

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2024

Pitching Room, SCIoT, Bletchley Camous

17:00 – 19:00

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance Record 2023/24	Present at this meeting
Sally Alexander	CEO	8 of 8	Yes
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	6 of 8	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Leroi Henry	Independent	5 of 8	Sent apologies
Jacob Jempson	Student	6 of 8	Yes (Teams)
Rebecca Myrie	Staff	7 of 8	Sent apologies
Amit Nayyar	Independent	7 of 8	Yes (Teams)
Angie Novell	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Rosemary Ogunade (from 16.11.23)	Student	4 of 8	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	8 of 8	Yes (Teams) (in part)
Ian Revell	Independent	8 of 8	Yes
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	4 of 5	Yes
Jay Timpany (from 18.6.24)	Staff	1 of 1	Yes
Manish Verma	Independent	7 of 8	Yes (Teams)
Jeremy Wilsdon	Independent	5 of 8	Yes
Tom Wraight	Independent	6 of 8	Sent apologies
Shalom Lloyd (resigned 22.8.23)	Independent	0 of 0	
David Meadowcroft (resigned 31.12.23)	Independent	2 of 3	
Sean Hainsworth (resigned 15.4.24)	Staff	4 of 5	
Alan Cook (resigned 15.4.24)	Independent	3 of 5	
Attendance % this meeting		81%	13/16
Attendance % year to date		82%	107/131

Attendees at this meeting: Annie Allen (Chief People Officer), Maxine Bennett (Lead Director: Prisons), Mark Fell (Executive Principal), Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner), Amy Langford (Group Director: Inclusion) (in part), Jen Worby (Head of Safeguarding) (by Teams / in part), Susan Akhtar (Group Director: Finance) (in part)

1.0 Procedural

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Mat Gotkowski welcomed everyone to the meeting including Amy Langford.

Apologies had been received from Leroi Henry, Tom Wraight and Rebecca Myrie.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

Ian Revell, Mat Gotkowski and Angie Novell declared an interest in item 3.4 (these items had been previously approved by email to avoid a conflict).

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2023/24

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

Sally Alexander drew attention to the following:

Accountability Statement / Board Priorities 2024/25 and measures

The revised draft of the Accountability Statement, including the Board priorities for 2024/25 and the proposed measures, had been circulated to the Independent Governors for input prior to final approval by the Chair and Vice-Chair. The accountability Statement is now published on the College website [here](#).

The Board priorities will inform the Board's Business Plan for 2024/25 and regular progress will be reported through the Dashboard.

SCIoT

Paper 2,1 includes an overview of the SCIoT including learner numbers and the four strategic priorities which will support the delivery of the revised SCIoT vision. The Activate Learning offer will reflect the local needs of Oxford and Reading.

Sustainability

The College has appointed a new Sustainability lead who will report to the Board in October.

Dashboard

Governors asked whether some of the academic KPIs in the Dashboard should be red given the information reported in Paper 2.3A. Jason Mansell replied that Paper 2.3A reports predictions at this stage but the final performance against the KPIs will be rag rated accordingly.

The Board received the CEO Report

Jen Worby were welcomed to the meeting

2.2 Safeguarding & Prevent Annual Report (*previously circulated as Papers 2.2*)

Amy Langford highlighted some headlines from the report:

- The College is compliant with all Safeguarding and Prevent statutory duties and works with the local agencies. The Internal Auditors judged the controls relating to Safeguarding to be 'Substantial Assurance' in March 2024 (highest level) and Ofsted judged Safeguarding to be 'effective'; in February 2024.
- The number of incidents in 2023/24 has risen by 59% from 1879 to 2992 The number of distinct student disclosures has risen by 91% from 845 to 1617. The team attribute this to
 - 14 % increase in student numbers mostly at Level 1.
 - increased staffing
 - better reporting
 - Improved process of screening students on transfer

- Mental health was a factor in 80% of the incidents. There has been a 47% increase in referrals for Wellbeing support.
- The team has expanded; new roles include Head of Safeguarding, two Campus Designated Safeguarding Leads, two Designated Safeguarding Officers and two new Campus Managers. The Wellbeing Team expanded, and the Positive Behaviour Team was introduced.
- The College is expecting c.1600 new safeguarding files in September relating to students transferring from secondary schools to the College. The transferring schools will rag rate students so that support can be put in place immediately where necessary.
- The focus for 2024/25 will be on:
 - Student behaviour / managing student behaviour in communal areas (a whole college approach)
 - Harmful Sexual Behaviours (which is an increasing issue across the sector and in secondary schools)
- Risk mitigation is reviewed at every meeting of the Risk Management Group but safeguarding continues to be ragged as 'red; (highest level of risk). Categories posing the highest level are gang related, suicide and Prevent.
- [KCSIE](#) has had a minor review in 2024 but a more extensive review is expected in 2025.
- Ian Revell is the Link Governors for Safeguarding and Prevent.

