

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

Part 1 Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2022

Room 1, Chaffron Way Business Centre

17:00 – 19:33

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance Record 2022/23	Present at this meeting
Maria Abbas (joined 25/11/22)	Student Governor	1 of 1	Yes
Sally Alexander	CEO	3 of 3	Yes
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	2 of 3	Yes (in part)
Alan Cook	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	3 of 3	Yes (Teams)
Kaye Dwight	Staff	3 of 3	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Sean Hainsworth	Staff	3 of 3	Yes
Jacob Jempson (joined 25/11/22)	Student Governor	1 of 1	Yes
Shalom Lloyd	Independent	2 of 3	Sent apologies
David Meadowcroft (Chair)	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Angie Novell (joined 28/10/22)	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Charlynn Pullen	Independent	3 of 3	Yes (Teams)
Ian Revell	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	2 of 3	Sent apologies
Sufian Sadiq	Independent	3 of 3	Yes (Teams) (in part)
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	3 of 3	Yes
Manish Verma	Independent	2 of 3	Yes
Jeremy Wilsdon (joined 28/10/22)	Independent	0 of 0	n/a
Attendance % this meeting		89%	17/19
Attendance % year to date		92%	47/51

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

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

- As agreed at his appointment interview, Jeremy Wilsdon was not available for this meeting. Shalom Lloyd, Gwynneth Tan and Natalie Malena-Bangs (Judicium) had sent apologies due to illness (Judicium had not been able to provide a replacement clerk)
- Angela Novell, Jacob Jempson and Maria Abbas were welcomed to their first meeting, and they briefly introduced themselves.

1.2 Declaration of Interests
None previously declared.

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.

Ofsted Inspections of Prisons

- Post COVID, prisons are once again undergoing full inspections by Ofsted, as part of the HMIP prison inspection process. Governors were reminded that under the new Prison Inspection Framework, it is the prison which is inspected (and graded) and not the PEF (Prison Education Provider) e.g. the College.
- Ofsted has been very critical of Education, Skills and Work across prisons, and the College is seeing prisons being graded as 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' which mirrors the national picture. A separate grade was requested by all colleges, but Ofsted has not agreed to this.
- Regimes are a challenge, particularly in the Long Term High Security Estate, where learners have been unable to access education; this was evident in the recent inspection at HMP Garth where the College self-assessed its provision as Good but due to regime restrictions, the final Ofsted outcome for Education, Skills and Work across the prison was Inadequate.
- Although this is affecting staff morale, it is not impacting the College's reputation as a provider, and the College continues to work effectively with the HMPPS National Contract Management Team and local prison leaders.
- Members of the senior team are visiting the prison education teams who are maintaining quality standards and appreciate the College's support. HMPPS is equally frustrated by the situation and the College has planned a joint meeting with the Authority in early January 2023 to review whether anything more can be done collectively.

Governors asked:

What are the reasons why learners are not available to attend education and work?

During COVID, when prisoners were confined to cells, behaviour improved so this has been continued for some higher risk prisoners. There are other issues such as prison officer shortages.

We also have vacancies, particularly in vocational trades, but the impact is low when spread across 19 prisons.

Maths and English - the Greater Than > Network

Governors asked:

How will our students benefit?

It is a project to support the teaching of English & Maths across the region i.e. we will develop the training with our staff and then share the training with other colleges, for the benefit of students, over the next three years.

ONS reclassification

More information on the impact is emerging (included in Paper 2.3).

The Board received the CEO Report

2.2 Student Experience

Jason Mansell and Alex Warner led on these items.

a) Quality and Performance (previously circulated as Paper 2.2A)

College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2021/22 (previously circulated as Paper 2.2B)

- The SAR is a comprehensive self-reflective review of performance for the 2021/22 academic year. It is an accumulation and summary of performance across all curriculum areas.
- Jason Mansell assured governors of the rigorous validation process which had included challenge from CQG members and challenge by Link Governors at School level. The SAR describes areas of strength as well as areas for development and improvement. The SAR is a comprehensive document summarising the quality of provision and the student experience at a College level.
- College provision has been self-assessed as Good overall and in all areas of the Ofsted EIF (Education Improvement Framework):
 - Quality of Education Good
 - Behaviour and Attitudes Good
 - Personal Development Good
 - Leadership and Management Good
 - Safeguarding Effective
 - Education Programmes for Young People Good
 - Adult Learning Programmes Good
 - Apprenticeships Good
 - Provision for learners with high needs Good
- The overall picture is one of improvement compared to 2020/21:
 - 11 out of 13 Schools are graded Good or Better (10 in 2020/21)
 - 3 Schools improved their grade
 - Inclusion from Good to Outstanding
 - Engineering from Requiring Improvement to Good
 - Motor Vehicle from Requiring Improvement to Good
 - 8 Schools maintained their grades
 - 2 Schools dropped down a grade:
 - Care from Good to Requiring Improvement

