

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP
CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2024
Pitching Room, SCIoT, Bletchley Campus
17:00 – 18:40

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance Record 2023/24	Present at this meeting
Sally Alexander	CEO	5 of 5	Yes
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	3 of 5	No
Alan Cook	Independent	3 of 5	No
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	5 of 5	Yes
Sean Hainsworth	Staff	4 of 5	No
Leroi Henry	Independent	4 of 5	Yes (Teams)
Jacob Jempson	Student	4 of 5	Yes
Rebecca Myrie	Staff	5 of 5	Yes
Amit Nayyar	Independent	4 of 5	Yes (Teams)
Angie Novell	Independent	5 of 5	Yes
Rosemary Ogunade (from 16.11.23)	Student	3 of 3	Yes (Teams)
Ruby Parmar	Independent	5 of 5	Yes (Teams) (in part)
Ian Revell	Independent	5 of 5	Yes (in part)
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Manish Verma	Independent	5 of 5	Yes (Teams)
Jeremy Wilsdon	Independent	2 of 5	No
Tom Wraight	Independent	5 of 5	Yes
Shalom Lloyd (resigned 22.8.23)	Independent	0 of 0	
David Meadowcroft (resigned 31.12.23)	Independent	2 of 3	
Attendance % this meeting		71%	13/17
Attendance % year to date		84%	70/ 83

Attendees at this meeting: Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Annie Allen (Chief People Officer), Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner), Maria Bowness (Group Director: Curriculum & Pedagogy) (in part), Amy Langford (Group Director: Inclusion & Student Experience) (in part), Clare Hood (Group Director: Quality and Teaching & Learning Improvement) (in part), Susan Akhtar, Group Director of Finance) (in part), Tim Gallagher (Head of Student Support) (in part).

1.0 Procedural

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Mat Gotkowski (meeting chair) welcomed governors to the meeting and also Amy Langford, Clare Hood and Maria Bowness.

Apologies had been received from Alan Cook, Jez Wilsdon, Richard Bartlett-Rawlings, Sean Hainsworth, and Maxine Bennett.

1.2 Declaration of Interests
None previously declared.

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2023/24

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

Strategic Meeting with MK Council

A successful meeting was held with MK Council to share the College and Council strategic plans and to commit to working together to support the City to grow. The Chair of Governors also attended the meeting. The focus for the next meeting will be Adult provision and an officer from the Council will be attending the Board Awayday.

Executive Principal Recruitment

The advert is live and there has been a good level of interest. Governors Angie Novell and Jez Wilsdon, who are members of the CQG, will be involved in the shortlisting and interviews.

College in the Community Day

Many activities have taken place today and a formal update will be given at the next meeting. Sally thanked the governors who had participated.

Angie Novell outlined the activities at SNAP where College's Inclusive Learning students had taken over the café for the day and funds had been raised for charity. It demonstrated partnership in action and supported the transition of students to adult services.

Dashboard

Red areas include student attendance (referred to in item 2.2A), staff sickness and staff turnover.

The Board congratulated the Head of People Development / EDI and the Performing Arts students on their recent success.

Governors asked questions:

Staff turnover is red – is the College doing enough to address this?

Annie Allen, Chief People Officer, assured the Board that everything was being done which was within the College's control.

A target of 15% is sensible (as some turnover is good), however, recruitment of teachers is a national challenge, and some roles are harder to recruit than others (e.g. Electrical lecturers and teaching assistants).

Staff turnover has improved but is a challenge in prisons particularly in the south of England; there are social, economic and local labour market challenges in the south and working in a prison environment does not suit everyone.

Where there is a good working environment and good leadership, prison staff turnover is better. Unfortunately, the College has no influence over investment in prisons and the working environment.

