

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP
CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 14th February 2024
Pitching Room, SClOT, Bletchley Campus
17:00 – 18:55

| Board Members | Category of Governor | Attendance Record 2023/24 | Present at this meeting |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sally Alexander | CEO | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Richard Bartlett-Rawlings | Independent | 3 of 4 | No |
| Alan Cook | Independent | 3 of 4 | Yes (Teams) |
| Mat Gotkowski | Independent | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Sean Hainsworth | Staff | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Leroi Henry | Independent | 3 of 4 | Yes |
| Jacob Jempson | Student | 3 of 4 | No |
| Rebecca Myrie | Staff | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Amit Nayyar | Independent | 3 of 4 | No |
| Angie Novell | Independent | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Rosemary Ogunade (from 16.11.23) | Student | 2 of 2 | Yes (in part) |
| Ruby Parmar | Independent | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Ian Revell | Independent | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Neil Sainsbury | Independent | 1 of 1 | Yes |
| Manish Verma | Independent | 4 of 4 | Yes (Teams) |
| Jeremy Wilsdon | Independent | 2 of 4 | Yes |
| Tom Wraight | Independent | 4 of 4 | Yes |
| Shalom Lloyd (resigned 22.8.23) | Independent | 0 of 0 | |
| David Meadowcroft (resigned 31.12.23) | Independent | 2 of 3 | |
| Attendance % this meeting | | 82% | 14/17 |
| Attendance % year to date | | 88% | 58/ 66 |

Attendees at this meeting: Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Annie Allen (Chief People Officer), Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner), Maxine Bennett (Lead Director, Prison Services), Maria Bowness (Group Director: Curriculum & Pedagogy) (in part), Marc Hulbert (Head of English/ A-Levels) (in part), Anna Clarke (Group Director: Employer Engagement & Partnerships) (in part), Lee Parker (Group Director: Marketing & Communications) (in part)
 Pauline Odulinski, External Governance Reviewer

The meeting opened with an additional confidential item (minuted as confidential). Staff, Staff Governors and Student Governors were not in attendance.

1.0 Procedural

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for rescheduling the date due to the Ofsted inspection.

- Apologies were received from Amit Nayyar, Richard Bartlett-Rawlings and Jacob Jempson.
- Neil Sainsbury was welcomed to the meeting after an agreed sabbatical.
- Pauline Odulinski was welcomed to the meeting. Pauline is conducting the external review of governance and is attending as an observer.
- Rosemary Ogunade will be arriving later as her class does not finish until 5pm at Chaffron Way.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

None previously declared.

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2023/24

Ruby Parmar reminded the Board that we are trialling two / three discussion items at each meeting with a broad overview of performance against the strategic priorities and KPIs being reported through the Dashboard. Anything ragged red in the Dashboard has an expanded explanation in the CEO report and / or a separate report. Governor feedback on the approach is welcomed.

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

Ofsted Inspection 6 – 9 February

Minuted as confidential

Hustings

The Hustings planned for today has been rescheduled for 13th March; the event will be chaired by a student.

A Governor suggested that representatives of the MK Youth Council may wish to engage in the event.

Dashboard

Red areas include student attendance, staff sickness and staff turnover. There are many proactive initiatives in place to support attendance including more parental involvement and recognising good attendance. Staff turnover in prisons is showing some improvement but remains a challenge. The College is looking at innovative ways to recruit but teacher recruitment is a national challenge not helped by higher pay in the school sector.

Engagement scores are the highest they have been.

Rosemary Ogunade arrived at 17:30

The Board noted the CEO Report

Maria Bowness and Marc Hulbert were welcomed to the meeting

2.2 Curriculum Reform (previously circulated as Paper 2.2)

Maria Bowness highlighted some key points:

1. The Government is reforming post 16 qualifications.
2. At Level 1 and Level 2, the College has already introduced the Project One / Skills Academy which includes English & maths, employability skills and a carousel of industry subjects. Students have a better foundation to progress with appropriate information, advice and guidance.
3. At Level 3 there are two pathways for technical and academic.
 - Technical includes apprenticeships and T Levels
 - The academic pathway is A Levels which the College will be offering from September 2024.
4. The College's reform of its Level 3 curriculum is in line with the DfE roll out plan for T Levels and is ahead of many colleges (the College achieved a 100% pass rate for T Levels last year).