- Distance Learning from Outstanding to Good

College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) (previously circulated as Paper 2.2C)

- The College 2022/23 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) includes eight headline themes reflecting the activities identified as requiring improvement through the SAR process.
- The QIP has been subject to the same rigorous validation process as the SAR. It is a forward looking improvement plan which will be monitored by the Leadership Team and CQG during the 2022/23 academic year. The Schools have a local QIP which Link Governors can request / review during their Link Governor visits.
- The internal IQR (Independent Quality Review) and 360 reviews (where colleagues are held to account by the ELT), are already demonstrating that there has been in-year progress.

The Chair recommended the SAR and QIP to governors as a valuable reference document describing college performance in 2021/22. Paper 2.2A provides a useful summary.

Governors asked questions:

Are these external documents?

The SAR is an internal evaluation document to drive improvements and the QIP is a working document to track the progress of improvement actions. These will be requested by Ofsted in the event of an inspection (although the SAR is historic so some content would need to be updated).

What is the definition of 'achievement' and high grades?

Achievement is a formula based on retention of students and their pass grade.

High grades relate to GCSE grades 4 – 9 (Grades 1-9 are pass grades).

Will CQG regularly monitor the QIP and report back to the Board?

The ELT will report progress to CQG and the Board. The CQG provides an additional layer of scrutiny and assurance e.g. CQG will have a deep dive into Care Professions at the January meeting.

Link Governors were also recommended to monitor local QIPs through Link Governor visits and feedback to the Board (see paper 3.7).

The Board:

- ***Approved the SAR for 2021/22***
- ***Approved the QIP for 2022/23***

Sufian Sadiq joined the meeting at 17:30

Curriculum Reform (previously circulated as Paper 2.2D)

A key driver of the detailed analysis is to address staff workloads and wellbeing e.g. the size and structure of Schools.

The themes identified as priority for 2022/23 (in readiness for 2023/24) are:

1. Relocation of Schools.
2. Level 1 Qualification Reform. (Level 1 programmes do not require a narrow vocational focus but can be more generic focusing on development of professional behaviours, English & maths, onward progression to a professional pathway etc.)

The Board received the update on curriculum reform activities

b) CQG Meeting (21st November 2022) (previously circulated as Paper 2.2D)

Charlynn Pullen referred to the report of the meeting (previously circulated as Paper 2.D) and outlined matters discussed (i.e. draft SAR, draft QIP, IQRs, Employer Engagement, Safeguarding and Student Voice).

The Group Director: Inclusion and Head of Student Development and Support had reported to governors on safeguarding incidents; there has been an increase in the overall number of incidents and an increasing number relate to misogyny.

Jason Mansell added that there has been a rise in safeguarding incidents in the community which is impacting on our students. The College is managing the situation, but the number of reported issues has increased. Post-COVID, the student cohort has changed e.g. there are more students with additional learning needs and students are generally less confident. An increase in inappropriate behaviour is resulting in more disciplinary cases. It is a national picture.

Governors asked questions:

Is there catch-up funding available for these students?

Yes, the funding is being used for additional learning interventions. Misogyny is included in the personal development curriculum.

Are staff modelling behaviours e.g. has the Allyship training with leaders been cascaded?

Yes, staff constantly challenge inappropriate behaviour.

The College's ESG (Equality Strategy Review Group) is also monitoring trends in the College and the wider community.

The EDI manager is a former teacher and is actively involved in the recruitment of two vacancies in the quality team.

The Board approved the report from the CQG meeting on 21st November 2022

2.3 a) Financial Health

Period 3 (October) Management Accounts (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A)

Miranda Coles and Jason Mansell led on this item.

Management Accounts Period 3 (October 2022)

- Contribution is better than the budgeted position
- Income is below budget.
- Pay costs are below budget. There were 99 reported vacancies in October split across campus and prisons (one third and two thirds respectively). Governors were assured there was no impact on delivery as lessons were being covered e.g. by occasional workers and existing staff working additional hours. This does however result in some pay cost savings e.g. no additional on costs.
- Non pay costs are below budget (which includes gas and electricity)
- The SCIoT is included in the College overall figures but may be reported separately from the February Board meeting
- The Financial Statements will be presented for signature at the Board meeting on 20th December.
- The Financial Health KPIs will be reviewed when the audit work is completed.
- Cashflow is on target.
- The ONS reclassification has come at a challenging time i.e. when colleges are finalising their financial statements. Future borrowing needs DfE approval. The Letters of Support to subsidiaries may need DfE approval¹ and we are waiting to hear what impact this will have on signing our accounts. The College will be receiving additional capital funding of £273k in January.