The Board noted the CEO Report

2.2 Safeguarding and Prevent (previously circulated as Paper 2.2)

Amy Langford highlighted some key developments since she last updated the Board in December:

- In February, OFSTED judged Safeguarding to be 'Effective'. An internal audit on safeguarding is in process (and substantial assurance is expected).
- Staffing has increased and the team is now at optimum capacity with four full time Designated Safeguarding Officers. The Head of Safeguarding role will be advertised internally, and interviews have taken place today for two new Campus Manager roles to be based at Bletchley and Chaffron Way.
- The Friends and Allies Network (FAN) met on 28th February 2024 with a focus on campus and community safety. The event was attended by students and external agencies and the next step is to produce a student led action plan. Wearing college badges was a key point for discussion.
- The College is working with secondary headteachers on improving the transfer of safeguarding information when students transition from schools to College. This will help to prioritise support for new students.
- Amy will be attending the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) meeting with Thames Valley Police next week re Prevent.

Governors asked questions to which Amy responded:

Have there been any significant security / safeguarding incidents since the last meeting?

No but we have been reviewing unauthorised access and student complacency around wearing badges. Yellow lanyards have been introduced for when students forget their badge and biometrics are being considered.

The Board received assurance on Safeguarding and Prevent

2.3A Student Experience: Campus QIP, OFSTED Inspection, In-year achievement (previously circulated as Paper 2.3A)

Clare Hood and Maria Bowness highlighted some key points from the report:

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) / Post OFSTED Inspection Plan (PIAP)

- In November 2023, the Board approved eight improvement themes (based on the 2022/23 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which were included in the Campus QIP. The role of the CQG is to monitor the QIP and the impact of improvement actions.
- Reasonable progress has been made against the QIP however, three areas continue to be RAG rated red:
 - Attendance
 - Maths outcomes
 - Uptake of work experience

- The OFSTED inspection in February 2024 (report published today) resulted in the following outcomes:
 - overall effectiveness is 'Good'
 - adults and high needs are 'Outstanding'
 - safeguarding is 'Effective'.
 - contribution to meeting skills needs is 'Strong'.
- Several of the Areas for Improvement (Afl) highlighted by OFSTED are already in the QIP and will continue to be areas of focus alongside the new Afls which include:
 - Personal development for apprentices
 - Developmental targets and feedback for apprentices
 - Consistency of delivery across apprenticeship standards
 - Learner behaviour in social spaces.

The Afls will be added to a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) which will be merged with the QIP and discussed by CQG on 25 March.

2023/24 Achievement

- For the remainder of this academic year, the focus is on learner achievement with attendance and retention being key indicators.
- Whilst attendance is unlikely to improve and is below target, it is ahead of last year (including English and Maths). A Task Force is monitoring attendance and driving actions. Overall retention is 96.3% which is 0.5 percentage points lower than the same point last year (partly due to prompt action to remove learners who have stopped attending). Data shows that retention is 2.3 percentage points above the national rate.
- Timely achievement in apprenticeships is a QIP improvement theme. Achievement in year is already at 53.9% (target is 65%). The issue last year with End Point Assessments has been addressed.
- Maths teaching was an Afl in the OFSTED inspection report. In the GCSE resits in November 2023, 23.9% of learners achieved grade 4 or above (target 26%) which was 1 percentage point above the national average for the resits. There are maths interventions taking place including twilight sessions and holiday classes.
- The recent BTEC examination results show an upturn across every area compared to last year.

Governors asked questions to which Clare and Maria responded:

Are students not accepting work experience placements or are these not being offered?

It is ragged red only because it was raised by OFSTED as an Afl however, the current take-up is not a concern as there is plenty of time left this year. Since issuing the report, the figure has increased from 54% to 59% (target is 90%).

Lower-level students are better prepared for work experience later in the academic year.

Is the College flexible when it requests employers to offer work experience?

Yes, the duration can be flexible to meet the needs of both students and employers. Students experience an application and interview process before the work placement.

The Board noted the report on the Campus QIP, post OFSTED actions and in-year achievement.

Ian Revell arrived at 17:40

Tim Gallagher was welcomed to the meeting.

