

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2025

Pitching Room, SCIoT, Bletchley

17:00 – 19:00

| Board Members | Category of Governor | Attendance Record 2024/25 | Present at this meeting |
|--|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sally Alexander | CEO | 7 of 7 | Sally Alexander |
| Abbas Bandali ² | Student | 5 of 6 | <i>Sent apologies</i> |
| Richard Bartlett-Rawlings | Independent | 5 of 7 | <i>Sent apologies</i> |
| Ian Bickers | Independent | 7 of 7 | Ian Bickers |
| Ajira Bouchada ¹ | Independent | 5 of 7 | Ajira Bouchada (Teams) |
| Mat Gotkowski | Independent | 6 of 7 | <i>Sent apologies</i> |
| Rebecca Myrie | Staff | 6 of 7 | Rebecca Myrie |
| Amit Nayyar | Independent | 6 of 7 | <i>Sent apologies</i> |
| Angie Novell | Independent | 4 of 7 | Angie Novell |
| Ruby Parmar | Independent | 7 of 7 | Ruby Parmar |
| Ian Revell | Independent | 7 of 7 | Ian Revell |
| Neil Sainsbury | Independent | 7 of 7 | Neil Sainsbury |
| Lindsey Styles | Independent | 7 of 7 | Lindsey Styles |
| Jay Timpany | Staff | 7 of 7 | Jay Timpany |
| Manish Verma | Independent | 5 of 7 | Manish Verma (Teams) |
| Jeremy Wilsdon | Independent | 6 of 7 | Jeremy Wilsdon |
| Tom Wraight | Independent | 6 of 7 | Tom Wraight |
| ¹ from 2/10/24 | | | |
| Catherine McKenna-Mackmurdo (1/11/24 to 29/4/25) | Student | 2 of 4 | |
| Leroi Henry (resigned 4/6/25) | Independent | 2 of 6 | |
| Attendance % this meeting | | 76% | 13 / 17 |
| Attendance % year to date | | 84% | 107 / 128 |

Attendees at this meeting: Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Mark Fell (Executive Principal), Karen Brown (Head of Governance)

Attendees in part: Laura Black (Group Director IoT, Adult and HE), Anna Clarke (Group Director Employer Engagement and Partnerships / Apprenticeships), Jules Quinn (Group Director: People Services), Susan Akhtar (Group Director of Finance).

Prior to the meeting governors had an opportunity to meet with students who shared highlights from their trip to Thailand in February

1.0 Procedural

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Laura Black to the meeting

Apologies had been received from Mat Gotkowski, Amit Nayyar, Richard Bartlett-Rawlings, Abbas Bandali and Sam Samuels.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

None previously declared

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2024/25

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

Governors asked questions to which Sally responded:

What is the value to the college of the % increase in funding per young learner?

We cannot calculate this until the revised allocations are received.

What is the value of the contract to deliver library provision at HMP Erlestoke? Will there be a pensions liability?

The value is very small (£29.5k for the remainder of PEF) and involves 2 staff so the pension liability is low.

Does the Red Bull bus wrap bus include College branding?

This is a Red Bull initiative but does include a small reference to the College.

How does the change in skills focus and Universal impact our Estates Strategy?

This will be considered during the research phase as we develop our next Strategic Plan, not just what it means for our buildings but co-location and partnerships with employers and how we use digital. The College will also explore potential project work and government initiatives e.g. Technical Excellence Colleges.

The Board received the CEO Report and Board Dashboard

2.2 Student Experience: Higher Education and SCIoT *(previously circulated as Paper 2.2)*

Minuted as Confidential

*Laura was thanked for attending and she left the meeting
Jules Quinn was welcomed to the meeting*

2.3 People and Culture: *(previously circulated as Paper 2.3)*

Jason Mansell and Jules Quinn referred to Paper 2.3 and summarised:

- Milton Keynes College Group has over 1,200 staff and is one of the largest employers in Milton Keynes.
- The aim of the People Strategy is to attract and retain a diverse workforce of the right size, shape, cost, and agility to deliver the required growth to meet the skills needs of our communities. The Strategy focuses on seven strategic aims listed below and sets out the 2025 baseline, the 2031 aims and how these will be achieved and finally, the success measures:
 1. Workforce
 2. Staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 3. Health and Wellbeing
 4. Learning and Development Culture
 5. Reward and Recognition
 6. Staff Experience and Engagement
 7. Employee Relations

- An annual operational plan will underpin the People Strategy to deliver the seven strategic aims and meet the People KPIs. Performance against the aims and KPIs will be reported to the Board of Governors, through an Annual Report and monthly via the Board Dashboard.
- The People Strategy will be reviewed in July 2026 to ensure it is aligned to, and supports the delivery of, the new Group Strategic Plan 2026-2031.

Governors asked questions to which Jason and Jules responded:

The reduction in campus staff vacancies is commendable – how has this been achieved?

We are retaining more staff, and they are progressing to higher roles.

Better planning, improved collaboration between Hiring Managers and People Services, internal staff development (e.g. 119 staff have progressed internally in the last 12 months), more efficient processes, improved reputation and responsible pay awards.