Student Numbers

- The R04 return shows an increase of 9% (an increase of 450 students) compared to the same time last year. The level of withdrawals has also reduced. 94% of students who have withdrawn early said the College could not have done more to support them to continue and just over half are now in work. 16-19 student satisfaction has increased from 81% in 2021/22 to 89% in 2022/23.
- 16-19 is above allocation but below the growth target.
- Adult recruitment is 20% higher than last year.
- Apprenticeship is higher than last year but below target due to paperwork issues; this is not a concern, and the numbers will increase.
- HE is below target (111 versus 186). The SCIoT leadership team has been tasked to break down the student numbers and funding and forecast the impact of new courses starting between January and July 2023.
- Contribution (c.£200k) relating to the Multiply Contract (numeracy skills) which is council funded is not reflected in P3 management accounts.
- Next steps. On 11th of January, a detailed review of student numbers, income generated and expected further recruitment, will be carried out to forecast full year income and costs. Apart from 16 - 19, other provision has multi entry points throughout the year.

Governors asked questions:

¹ The auditors have since confirmed this is not required.

How does the College compare to other colleges in terms of student recruitment?

HE and FE are struggling nationally to recruit. Other colleges are not meeting 16 to 19 allocation due to the pressure on young people to find work (because of the economic situation). The College is not reliant on one income stream.

Can we grow apprenticeships? Corporates are visiting schools to speak directly to pupils.

Yes. We have good school and employer links and will be focusing more on this.

Can the Council support us to grow apprenticeships?

Yes. The Chief Executive of MK Council will be visiting the SCIoT and wants to work with the College. To deliver LSIPs (Local Skills Improvement Plans), the Group Director: Employer Engagement and Partnerships works with the Council and Chambers and our employer engagement is very effective.

The Board noted the financial position as at Period 3

b) Finance Group Meeting 22nd November 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A)

Mat Gotkowski referred to the report of the meeting (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A).

Governors had sought and received assurance that staff vacancies were not masking financial issues. The Group had also discussed the financial statements, P3 management accounts, financial hardship (staff and students) and gave a strategic steer on the SALIX funding opportunity (see item 2.5 below).

The Finance Group will continue to meet in 2022/23.

Jason Mansell added that in prisons, if the 67 vacancies across the 19 prisons were filled, pay costs would increase but would be covered by increased delivery income due to the costs plus model. On campus, gaps were being filled by engaging occasional workers and existing staff working additional hours i.e. pay costs were still being incurred. The level of vacancies on campus was constant through the year so the cost never materialises.

The Board approved the report from the Finance Group meeting on 22nd November 2022

2.4 People Strategy

Annie Allen led on this item and highlighted the key points:

a) People Strategy: Workload and wellbeing (impact on staff retention and recruitment) (previously circulated as Paper 2.4A)

- Governors are aware that staff workload and well-being is a strategic focus.
- The College has a good relationship with the unions and meets with them regularly (JCC sub-committees).
- Many staff and students are experiencing financial hardship due to economic conditions. In January, an internal campaign and reward and recognition platform will be launched signposting students and staff to practical assistance such as community support schemes, subsidised lunches, NUS / retailer discount schemes

and the Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) (for staff). Bursaries are also available to students.

- The Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report (Consent Paper 4.1) has been published on the College website; the gender pay gap has reduced since 2021 and the College remains committed to take more action to improve the day to day experience of staff and students. Equality and Diversity will be an item for the February Board meeting.

b) People Data Nov 22 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4B)

- In November, there were 59 new starts and 15 people left (resignations, retirements, end of contract) i.e. a net gain of 44.
- The main vacancies are in trades which are hard posts to fill (teaching salaries are generally not competitive compared to trade professions). The College is exploring creative ways to recruit in these areas. From experience, experienced tradespeople transition more effectively to a trainer assessor role, working alongside a Course Team Leader, rather than having direct delivery responsibility.
- Where there are gaps, students have not been affected as classes have been covered by occasional workers or teachers working additional hours. This can however impact staff wellbeing. Under its negotiated terms and conditions of employment, due to affordability, the College does not pay overtime to full-time staff (whether teaching or support) but teaching staff have contractual limits (annualised) for contact and non-contact time. So the burdens of covering e.g. sickness or recruitment requirements do not fall on the few. The College does engage occasional workers or may ask part timers to work additional hours.
- The unions are being asked for ideas to improve wellbeing and manage workloads e.g. reduce administrative tasks, share Schemes of Work.
- Turnover is higher than previous years and recruitment and onboarding creates a strain on the organisation in terms of skills dilution.