2.3B Student Experience: Campus Student Voice *(previously circulated as Paper 2.3B)*

Amy Langford and Tim Gallagher highlighted some key points:

- There is engaged Student Voice at the College which starts at enrolment including an active Student Council and Student Union. The Annex to Paper 2.3B outlines the structure.
- Students have raised a wide range of issues this year, which has led to student involvement in improving the student experience including:
 - Student space and maintenance issues
 - Software updates and laptop availability
 - Access to wellbeing support
 - Communications for students (leading to the establishment of a News Society and a TiKTok style video platform)
 - Safety following lockdown
 - Expansion of STEM clubs
 - Food provision on campus

The Student Governors added:

- The Student Voice is efficient and effective. It brings together learners from different areas of the College. Everything raised by students has led to action.
- Students receive amazing support however; the role of the Student Council and Class Representatives could be better promoted.

Tim confirmed that this feedback will be included in a planned review of student voice based on a Quality Student Union (QSU) Benchmarking tool.

Governors asked questions to which Amy and Tim responded:

Are there any differences in levels of participation and is there any correlation with attendance?

Holding meetings online during lock-down increased participation so a hybrid model has been continued. There is good cross-college representation including inclusive learning learners who attend with support. There have been no issues of under-representation.

Have students been involved in conversations to improve attendance?

The role of the Student Union's Quality of Education Officer is to link with the College Quality and Personal Development teams; this role has been vacant for a year but has recently been filled.

Maria Bowness added that representatives from the Attendance Task Force have met with students to understand the barriers to attendance and how low attendance impacts other students.

Is this model of student voice fully accessible for Inclusive Learning students? Do they need a personalised / more accessible approach to enable more participation?

Yes, Inclusive Learning has its own version with specialised support. An Inclusive Learning representative also attends the Student Council meetings.

Are different themes raised depending on the campus?

Yes, but they are brought together in the Student Council meetings which have cross-college attendees. This encourages shared ownership of solutions.

Cullinan is engaging with both staff and students in the ongoing surveys.

How does Learner voice work in prisons?

There is no standard approach, and the model is different from prison to prison. Although there is no Student Council, there are learner representatives on each wing who give feedback. Learners also complete a feedback survey twice a year; the data is analysed, and action is taken where matters are within the College's control.

The Board received assurance on Student Voice

Amy, Clare, Maria and Tim were thanked for attending and they left the meeting.

Ruby Parmar left the meeting at 18:10

Susan Akhtar was welcomed to the meeting

2.4 Financial Health

a) Period 6 Management Accounts 2023/24 / Budget Principles 2024/25

Period 6 Management Accounts *(previously circulated as Paper 2.4)*

Susan Akhtar highlighted some key points:

Overall

- All comparisons are to the budget reforecast (completed in December 2023).
- The Group position as at P6 (31st of January 2024) is a year-to-date surplus of £980k (which is £4k favourable to budget).
- Financial Health is 'Good'
- The College is on track to achieve the budgeted year-end surplus of £791k (although the income streams may be different to what was forecast)
- The Finance Group scrutinised the P6 Management Accounts at its recent meeting. The P7 (February) Management Accounts have been published today.

Campus

- Campus contribution at P6 is £22k behind target.

Prison Services

- Prison Services contribution at P6 is £26k favourable to budget.

Capital Expenditure

- The capital expenditure spend at Period 6 is £392k (on track)

Cash Position

- The P6 cash balance is £8,071k and cash days are 46 days.

Governors asked questions to which Susan responded:

Do the P7 Management Accounts show any significant differences?

No, although the Financial Health Score has improved (continues to be 'Good'). Following the recent AoC Finance Masterclasses, management accounts will be published monthly.

Governors will be invited to a FE Finance Workshop on 5 June.