Marc Hulbert, Head of A Levels outlined the strategy for A Levels:

1. There will be 4 pathways:
 - Green Skills
 - Social Science
 - Digital
 - Creative
2. The College will offer students a different experience compared to a school sixth form e.g. specialised pathways, academic mentoring, an additional EPQ (Extended Project Qualification), life skills (in partnership with Action4Youth) and links with the Open University.

A Governor from HE added that he has mentored two former MK College students and found them better prepared for university than students who had joined from school.

3. The entry criteria will be in line with schools and other colleges.
4. There has been a very good response so far with 221 applications for the 100 places on offer.
5. The new AAQs (similar to a small BTEC) will be available to deliver from 2025 alongside A Levels.

Governors asked questions to which Maria and Marc responded:

How do you plan to attract the right calibre of teaching staff?

Phase One is internal recruitment and then we will advertise externally. There will be some pay differential for teachers.

Is 100 students sustainable / cost effective when spread across all the subjects?

Yes, for the first year as we want to get it right and offer the highest possible student experience.

Are you prepared to go above 100?

Yes, but we don't expect this to be the case given our high entry requirements.

Can the College support this growth?

Yes, because BTECs are being defunded / withdrawn.

Governors suggested they may have contacts who could run masterclasses / support with EPQ activities.

The Board noted the report on Curriculum Reform and endorsed the proposed actions.

Maria and Marc were thanked for attending and they left the meeting.

Anna Clarke and Lee Parker were welcomed to the meeting

2.3 Partnerships and Skills (previously circulated as Paper 2.3)

Anna Clarke and Lee Parker highlighted some key points:

1. The '[Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#)' report, published in January 2021 changed the way that Colleges work with employers to ensure local skills needs are being met.
2. The Skills and Post-16 Education Act places a legal requirement on colleges and other providers to work with employers, to develop a [Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\)](#) to ensure that the training offered meets the needs of local areas.
3. Ofsted makes a separate judgment on how well colleges are meeting local skills needs, both at a strategic level and in ensuring the curriculum reflects business needs. The Ofsted judgment on skills, is confidential until the report is issued (as discussed at item 2.1) but was self-assessed as 'Strong'.
4. The [2023/24 Accountability Agreement](#), published on the website, sets out the Board Strategic Priorities which are reported in the Board Dashboard (Paper 2.1). The College is leading the Local Skills Improvement Fund across the SEMLEP region; delivery of four approved projects will support the SEMLEP region colleges to respond to LSIP priorities and meet local skills needs (including a project to build a new Green Skills Centre at the Chaffron Way campus for which planning permission was approved today).
5. At a strategic level, the College is developing a range of key partnerships including Red Bull, the Open University, Santander, and MK City Council to deliver the skills required in the local economy.
6. At a curriculum level, the Board is aware of the partnership work with employers including Silverstone, Careys, Microsoft, Niftylift and many more.

The Student Governor shared some examples of work experience and work-related activity in her area (Performing Arts).

Some curriculum areas are more challenged than others to find work experience opportunities and governors were asked to offer employer suggestions. Lee Parker will email governors with details.

Action 1: Lee Parker

Anna provided more detail on the STEMX partnership with Red Bull, developments with Santander and the Open University and a forthcoming summit with the Council to develop a joint strategy.

Governors asked questions to which Anna and Lee responded:

What are the benefits of delivering STEMX face to face in schools rather than on the Red Bull Campus?

There will be a wider reach, especially to more deprived areas, as the cost of transport is a barrier for some. It may be on site in the future if Red Bull find the right sponsor.

Governors congratulated Anna on the very positive engagement with employers to develop skills.

The Board noted the report on Partnerships and Skills

Anna and Lee were thanked for attending and they left the meeting.