Governors asked questions to which Amy responded:

Does safeguarding have an adverse impact on attendance?

This is not a correlation we have identified.

Will you report these figures to us regularly in 2024/25

Yes. There will be a regular update as we have done during 2023/24.

Action 1: Amy Langford

Do you have all the resources you need? Will increasing the team lead to even more referrals.

The more support we can provide will probably lead to even higher numbers. We are considering if we need to recruit expertise in harmful sexual behaviours.

Why has the number of stage 4 disciplinary meetings increased but the number of exclusions has reduced?

There is now a centralised and consistent approach to disciplinary meetings. The College responds to every behaviour concern, but the consequence will depend on the circumstances. Exclusion is not always appropriate.

Are there enough females in the team?

Yes, most staff are female.

Do you speak to other colleges on what they are doing to tackle harmful sexual behaviour and how does the College compare? Are you engaging with AoC networks.

Yes, and there has been more engagement with other colleges since the Ofsted inspection in February. In many ways we are more pro-active.

The Safeguarding & Prevent Link Governor added that he meets regularly with Amy. Societal issues (such as harmful sexual behaviours) mirror what is happening in college. He continues to be assured that controls are effective and the closer working with secondary schools will ensure the College is prepared for students who need early support.

The Board:

- ***Approved the Safeguarding & Prevent Annual Report 2023/24 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***

Amy and Jen were thanked for attending and they left the meeting

2.3A Student Experience – Campus Update *(previously circulated as Papers 2.3A)*

Mark Fell highlighted the following:

Campus Achievement Predictions

- With the exception of Functional Skills maths and English, all academic KPIs indicate an improvement on 2022/23 although some of the College's stretch targets (KPIs) have not been met (i.e. Attendance, Functional Skills maths, Functional Skills English).
- Headline 16-18 achievement is predicted to be 84%, which is 2 percentage points better than 2022/23 and 1 percentage point below the KPI.
- Headline Adult achievement is predicted to be 90%, which is 4 percentage points better than 2022/23 and at the KPI.
- Apprenticeship achievement is predicted to be 65%, which is 11 percentage points better than 2022/23 and at the KPI.
- GCSE maths and English are predicted to be 10 percentage points and 1 percentage point respectively above the 2022/23 outturn and at or above the KPI.
- HE achievement is predicted to be 80%, which is 1 percentage point better than 2022/23 but 5 percentage points below the KPI.
- In-year retention is better when compared to 2022/23 performance and also when compared to in-year national data from comparator colleges (MiDES).

Functional Skills maths and Functional Skills English

- Functional Skills maths and Functional Skills English achievement are both predicted to be below the KPI and 4 percentage points and 5 percentage points respectively below the 2022/23 outturn. Staff are still supporting students to sit Functional Skills exams, so these are not the final numbers.

- An increase in enrolments in Functional Skills maths from 442 in 2022/23 to 803 in 2023/24 caused initial challenges with class sizes and availability of teachers.
- Plans to improve performance include:
 - A new Maths and English Strategy, with amendments to enrolment and entry requirements, which will lead to larger volumes of learners taking GCSE rather than Functional Skills. This is expected to improve achievement rates overall but could adversely impact GCSE high grades achievement (a lower grade pass at GCSE is more accessible than a pass at Functional Skills Level 2) but would demonstrate that students have progressed.
 - A school level balanced scorecard will be introduced with half-termly reviews to monitor school performance and to target intervention and support.

Attendance

- Whilst overall attendance shows a 2 percentage point improvement on 2022/23, the KPIs for overall attendance, English attendance and maths attendance will not be met.
- The Attendance Task Force will continue to drive improvements with more communication with parents and supportive interventions.
- Improved attendance is a good indication of higher achievement.

