

## MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE

### SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (S&G)

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025,  
Teams  
16:00 – 17:00

Committee Members	Attendance Record 2024/25	Present at this meeting
Sally Alexander Ruby Parmar Ian Revell (Chair) Neil Sainsbury* Lindsey Styles  *from 4/3/25	2 of 2 2 of 2 2 of 2 1 of 1 2 of 2	Sally Alexander Ruby Parmar Ian Revell Neil Sainsbury Lindsey Styles
<b>Total Percentage attendance (this meeting)</b>	<b>100%</b>	5/5
<b>Total percentage attendance (year to date)</b>	<b>100%</b>	9/9

**In attendance:** Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner)

#### 1.0 PROCEDURAL

##### 1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Ian Revell welcomed Neil Sainsbury to his first meeting.  
There were no apologies (everyone was present)

##### 1.2 Declaration Of Interests:

None were declared.

#### 2.0 BOARD EFFECTIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE

##### 2.1 Board Composition and Membership *(previously circulated as Paper 2.1)*

Karen Brown summarised as follows:

Composition and membership

- There are 14 Independent Governors in post (currently no vacancies) however Angie Novell has resigned from July as she has relocated from the area. Mat Gotkowski and Manish Verma complete their second term of office in April 2025 and have applied to serve a third term (see below).

- There are two staff governors and two student governors in post (currently no vacancies). One (and possibly two) student governor vacancies will arise at the end of July.
- There are no committee vacancies; membership of the Remuneration Committee will be reviewed in July.

### Diversity

- Females continue to be under-represented. Of the 14 Independent Governors, 10 (71%) are male and 4 (29%) are female which is below the target (50% male and 50% female).
- Ethnicity (36%) is below target (50%) however it is in line with the student profile (34%) and above the sector benchmark (18%).
- Diversity targets will continue to be one of the considerations when succession planning however the priority is to recruit governors with relevant skills.

### Skills and Competencies

- There are currently no identified skills or competencies gaps.

### Succession Planning

- The resignation of Angie Novell will create a vacancy on the Board and Remuneration Committee. Jez Wilsdon has succeeded Angie as the Chair of the CQG (Curriculum & Quality Group) and Ian Bickers has succeeded Angie as SEND Link Governor. There will be an election in July to elect Vice-Chairs of Governors for 2025/26 and this may address the vacancy on the Remuneration Committee.
- The CEO and Head of Governance will be meeting a candidate who is interested in joining the Board later in March.
- The CEO is also in early discussions with another potential candidate.
- The Committee agreed that whilst there is only one forthcoming vacancy, membership could be increased on a temporary basis for a candidate who has specific skills in accordance with the Board's standing orders.

### Board reappointments

- Mat Gotkowski (Confidential Paper 2.1A) and Manish Verma (Confidential paper 2.1B) have applied to serve a third term of office. After considering their application forms, attendance for the last three years and their contributions to the Board, the Committee agreed to recommend their reappointments. Both are directors of the College's two subsidiary companies.
- Manish has expressed an interest in being involved in the Digital Curriculum if there is an opportunity.

**Action 1: Karen Brown by April 2025**

### ***The Committee:***

- ***Noted the Board current composition, committee membership, skills, and diversity***
- ***Recommended to the Board that Mat Gotkowski and Manish Verma be re-appointed for a third term of office.***

## **2.2 Student Governor Election Process (and ongoing support) (previously circulated as Paper 2.2)**

Karen Brown led on this item:

As requested at the last meeting, the Committee discussed the student governor election process; student governors are elected by the student body.

Governors asked questions:

***Would a student candidate be eligible if their tutor had not endorsed the application?***

No as this is part of the process. However, in all cases to date, tutors have been very positive about endorsing students' applications.

***If a student is not considered suitable for the role after a discussion with the Head of Governance / Governance Partner, who decides they should not proceed.***

It is usually by mutual consent i.e. the student reaches the conclusion that the role or the time is commitment is not what they were expecting. If they withdraw from the process, they are offered a different role e.g. as a student ambassador. This also applies to students who are not successful in the final election.

The Committee discussed:

- There are two opportunities to recruit:
  - In the summer term. This could target progressing students via the Student Council and would ensure there was a student governor in post from 1<sup>st</sup> August (who could enrol on the external training programme in October). The disadvantage being that the student governor may only serve a one year before they leave the College.
  - In the autumn term. This could target new students who may then serve for two years. The disadvantage being the Student Council does not meet until November so there would be a vacancy for the first two Board meetings, and they would also miss the start of the external training programme in October.
- It would be good to attract a larger pool of candidates including adults and HE. The Head of Governance will speak to the Group Director: IoT, Adult and HE

**Action 2: Karen Brown by April 2025**

- The Chair of Governors offered to speak directly to the Student Council about the role of the Board and / or make a video.