What is the basis for an ethnicity target of 20%?

This is informed by sector and regional data. We will clarify.

Action 1: Jules Quinn by 16 July 2025

Will you be developing new strategies to recruit trade skills?

The Operational Plan will include our actions to deliver this strategy and having a transparent Pay Policy will be key. There is also a FE targeted retention scheme for teachers new to FE who work in STEM.¹

The Peakon (staff satisfaction) score is lowest for reward (6.5%). Do you quantify the value of non-cash benefits e.g. pension contribution / generous leave entitlement for staff? Is enough being done to reward long-service?

We are exploring ways in which we can build and articulate a "Total Reward Statement to staff. We have annual staff Long Service Awards (10, 15, 20, 25 & 30 years) and we also have staff nominated values awards every year.

Governors concluded that the People Strategy needs to be more explicit about the different environment in prisons and the unique challenges faced by prison colleagues where sickness, turnover and vacancies are higher. It was agreed that an additional paragraph will be included to recognise the differences between prisons and campus etc. and make it clear that actions will be differentiated in the operational plan to reflect this.

Action 2: Jason Mansell / Jules Quinn by 16 July 2025

¹ The DfE Teacher Retention Bonus Scheme has been a valuable way for us to support staff retention this academic year. This scheme is available for STEM teaching staff in the first 5 years of their teaching career. As many of our recent recruits in these areas come straight from industry, we have also maximised the scheme as a talent attraction tool. In the 24/25 window (Oct 24 to April 25), 49 staff from across Prisons and Campus have received a total of £285,000. 46 received £6,000 and a further 3 received £3,000. Since the closing of this year's scheme, we have been part of a research project to evolve the process of validating claims and driving efficiencies in claim submissions to make the scheme even more accessible. The 25/26 scheme will open in the Autumn term, and we will be encouraging eligible staff to apply.

The Operational Plan will include targeted interventions and support for prison colleagues including mental health resources and well-being initiatives and will focus on improving working conditions which are within the College's control.

The Board approved the People Strategy 2025/26 to 2030/31 subject to Action 2

Jules was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

Anna Clarke was welcomed to the meeting

2.4B Draft Accountability Statement and Board Priorities 2025/26 (previously circulated as Paper 2.4B)

Jason Mansell referred to Paper 2.4B and summarised:

- The Board reviewed progress against the 2024/25 targets at the Annual Strategic Event on 30th April. Proposed targets for 2025/26 (and Board Strategic Priorities) are aligned to local and national needs:

| Annual project area | Board Strategic Priorities for 2025/26 |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Student Experience | • Deliver Year 2 of the Quality Strategy |
| Curriculum Development | • Evolve the Curriculum Strategy to meet new local, regional, and national skills needs |
| Institute of Technology | • Successful completion of the initial Licence agreement and explore re-licencing up to July 2028 |
| Financial Sustainability | • Deliver Good Financial Health and improve EBITDA and current ratio. |
| People and Culture | • Implement the People Strategy 2025-2031 to enable growth to meet Local and National Skills Priorities. |
| Prison Growth | • Commence and deliver new PES contracts. |
| Partnerships and Meeting Skills Needs | • Establish new strategic partnerships to meet local and regional growth needs |
| Sustainability | • Deliver the Climate Action Plan |
| Estates | • Revisit the MK College Group Estates Strategy in line with the new Strategic Plan 2026-2031 |

2.4A Meeting Local and National Skills Needs (previously circulated as Paper 2.4A)

Anna Clarke referred to Paper 2.4A and summarised:

- The [Skills and Post-16 Education Act](#) places a legal requirement on colleges to work with employers, so that the training offered meets the needs of local areas. In February 2024, Ofsted judged the College as 'strong' in this respect.
- A significant number of our students are achieving qualifications which support their progression into higher level learning, provide the skills required by employers, and/or provide pathways directly into employment.
- Currently, 3,646 (34%) of campus students are working towards qualifications in **national priority** industry sectors which will increase to 37% in 2025/26 based on the Curriculum Plan. This figure is above the 2023/24 FE College average of 30.4%.
- **Local (regional) priorities** are more fluid and mainly relate to generic employability skills e.g. our large cohort of Skills Academy students focus on skills for life.
- The Accountability Agreement targets (same as Board priorities), are aligned to local skills priorities.
- The College worked collaboratively with CoSEM Colleges to deliver four LSIF (local skills improvement fund) projects to respond directly to the eight LSIP (local skills

improvement plan) priorities. The LSIPs are due for a refresh and are likely to be focused on construction and driving career aspirations (such as our STEMx with Red Bull and Skill Up and Green Skills projects with Santander)

- The College's Curriculum Strategy outlines how the College works with employers to co-design and co-deliver curriculum to ensure provision is relevant and aligned to current and future skills needs.
- Skills England launched this week replacing the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

Governors asked questions to which Anna responded:

Milton Keynes was the lead college for LSIF but is there likely to be a LSIF 2?

Not known. Skills England is likely to focus on construction as £600m has been allocated for training including investment in 10 new Technical Excellence Colleges. These colleges are likely to follow the LSIF model with colleges working together with a lead college,

Why is Logistics and Haulage not a skills priority for MK?