SAR Validation Activities

- Mark will be leading the self-assessment process. Students and Link Governors will be invited to participate in SAR validations.

Governors asked questions to which Mark and Jason Mansell responded:

What is the position with pipeline apprenticeships?

The challenge last year was apprenticeship achievement dropped to 54% and this year we are predicting 65%. This improvement is expected to continue, and the team is sharing good practice with other colleges e.g. front loading work.

How should we strike the balance between being ambitious and not meeting targets?

It is right to be ambitious and aspirational and we are using KPIs as a tool to drive continual improvement. Headline Adult achievement is expected to meet the KPI and Headline 16-18 Achievement is expected to be within 1 percentage point of the KPI. Both represent an improvement on 2022/23.

Can you report more regularly against national rates?

Yes. National data is often a year out of date but we can report in-year MiDES data against comparator colleges. MiDES retention data is reported in the paper and the College compares favourably.

With the new scorecard approach, we will start to validate predicted achievement from October.

Has the new maths and English strategy had student input? Do we peer review?

It will be an evolving strategy and we need to be innovative in our delivery. We also need to consider how we offer an exceptional student experience to our adult learners. Colleges share their experiences, but all colleges are facing similar challenges.

The Student Governor added that English and maths is regularly discussed with Student course representatives. Students feedback that if they do not understand what is being taught, they stop attending.

Is there an opportunity to work with secondary schools at an earlier stage so that students are not already disillusioned with English and maths before they join the College?

Mark will raise this at the next meeting with the secondary headteachers (MKSH).

The Board noted the predicted KPI performance and the ongoing development of provision

2.3B Curriculum & Quality Group Meeting 24 June 2024 *(previously circulated as Paper 2.3B)*

Angie Novell, Chair of the CQG, referred to the report of the meeting. The Group had reviewed the prisons SAR (Self-Assessment Report) and QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) and recommended this for approval.

The Board approved the report of the meeting and approved the prisons SAR and CQIP (Consent item 4.7)

Susan Akhtar was welcomed to the meeting

2.4A Financial Health 2023/24 Management Accounts Period 10 (May 2024) *(previously circulated as Paper 2.4A)*

Susan Akhtar led on this item.

- The P10 Management Accounts were scrutinised by the Finance Group at the meeting on 2nd July 2024.

Overall

- The Group position as at P10 (31st of May 2024) is a year-to-date operational surplus of £1,605k (which is £863k favourable to the reforecast budget). This is mainly due to underspend in both pay and non-pay costs within campus and pay costs within prisons.
- Financial Health is 'Good'
- The reforecast contribution is expected to be met at year-end.

Campus

- Campus contribution is £653k favourable to budget.
- Income is £1,578k below budget of which Adult income is £694k below budget
- Pay costs are £834k below budget and non-pay costs £1,397k lower than budget.

Prison Services

- Prison Services contribution is £211k favourable to budget.
- Income and Staff costs are lower than budget due to recruitment issues reflected in teaching delivered and related income earned.
- Within non-staff costs there are mobilisation costs for Fosse Way, which is showing as an adverse variance, however income has since been released to reflect this. Costs relating to Kent, Surrey & Sussex, will be reclaimed within the cost-plus funding model, All other non-staff costs are in line with the forecast.

Capital Expenditure

- The capital expenditure spend is £446k (on track)

Cash Position

- The cash balance is £10,177k and 59 cash days.

The Board noted the financial position as at Period 10

2.4B Budget 2024/25 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4B)

Susan Akhtar led on this item.

- The proposed budget was scrutinised by the Finance Group at the meeting on 2nd July 2024.
- The proposed budget is a surplus of £1,070k (campus / IoT £470k and prisons £600k), which is in line with the three-year financial plan approved in July 2023. This budget includes the trading activity for MK College Commercial (MKCC) of £3.8m (which will be separately reported to the Directors) and the Student Union budget of £5k.
- The aim continues to be Good Financial Health (with an increased target score of 200).
- Developing the budget has involved robust planning and collaboration between Finance, Curriculum and Marketing. The numbers are realistic.
- It is not a budget for growth but consolidates the current position (in the context of significant growth in 23/24). 16 -19 target student numbers are in line with the allocation including 100 for A Levels (increasing to 240 in Years 2 and 3). Adult numbers are reduced to reflect changes in funding. There is a small increase in HE numbers in 24/25 but growth in Years 2 and 3. Apprenticeships numbers are lower than 23/24 with growth in Years 2 and 3.
- Forecast contribution in some areas is below the internal target (50%) e.g., professional pathways. These areas are being analysed in more detail and the CEFSS review in November (Board strategic priority 4), should offer some recommendations to improve curriculum efficiency.

