June 2023 (previously circulated as Paper 3.3)

Alan Cook, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, referred to the report of the meeting. The Committee had reviewed and recommended assurance reports relating to the External Audit Strategy & Plan (for 22/23), Risk, Internal Audit, Health & Safety, Data Protection and Freedom of Information, College Financial Regulations, and the Committee's Terms of Reference (see consent agenda item 4.2).

The Committee also received a briefing from the external auditor on further impacts of the ONS reclassification and Managing Public Money requirements.

The Board approved:

- **The report from the A&R Committee meeting of 22nd June 2023**
- **External Audit Strategy and Plan for 22/23 (Paper 4.2A)**
- **Strategic Risk Register and Risk Management Policy (Papers 4.2B and 4.2C)**
- **Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for 23/24 (Paper 4.2D) (subject to Student Records)**
- **H&S Annual Report 22/23, H&S Policy and H&S Policy Statement 23/24 (Papers 4.2E, 4.2F and 4.2G)**
- **The DPA and FOI Annual report 22/3 (Paper 4.2H)**
- **Seven sections of the Financial Regulations (Paper 4.2I)**
 - **Section 1: Introduction & General**
 - **Section 2: Responsibility Delegation and Monitoring**
 - **Section 5: People Services and Payroll**
 - **Section 9: Credit Management**
 - **Section 10: Treasury Management, Banking and Cash**
 - **Section 12: Inventory & Asset Management**

- **Annex 1: Post Holder Titles and Groups**
- **The Committee's Terms of Reference for 23/24 (paper 4.2J)**

3.4 Search & Governance Meetings of 14th June and 4th July (previously circulated as Paper 3.4)

Ian Revell, who had chaired both meetings, referred to the report and highlighted:

- Three candidates had attended for interview; all had been recommended to the Board for appointment (since been approved by email).
- The Committee recommended the reappointment of Alan Cook to serve a further twelve months (fifth year of office)
- The Committee recommended that Alan Cook and Ruby Parmar serve as Vice-Chairs for 2023/24 (as Chair Elect, Ruby will serve as Vice-Chair until December 2023).
- The Committee may need to meet in September if the new AOC Code of Governance is published.
- **The Board ratified the decision to:**
 - **Appoint Amit Nayyar, Leroi Henry and Tom Wraight, to the Board, from 1st August 2023, for a three-year term of office subject to a satisfactory DBS check.**
 - **Re-appoint Alan Cook to serve a further twelve months from 1st August 2023**
 - **Elect Alan Cook and Ruby Parmar as joint Vice Chairs for 2023/24 (Ruby Parmar to December 2023)**
- **The Board approved the Committee's Terms of Reference for 2023/24 (Annex 1 of Paper 3.4)**

3.5 Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) Meeting of 21st June 2023 (previously circulated as Paper 3.5)

Richard Bartlett-Rawlings referred to the report and highlighted:

- The IoT building at Bletchley was handed over to the College on 21st June. Open events have been held for VIP guests, staff and the Community. The project overspend could be c£100k (including VAT) including the additional £45k (plus VAT) on beam encasements. The figure is being checked but is a 'worst case' amount. The sites at Oxford and Reading are fully operational.
- The ITC extension is still awaiting the BREEAM certificate.
- The works at Chaffron Way are on track. The contract for the main works has been signed.
- Tariff Finding – the funding agreement has been signed and the projects are being scoped.
- Since the meeting, the College has been advised that it was unsuccessful in its bid for SALIX funding.

The Board approved the report from the CPMG meeting of 21st June 2023.

3.6 Items for the next meeting

The Board's Business Plan for 23/24 will come to the next meeting for approval

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 FE Climate Report (previously circulated as Paper 4.1)

The Board approved the report which sets out progress to date.

4.2 Audit & Risk Committee Recommendations (previously circulated as Papers 4.2A to 4.2J)

Minuted at 3.3 above.

4.3 Minutes of the last meeting (7th June 2023)

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 7th June 2023 (previously circulated as Paper 4.3A and Confidential 4.3B)

Matters arising: None

Next Meeting: 4th October 2023

After the meeting, on behalf of the Board, the Chair:

- Thanked Miranda Coles for supporting the College as Interim Chief Finance Officer; this will be Miranda's last Board meeting.
- Expressed thanks to Sufian Sadiq who resigned from the Board in June after 17 months but is continuing as a co-opted member of the CQG
- Thanked Maria Abbas for serving as Student Governor since November 2022, presented her with a voucher and wished her well at University.
- Thanked Kaye Dwight for serving as a Staff Governor for three years, presented her with flowers and congratulated her again on her promotion.
- Presented Gwynneth Tan with a College bowl and thanked her for serving as an Independent Governor for nine years and as Chair of the Remuneration Committee.
- Presented Peter Cox with a College bowl and thanked him for serving as an Independent Governor and Member of the Audit & Risk Committee for nine years and in recent years, as Chair of the CPMG. Peter's last meeting will be CPMG on 19th July however he has agreed to be a co-opted governor on CPMG and an independent director of MKCC Ltd from 1st August 2023.
- Presented Charlynn Pullen with a College bowl and thanked her for serving as an Independent Governor for eight years and recently, as Chair of the CQG. Charlynn has moved away from Milton Keynes.



Approved 4 October 2023
Vice Chair of Governors – Alan Cook