Governors asked questions

You are reporting 99 vacancies in Paper 2.3A but how many are actual gaps i.e. existing roles which are not being covered?

Approximately five on campus (but the number is constantly changing). It is a low margin in terms of actual gaps at any given time but with some areas that are very hard to fill e.g. trades such as bricklaying, painting and decorating and engineering.

What are the reasons for the resignations? Is there a retention issue? Could we reduce recruitment costs by improving retention e.g. golden hellos, retention payments etc?

Salaries are union negotiated. The College pays what it can afford, and salaries are competitive within the sector. The pay deal was well received by staff and the unions. Golden hellos are not sustainable financially and cause issues with loyal team members who have been with the College a long time (some perceive they have to leave and return for a salary review or golden hello).

Has the unrest in other sectors unsettled staff e.g. the strikes by postal workers, rail staff and nurses?

No although other colleges have been affected.

When visiting HMP Manchester recently, the UCU rep told us they appreciate the honesty and open sharing of information about affordability.

Our regular meetings with the unions mean that relationships are positive (which is not the same at all colleges) and any issues can be addressed promptly.

c) **Recognition and Reward** (*previously circulated as Paper 2.4C*)

Included in item 2.2A above,

d) **Organisational: Recruitment of COO**

The Board's Selection Committee is due to meet on 21st of December 2022 to short list the applications and agree the format of the Assessment Day on 17th January 2023.

The Board noted the report on the People Strategy

2.5 Capital Projects (SALIX)

There is an opportunity to bid for SALIX funding to replace essential heating equipment at Bletchley and to support decarbonisation of the Bletchley Campus and the Innovation and Technology Centre at Chaffron Way. However, the costs are significantly higher than expected and the College would be required to provide match funding of £3.9m.

The College is already committed to the CTF capital project requiring match funding of £3.7m.

The SALIX opportunity was discussed at the recent Finance Group meeting when governors concluded that the College could not afford to proceed at this time but requested a recommendation be presented to the Board. The ELT recommendation is not to proceed.

Governors asked questions:

What is the cost / impact of not undertaking this work?

The College is preparing a list of capital work at Chaffron Way and Bletchley e.g. the boilers at Bletchley will need replacing. The list, which will be prioritised, will assist the College to plan the funding requirements.

Additional DfE capital funding is being made available following the ONS reclassification.

What is the position with the Estates Strategy?

The new COO will be reviewing this to ensure it is aligned to the curriculum (and potential opportunities for Tariff Funding from the Council).

The Board approved the recommendation not to proceed with the SALIX applications at this time for affordability reasons

2.6 Tech Park Funding Agreement

This item was withdrawn from the agenda (deferred to the February meeting).

3.0 Governance and Compliance

3.1 Subsidiary Companies

Deferred to the next meeting

3.2 Audit & Risk (A&R) Committee 24th November 2022

Alan Cook referred to the report of the meeting (*previously circulated as Paper 3.2A*). The financial statements have been delayed consequently there are directors (of the subsidiary

companies), Audit and Risk, and Board meetings scheduled for next week to sign off the accounts.

The College is expecting a higher level of challenge from the new internal auditors (which is positive).

The Board approved the report from the A&R Committee meeting on 24th November 2022 and as recommended by the Committee:

Noted the:

- ***Regularity SAQ (Paper 3.2B)***
- ***Internal Audit Annual Report (Paper 3.2C)***

Approved:

- ***The A&R Committee Annual Report for 2021/22 (Paper 3.2C)***
- ***The Strategic Risk Register (Paper 3.2D)***
- ***Five sections of the Financial Regulations (Paper 3.2E)***
 - *Section 2: Responsibility Delegation and Monitoring*
 - *Section 6: Purchasing and Competitive Tendering*
 - *Section 12: Inventory & Asset Management*
 - *Section 13: Capital Projects*
 - *Annex 1: Post Holder Titles and Groups*
- ***Re-appointment of Buzzacott as providers of the College's External Audit Service for 2022/23***

3.3 Search & Governance (S&G) Committee 8th November 2022

Ruby Parmar referred to the report of the meeting (*previously circulated as Paper 3.3A*) and highlighted:

Governor Engagement / Link Governor Policy

- The revised policy includes new KPIs (i.e. Link Governors should have meetings every term and submit a feedback report within 21 days). There will be a regular report to the Board (see item 3.7 below) summarising visits and engagement (and compliance with the KPIs). The feedback forms are valuable evidence of governor support and challenge.
- Link Governor visits should be framed around strategic priorities (2022/23 themes have been added to the feedback form as prompts) and Quality Improvement Plans.