Capital expenditure

- Planned expenditure (which has been prioritised) is £750k plus £750k allocated to the CTF project.

Setting KPI targets for 2024/25

- The October Board paper will include a proposal on Financial KPIs after submission of the CFFR (College Financial Forecasting Return).

Action 2: Susan Akhtar by 2nd October 2024

Risks

- The key risks are:
 - apprenticeship income is less than budgeted
 - campus pay costs are above 3% (aligned to a UCU National Pay Claim)
 - under delivery of 16-18 Study Programme students in 2024/25.

Governors asked for assurance to which Susan and Jason Mansell responded:

The College has a track record of not achieving adult income targets. Are the numbers in this budget realistic?

Yes, it has been a bottom-up approach. The Adult target numbers (Schedule 2) are below the allocation; numbers are cautious.

The Board:

- ***Approved the College Budget for 2024/25***
- ***Approved the College rolling three-year financial forecast 2024/25 – 2026/7***
- ***Approved the College Capital Expenditure budget of £750k for 2024/25 (plus £750k to the CTF project)***
- ***Agreed that the Financial KPIs for 2024/25 will be brought to the next meeting for approval***

2.4C Finance Group Meeting 2nd July 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4C)

Mat Gotkowski referred to the report of the meeting. The Group had asked for more analysis of provision with low contribution. It was helpful that a governor with curriculum knowledge had been able to attend the meeting.

The Board approved the report of the Finance Group meeting

3.0 GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

3.1 Audit & Risk Committee (A&R) meeting of 20 June May 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 3.1)

Richard Bartlett-Rawlings, referred to the report of the meeting.

The Committee was assured that the RSM review had led to upskilling and process improvements in the MIS Funding & Compliance Team.

The Board approved the report of the meeting and the documents listed at item 4.3 below

3.2 MKC and CMA meeting of 21st May 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 3.1)

Sally Alexander referred to the report of the meetings and the action plans.

As wholly owned subsidiaries, MK College is the sole shareholder and responsible for the appointment of Directors,

MKC Commercial Ltd

A Commercial Agreement, MKCCL Board Terms of reference and a Director's Deed have been drafted by solicitors. These set out the indemnities and duties and obligations of the respective parties.

CMA Ltd

The contracts executed by CMA will be novated to the College and then the company can be struck off.

MKCCL

As the sole shareholder, the Board:

- **Approved the report of the meeting**
- **Approved the documents listed at item 4.4 below**
- **Approved the budget for 2024/25 (included in Paper 2.4B)**
- **Ratified the appointment of the Directors:**
 - **Annie Allen 10/12/21 to 9/12/24**
 - **Sally Alexander ex-officio**
 - **Peter Cox 1/8/23 to 31/7/24**
 - **Mat Gotkowski 27/2/24 to 26/2/27**
 - **Manish Verma 10/12/21 to 9/12/24**

CMAL

As the sole shareholder, the Board approved:

- **the report of the meeting**
- **the appointment of directors:**
 - **Sally Alexander ex-officio**
 - **Mat Gotkowski 20/2/24 to 19/2/27**
 - **Manish Verma 10/12/21 to 9/12/24**

3.3 Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) meeting 19 June 2024 ((previously circulated as Paper 3.3)

Manish Verma referred to the report of the meeting and confirmed that all projects were on time and budget.

The Board approved the report of the meeting.

3.4 Search & Governance Committee (S&G) meeting of 3 July 2024 (previously circulated as Paper 3.4)

Ian Revell referred to the report of the meeting.

The appointments and re-appointments had been circulated by email and approved prior to the meeting. Governors were reminded to test the link to the Board portal.