**Action 3: Ruby Parmar by May 2025**

- Members of this Committee could be available to speak to students during Freshers Week about the role of the Board.

**Action 4: S&G Committee Members by September 2025**

As student governors are elected by the student body, the Committee concluded that a competitive interview with governors would not be appropriate however a supportive conversation with a member of this Committee would be added to their induction programme. This will also be introduced for staff governors.

The Committee was pleased to note that student governors have a comprehensive induction and development programme (through Unloc) and ongoing support from a governor mentor, the Head of Governance and the Governance Partner.

It was noted that the Head of Governance and Governance Partner will be working with the Student Support Team to elect one student governor in the summer term. If there is a vacancy at the start of the new academic year, there will be an election in November.

***The Committee:***

- ***Agreed actions to attract more candidates***
- ***Agreed that a supportive meeting with a member of the Search & Governance Committee will be added to the induction progress for student (and staff) governors***
- ***Received assurance that there is a comprehensive induction programme and ongoing support for student governors***
- ***Noted the intention to elect a Student Governor in the summer term***

**2.3 Board Effectiveness: Board Development Plan (previously circulated as Paper 2.3)**

Sam Samuels referred to Paper 2.3 which reports progress against the plan:

The three themes are:

**1. Improve the quality of governor discussions with increased critical challenge and scrutiny. Status: ongoing.**

There are good discussions and challenge at Board, committee and scrutiny group meetings as evidenced in the meeting minutes. However, not all governors contribute at meetings especially if attending by Teams.

**2. Ensure Board papers are purposeful. Status: ongoing**

Feedback from governors in February 2025 was positive (91% of respondents were happy with papers). The ELT and Head of Governance are supporting new colleagues with drafting Board papers to ensure they are succinct and purposeful.

**3. Increase accessibility and confidentiality of Board papers through embedding the new Board portal. Status: complete**

Feedback from governors in February 2025 was positive (100% of respondents were happy with using the new portal). One suggestion (to provide access to the CPR Dashboard) has been actioned. The Committee agreed that the Head of Governance should explore procuring the contract beyond October 2025.

**Action 5: Karen Brown by July 2025**

***The Committee noted progress with the Board Development Plan***

## **2.4 Board Effectiveness: Board Self-Assessment 2024** *(previously circulated as Paper 2.4)*

Sam Samuels led on this item:

- There was an external review of governance in 2024 so the next external review must be completed before July 2027.
- In the years where there is no external review, Boards are required to have an annual governance self-assessment.
- The planned self-assessment activities in 2024, as listed in the Board's Standing Orders include questionnaires for independent governors, staff governors, student governors and ELT. The Governance Partner is seeking examples of best practice from across the network and will bring the proposed questionnaire(s) to the next meeting for members' input. It is likely that questions will be framed around the AoC Code of Governance.
- The questionnaires will be issued and responses analysed in August / September and reported to this Committee in October.
- 1:1 reviews with governors are not scheduled in 2025 as the Board has previously determined that these should be carried out biennially.

***The Committee approved the plan for self-assessment in 2024***

## **2.5 Scheduling Board Meetings in 2025/26** *(previously circulated as Paper 2.5)*

Sam Samuels led on this item:

- In response to feedback at the 1:1 reviews with governors last summer, governors were surveyed on their preferred timings for Board meetings in 2025/26
- Eight of the fourteen independent governors, the CEO and both staff governors responded (i.e. 11 responses out of 17 in total).
- Wednesday was the most popular day for meetings (9 of 11 respondents) and early evening (5pm) was the most popular choice (9 of 11 respondents). Currently, Board meetings are scheduled on Wednesdays at 5pm so no change is proposed for 2025/26.
- Committees and scrutiny groups will continue to choose a time to suit their members.

***The Committee agreed that Board meetings should continue to be scheduled on Wednesdays between 5pm and 7pm.***

## **3.0 CONSENT AGENDA**

The following items were not discussed:

### **3.1 Minutes of the previous meeting(s)** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.1)*

Matters arising

Date	Action	Who	Status
22 October 2024	1. Review the process for electing Student Governors	KB	Complete – item 2.2

***The minutes of the meetings held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 were approved***

### **3.2 EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Role Description** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.2)*

***The Committee recommended the EDI Role description to the Board for approval***

## **4.0 GOVERNANCE**

### **4.1 Items for the next meeting are:**

- Board Development Plan (progress)
- Board Self-Assessment Questionnaires
- Election of Vice-Chair
- TOR and Business Plan 25/26

**NEXT MEETING: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025**



Approve 17 June 2025  
Chair of Search and Governance – Ian Revell