Governor Attendance Policy

- The view of the S&G Committee was that hybrid meetings are not fully effective, and it is the preference that governors physically attend meetings which are designated as 'in person' unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is a professional responsibility and governors should fully understand the time commitment before committing to the role.

Governors discussed that governors undertake great work outside of meetings. The Board is intent on increasing its diversity and does not want to create barriers for governors who are not available to attend meetings in person, on an exceptional basis.

The Board approved the report from the S&G Committee meeting on 8th November 2022 and as recommended by the Committee approved:

- ***The S&G Committee Annual Report for 2021/22 (Paper 3.3C)***
- ***Scheme of Delegation (Paper 3.3B)***

- **Governor Attendance Policy (Paper 3.3D)**
- **Governor Engagement / Link Governor Policy (Paper 3.3E)**
- **EDI Link Governor Role Description (Paper 3.3F)**

3.4 Property Development Monitoring Group (PDMG) 16th November 2022

Peter Cox referred to the report of the meeting (*previously circulated as Paper 3.4*) when the PDMG had received assurance on project progress, variations from budget and vision / design principles.

- Bletchley. Risk analysis is Amber. Final delivery is estimated to be 22nd May 2023 (original scheduled date was 24th April 2023). There is an emerging financial risk relating to steel beam/column encasement costs following a change in the rules.
- Oxford. Risk Analysis is Green. The project has been delivered and handed over to Activate Learning. There are some outstanding deliverables (FFE and AV).
- Reading. The project is closed

From December 2022, PDMG and CPMG will merge.

The Board approved the report from the PDMG meeting on 16th November 2022

3.5 Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) 2nd November 2022

Peter Cox referred to the report of the meeting (*previously circulated as Paper 3.5*) when CPMG had received assurance on project progress (ITC extension and Capital Transformation Fund).

Paper 4.4 (see below), requests Board approval for three contracts.

The Board approved the report from the CPMG meeting on 2nd November 2022

3.6 Remuneration Committee 29th November 2022

David Meadowcroft referred to the report of the meeting (*previously circulated as Paper 3.6A*)

The Board approved the report from the Remuneration Committee meeting on 29th November 2022 and as recommended by the Committee:

Approved

- ***Remuneration Committee Annual report for 2021/22 (Paper 3.6B)***
- ***Senior Post-Holder Remuneration Annual Report (Paper 3.6C)***

3.7 Governor Engagement & Link Governor Report (*previously circulated as Paper 3.7*)

This is a new report requested by the Search & Governance Committee and will be a standing item at future Board meetings.

The report acknowledges that other visits may have taken place but have not been recorded. Governors were reminded to complete and return the feedback form within 21 days of a visit (as discussed in item 3.3 above).

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

3.8 Items for the next meeting

Student Experience

- Curriculum Reform
- Prisons – SERCO

Financial Health

- Management Accounts
- Budget principles of 2023/24
- FE Climate Roadmap

People

- Equality and Diversity Annual Report / Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

- 4.1** ***The Board noted the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report for publication on the College website (and discussion at the next meeting) (previously circulated as Paper 4.1)***
- 4.2** ***The Board approved the Modern Slavery Statement 2021/22 for publication on the College website (previously circulated as Paper 4.2)***
- 4.3** ***The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 9th November 2022 (previously circulated as Paper 4.3A and Confidential 4.3B)***

Matters arising

Date Raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
09.11.22	Academic KPIs to be revisited by CQG and recommended to the Board	JM	Carry forward to CQG meeting 23 rd January 2023 / Board meeting 8 th February 2023

4.4 CTF Contracts – minuted as confidential

Next Meeting: 20th December 2022 (additional meeting) and 8th February 2023

Richard Bartlett-Rawlings left the meeting at 19:00

Kaye Dwight, Sean Haines, Maria Abbas and Jacob Jempson left the meeting at 19:00 (before the confidential item)



Approved 8 February 2023
Chair of Governors – David Meadowcroft