The Board:

- ***Approved the report of the meeting***
- ***Ratified the re-appointment of Ian Revell to serve a second term of office (three years)***
- ***Ratified the appointment of Lindsey Styles and Ian Bickers to serve a first term of office (three years) subject to a satisfactory DBS check wef 1st August 2024***
- ***Ratified the election of Mat Gotkowski and Angie Novell to serve as joint Vice-Chairs in 2024/25***
- ***Approved the implementation of TeamEngine (Board portal)***
- ***Approved the S&G Terms of Reference for 2024/25***

3.5 Feedback from AOC Governors' Summit 2024

Governor Neil Sainsbury attended the online AOC Governors' Summit in May. Neil shared the key messages from David Hughes' keynote: The prospects for colleges over the next 5 years.

The summit was prior to the change in government so some policy changes are expected.

Neil concluded that he was assured that there is a good level of governance at the College.

Sally Alexander added that she has written to James Timpson the new prisons minister to request a meeting, and has also written to the three new local MPs, congratulating them on behalf of the College and requesting a meeting to discuss a joined-up approach to Skills in MK.

The Board noted the key messages and thanked Neil for attending the summit on behalf of the Board

3.6 Items for the next meeting (2 October 2024)

- SEND Annual Report
- Safeguarding – new academic year
- Staff Pay
- Student Union Budget
- Financial Health KPIs
- Board Business Plan

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Minutes of the last meeting (5 June 2024) (previously circulated as Papers 4.1A and Confidential 4.1B).

Matters arising:

Date Raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
5/6/24	Analyse A Level enrolments for EDI	MF/MB	Carry forward to October 2024
	Circulate the final draft Accountability Statement with measures	JM	Complete (the link is included in Paper 2.1)
	Confidential action	AA	Transferred to T&FG
1/5/24	Spotlight item at Board or CQG on how EDI is reflected in the curriculum (see EDI Charter)	AK	Carry forward Add to the board business plan for 24/25

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 5 June 2024

4.2 Sub-Contracting Strategy and Plan for 2024/25, Policy, Fees and Charges (previously circulated as Paper 4.2)

The Board approved the Sub-Contracting Strategy and Plan for 24/25, Policy, Fees and Charges

4.3 Audit & Risk Committee 20 June 2024 recommendations (*previously circulated as Papers 4.3*)

See also item 3.1 above.

The Board approved:

- a) Strategic Risk Register**
- b) External Audit Strategy & Plan 2023/24**
- c) Internal Audit Strategy & Plan 2024/25**
- d) Data Protection Policy**
- e) Freedom of Information Policy**
- f) Health & Safety**
 - **Annual Report**
 - **H&S Policy**
 - **H&S Policy Statement 24/25 (for signing)**

4.4 MKC Commercial Ltd: Legal Agreements (*previously circulated as Paper 4.4*)

See also item 3.2 above.

The Board approved for signing:

- **The Commercial Agreement**
- **The MKCCL Board Terms of Reference**
- **The Director's Deed**

4.5 Contracts (*previously circulated as Paper 4.5A and 4.5B*)

The Board approved the following contracts:

- **Contextualised Numeracy Project (Multiply) for a 3-year period**
- **Desktop computers – XMA for a 3-year contract, subject to agreeing final contractual terms**

4.6 PEF Contract Variation (*previously circulated as Paper 4.6*)

The Board agreed the variation to the PEF contract for Kent, Surrey and Sussex approved the signing of the contract by the CEO (subject to agreeing final terms)

4.7 Prisons SAR and Quality Improvement Plan (*previously circulated as Paper 4.7*)

See also item 2.3B above.

The Board approved the Prisons SAR and QIP.

Next Meeting 2 October 2024

Ruby Parmar left the meeting at 18:45

Mat Gotkowski:

1. Referred governors to the [MKC Group About Us](#) leaflet which had been produced at the Chair's request. These are for governors to use / share with stakeholders and potential new connections. More copies are available on request.
2. Thanked the Student Governors for serving on the Board, presented them with a voucher and wished them well for the future. Both are going to University in September.
3. With Sally Alexander, presented Maxine Bennett with a college bowl and flowers and wished her a happy retirement. Maxine has been involved in prison education for almost twenty years, starting out at HMP Bullingdon, and has overseen many achievements during her time at the College.

Jay Timpany, Rosemary Ogunade and Jacob Jempson left the meeting at 18:50

PART B - CONFIDENTIAL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Parmar', written in a cursive style.

Approved 2 October 2024
Ruby Parmar
Chair of Governors