It was not raised as a priority sector in the LSIP.

We offer digital and management skills relevant for haulage and distribution companies as opposed to traditional NVQs in say warehousing.

The CEO will circulate the Grant Thornton MK50 Report (*the largest 50 (by revenue) privately owned businesses in the MK area*) and a recent letter from the Secretary of State for Education on Skills England priorities.

Action 3: Sally Alexander by 6 June 2025

The Board

- ***Received assurance that the College is meeting local and national skills needs***
- ***Approved the draft 2025/26 Accountability Statement and the 2025/26 Board Strategic Priorities and measures, for signing by the Chair and CEO and submission to DfE by 30 June 2025.***

Anna was thanked for attending and she left the meeting
Susan Akhtar was welcomed to the meeting

2.5 Financial Health: 2025/26 Capex budget / DfE Confirmation of Financial Health 2023/24 (previously circulated as Paper 2.5)

Susan Akhtar referred to Paper 2.5 and summarised:

Capital Expenditure Budget 2025/26

- After internal challenge and scrutiny, the Capital Expenditure Budget is proposed as £500k, including a small contingency of £49k for any in-year urgent requests. It is focussed on priority investment.
- This is in addition to the capital projects which receive external funding (as reported at item 3.1 below). The College will continue to review and bid for other funds wherever available (e.g. the College has been allocated £1.5m of DfE Capital Expenditure funding which will need to be spent by March 2028).

DfE Confirmation of Financial Health

- The DfE has officially confirmed Financial Health for 2023/24 as 'Good'.

The Board

- ***Approved the College Capital Expenditure budget of £500k for 2025/26***
- ***Noted the DfE's confirmation of Good Financial Health for 2023/24***

Susan was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

3.0 GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

3.1 Curriculum & Quality Group 28 April 2025 *(previously circulated as Paper 3.1)*

Jez Wilsdon referred the Board to the report of the meeting, The CQG continues to provide support and challenge to the CPR (College Performance Report) process and Quality Improvement Plans.

The CPR process is being piloted at HMP Fosse Way (before being rolled out across all prisons from 1st October). Prisons receive an overall grade from Ofsted for 'education, skills and work' whereas the scorecard only includes the measures which the College can control. The process will enable the quality of education to be monitored so will increase accountability. Evidence of improved performance will be motivational and useful to share with prison governors.

The CQG is considering expanding its scope to increase its scrutiny of curriculum as well as quality.

The Board approved the report of the meeting

3.2 Capital Projects Monitoring Group 13 May 2025 *(previously circulated as Paper 3.2)*

Manish Verma referred to the report of the meeting. The IoT capital project has been completed and the Tariff (to support growth in student numbers at Chaffron Way and Bletchley) and Carbon Offset (replacement of boilers at Bletchley) projects are on time and budget. Both have very tight delivery timescales (September 2025).

Manish also referred to Paper 4.2 (Written Resolution) which relates to the award of contracts for Bletchley capital works (Tariff and Carbon Offset projects); the contract will need to be signed under seal in due course.

Governors were assured that there has been a high response to the tender invitations e.g. the interviews for the Chaffron Way works are scheduled to take two days.

The Board approved the report of the meeting

3.3 Items for the next meeting

- Safeguarding Annual Report
- Financial Health: P10 Management Accounts / Budget 2025/26 / 3 Year Finance Plan
- Student Outcomes (predictions)
- Stakeholder Strategy
- Reports from A&R, S&G, CQG, CPMG, FinG, Subsidiaries
- Consent Agenda: Climate Action Plan Annual Report, Fees Policy, Sub-contracting strategy & plan – fees and contracts, Health & Safety Annual Report

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Student Experience: CPR5 and In-Year Retention *(previously circulated as Paper 4.1)*

- 4.2 Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report (including actions)** *(previously circulated as Paper 4.2)*
- 4.3 Contracts: IT Devices x 2** *(previously circulated as Paper 4.3)*
- 4.3 Written Resolution – Main Works Contract (Bletchley Works – Tariff and Carbon Offset projects)** *(previously circulated as Paper 4.4)*
- 4.5 Minutes of the last meeting (30th April 2025)** *(previously circulated as Paper 4.5)*

Matters arising

| Date Raised | Actions arising from the last and previous meetings | Action Owner | Current position |
|--------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| 30/04/25 | Provide an example of employer engagement e.g. with the NHS including meeting frequency, employer needs and the College's response. | MF | Carry forward to the July Board meeting |
| | Propose EDI targets and realistic positive action | AK | Carry forward - scheduled for November 2025 |

Next Meeting 16th July 2025

Rebecca Myrie, Jay Timpany and Abbas Bandali, left the meeting

Item 5.1: Minuted as confidential

Ruby Parmar presented Angie Novell with a college bowl and thanked her for chairing the CQG and Remuneration Committees and serving as Vice-Chair and SEND Link Governor. Angie has resigned from the Board effective 31st July 2025 having relocated to Cornwall and will be attending the July Board meeting by Teams.



Approved 16th July 2025
Ruby Parmar
Chair of Governors