2.4 Prison Education Framework (PEF) Contract (previously circulated as Paper 2.2C)

Maxine Bennet highlighted some key points:

1. Since 1st April 2019, Milton Keynes College Group (MKCG) has delivered the PEF Contract in 19 prisons across three Lots (LTHSE North, LTHSE South and South Central). From 1st April 2023, the MKCG took over an additional ten prisons in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex (Lot 8). These contracts are now in Year 5 (of a 6-year contract).
2. For Contract Years 5 and 6, (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025), a new funding and performance model was introduced which is aligned to the new PES (Prison Education Services) methodology. This includes five service level agreements. MKCG is making good progress against the SLAs:
3. HMPPS has appointed new Heads of Education Skills & Work (HoESW) in every prison. Ofsted outcomes continue to be a challenge (most inspections since April 2023 resulted in a grading of reasonable progress or requires improvement) but as the grade covers Education, Skills, and Work, partnering with the HoESW is essential to improve the overall grade. Unlike other providers, MKCG has not received a Notice to Improve. Matthew Williams has been appointed as Deputy Director of Quality: Prison Services.
4. Behaviour and Attitudes of learners can be an issue and if there is an incident, Maxine has established a direct line of communication with the Prison No.1 Governor as it is essential that our staff feel safe. We are exploring a student ambassador programme where ex-learners speak to current learners about the benefits of education in custody.

A Governor added that a strength of the College is the work with offenders; offenders can be some of the most marginalised and vulnerable people in society but can find their lives transformed through education.

Prison Education Services (PES)

Maxine gave an update on the bidding process and timelines.

Governors asked questions to which Maxine responded:

Do you offer training to prisons staff to become teachers?

Yes. We are also exploring training existing teachers to teach maths.

The Board noted the report on the PEF contract and the update on the PES bid.

3.0 GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

3.1 Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) meetings 20 December 2023 and 17 January 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 3.1)

Manish Verma, Chair of the CPMG referred governors to paper 3.1 which is the report of the meetings. Members received a written progress report in February rather than convene a meeting.

Jason Mansell explained that the refurbishment work at Chaffron way (CTF project) includes replacing windows and air ventilation units. The utilisation study, which is in progress, relates to effective use of our buildings.

The Board approved the report from the CPMG meeting

3.2 Curriculum and Quality Group (CQG) meeting 22 January 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 3.2)

Angie Novell, Chair of the CQG, referred to the report of the meeting. The focus had been on the Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) as well as spotlight sessions on Teaching & Learning in prisons and Apprenticeships. Improving Apprenticeship Timely Achievement is a priority in the campus QIP and governors were assured that there is much closer monitoring and interventions are having an impact. The current achievement rate for 2023/24 is already at 50.4% with a predicted end of year achievement rate of 79% (target is 65%).

The Board approved the report from the CQG meeting

3.3 Items for the next meeting (20 March 2024)

- Student experience - progress vs QIP / in year performance / Quality Strategy / Student Voice / Safeguarding / Careers
- Financial Health – P6 Management Accounts / Principles for 2024/25 Budget
- Policies: Complaints, Student Behaviour
- Risk Assessment: radioactive material

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Minutes of the last meeting (13 December 2023) (previously circulated as Papers 4.1A and Confidential 4.1B).

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 13 December 2023

Matters arising:

| Date Raised | Actions arising from the last and previous meetings | Action Owner | Current position |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| 13.12.23 | 1. Update the Board on safeguarding at a future meeting. | AL | Complete (diarised for 20 March 2023) |
| | 2. Circulate the data - what % of the prisons staff turnover relates to new versus longstanding staff? | AA | Complete. Reported in the Dashboard under Strategic Priority 5 |
| 8 th Nov 2023 | Provide governors with more information on work experience | AW | Complete – shared at CQG on 22 January 2024 and circulated with papers for this Board meeting |

4.2 Student Union Constitution and Budget (*previously circulated as Paper 4.2*)

The Board approved the SU Constitution and Budget for 2023/24



Approved 20 March 2024
Ruby Parmar
Chair of Governors