The Board approved the P6 Management Accounts

Budget Principles 2024/25 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4A)

- The budget setting process has commenced aligned to the curriculum planning.
- Key aims for 2024/25 are:
 - Financially sustainable position
 - "Good" Financial Health
 - An overall surplus for the Group of 1-2% (based on both Campus and Prison Services generating a surplus). This is in line with the three-year financial plan approved by the Board in July 2023.
- The three-year plan will be based on sustainable Campus provision which delivers an exceptional student experience. Staff utilisation and matching income to delivery costs will be critical.
- Capital expenditure will be a similar level to this current year for priority investments in IT and estates (in addition to the previously committed match funding for the CTF project).
- The three-year plan forecasts overall prudent growth in student numbers (188 in 2024/25 and 589 by 2026/27) based on demographic data (these are indicative numbers at this stage and are likely to change).
- Key risks are likely to include:
 - Not recruiting and retaining students to meet income targets
 - Not matching staff costs to income generated.
 - Apprenticeships not enrolling due to changing market forces linked to the economic climate.

- The need to increase pay costs above affordability in order to recruit and retain staff.
- Uncertainty around the Prison Contract beyond 1 April 2025

Governors asked questions to which Susan responded:

Are you confident about the planned growth in 16-18 student numbers?

Yes. The allocation (notification of funding) for 16-18 funded provision in 2024/25 has been received. Due to the lagged funding model this is based on actual student numbers in 2023/24. Applications for 2024/25 are strong and ahead of last year.

The Recruitment, Retention and Onboarding Group (RROG) will be monitoring applications post GCSE results day in August and making decisions on closing / capping some courses. There have been 400 applications for 100 A-Level places.

What happens to students who do not get a place on their preferred A-Level course?

They will be offered a place on an alternative College course.

What is the impact of students dropping out during the year?

There is no impact on income as the allocation is based on actual student numbers as of December 2023 (there is however an adverse impact on achievement if students withdraw after Day 42).

The Board approved the budget principles for 2024/25

b) Finance Group Meeting 26 February 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4B)

Mat Gotkowski summarised the key points from the meeting:

- The P6 Management Accounts were scrutinised, and feedback given (which is reflected in Paper 2.4). Additional assurance was sought on student numbers.

The Board approved the report of the meeting

3.0 GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

3.1 Search & Governance (S&G) meeting 12 March 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 3.1)

Ian Revell, Chair of the S&G Committee, referred to the report of the meeting when the Committee had discussed Board succession planning and three potential candidates to fill skills gaps. Access and confidentiality of Board papers is being reviewed and two options are being considered (i.e. mandatory use of College emails and Sharepoint versus an external board portal). Pauline Odulinski had attended and shared interim recommendations from the External Board review. Pauline will be presenting the final report to the Committee on 15 April and to the Board on 1 May. The Committee agreed to trial a new competency framework which governors will be asked to complete.

The Board approved the report of the meeting

3.2 Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) meeting 19 March 2024 (verbal update)

The CPMG did not meet in February 2024.

Manish Verma, Chair of the CPMG gave a verbal update from the meeting held on 19 March (minutes will be circulated). All capital projects are on track and good progress is being made with BREEAM submissions. The Oxford IoT capital project is now complete (apart from BREEAM). The Bletchley IoT has some outstanding defects which are being addressed at no cost to the College. The Green Skills Centre at Chaffron Way will be open for September.

Governors asked questions to which Manish responded:

Who is responsible for the costs to rectify the leaking roof at Bletchley IoT?

Ashe Construction are rectifying the issue and will paying any costs.

The Board approved the report of the meeting.

3.3 Items for the next meeting (1 May 2024)

- People (strategic priority 5)
- EDI Annual report / Gender & Ethnicity Pay Gap Report

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Minutes of the last meeting (14 February 2024) (previously circulated as Papers 4.1, Confidential 4.1B and Confidential 4.1C).

Matters arising:

Date Raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
14.2.24	Circulate information to governors on employer engagement.	LP	Complete (circulated 19.2.24)

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 14 February 2024

4.2 Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy (previously circulated as Paper 4.2)

The Board approved the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy

4.3 Careers Update (previously circulated as Paper 4.3)

The Board approved the Careers Update

4.4 Risk Assessment: Storing radioactive substances (previously circulated as Paper 4.4)

The Board approved the storing of radioactive substances.

Next Meeting 1st May 2024 (and Awayday)



Approved 1 May 2024
Ruby Parmar
Chair of Governors