MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP
CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2024
Room 3, Chaffron Centre, Chaffron Way Campus
17:00 – 19:00

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance Record 2024/25	Present at this meeting
Sally Alexander	CEO	1 of 1	Sally Alexander
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	1 of 1	Richard Bartlett-Rawlings (T)
Ian Bickers	Independent	1 of 1	Ian Bickers
Ajira Bouchada (from 2/10/24)	Independent	1 of 1	Ajira Bouchada
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	1 of 1	Mat Gotkowski
Leroi Henry	Independent	0 of 1	*Sent apologies*
Rebecca Myrie	Staff	1 of 1	Rebecca Myrie
Amit Nayyar	Independent	1 of 1	Amit Nayyar (T)
Angie Novell	Independent	1 of 1	Angie Novell
Ruby Parmar (Chair)	Independent	1 of 1	Ruby Parmar
Ian Revell	Independent	1 of 1	Ian Revell
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	1 of 1	Neil Sainsbury
Lindsey Styles	Independent	1 of 1	Lindsey Styles
Jay Timpany	Staff	1 of 1	Jay Timpany
Manish Verma	Independent	1 of 1	Manish Verma
Jeremy Wilsdon	Independent	1 of 1	Jeremy Wilsdon
Tom Wraight	Independent	1 of 1	Tom Wraight
Attendance % this meeting		94%	16 / 17
Attendance % year to date		94%	16 /17

Attendees at this meeting: Annie Allen (Chief People Officer), 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), Maria Bowness (Group Director: Curriculum & Pedagogy) (in part), Lauren Gallyot (Sustainability Lead) (in part)

Prior to the Board meeting, there had been an optional briefing from Mark Fell on the new balanced scorecard.

1.0   Procedural

1.1   Welcome and Apologies

Ruby Parmar welcomed everyone to the meeting including Amy Langford and new governors Ian Bickers, AJ Bouchada and Lindsey Styles. Brief introductions were given.

There are no Student Governors in post as both students left the college in July 2024 and the Student Council (which is the electing body) is not due to meet until 11th

November. The Head of Governance will explore if the election can be brought forward.

Action 1: Karen Brown by 6th November 2024

Apologies had been received from Leroi Henry.
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings and Amit Nayyar were attending by Teams.

1.2 Declaration of Interests
None previously declared

1.3 Chair's Introduction to the Meeting

Ruby Parmar set the scene for the new academic year:

- After confirmation from Ofsted in February that the College continues to be 'Good', there are exciting opportunities ahead to develop and strengthen partnerships. There is an important role for Further Education in supporting the Government's 5 missions; a paper has been shared with the AoC on what MK College is doing (circulated to Governors after the meeting).

The feedback from governors during the recent reviews was helpful and as a result we will:

- Ensure 'aspiration' is central to our Fairer Futures Strategy (which we will start to review this cycle).

- Encourage all governors to engage in all aspects of the College and not just our own specialisms. We will encourage and support our Student Governors to engage more at our meetings.

- Have less presentation from college leaders and more time for discussion at meetings. The assumption is that governors have read the papers in advance and every question is valid.

- Receive an update on prisons at every meeting either as a discrete paper or though the CEO's report.

- Add a calendar to the Board Portal to assist governors to attend more College events as these are a good opportunity to learn and engage.

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2024/25

Amit Nayyar left the meeting due to a poor Wi-Fi connection

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

Sally Alexander drew attention to the following:

Dashboard and KPIs for 2024/25

Following positive feedback from governors, we will continue with this approach for 24/25. The dashboard provides governors with a current overview of performance across the College (key performance indicators and Board strategic priorities). The 2024/25 KPIs are presented in the dashboard for Board approval.

Student Numbers

Recruitment has been strong especially 16-18 where numbers are c.400 above target. There will be attrition by Day 42 (end of October) and we expect final numbers to be c.100 students above target (which will be c.190 students above the funding allocation). In this scenario, we could apply for in year growth funding for c.90 students (at £5k per student).

Most curriculum areas (except A Levels) have recruited to target with significant increases in Motor Vehicle (138%) and Care Professions (142%).

The growth presents both opportunities and challenges (e.g. the buildings are full).

Pay Award

Minuted as confidential

STEMx

Sally thanked governors for attending the STEMx launch event at Red Bull this week. The purpose behind this partnership is to inspire young people to consider a STEM educational pathway / career and the young people who attended the launch gave very positive feedback. The roll-out will commence in January 2025.

MKBAA Sponsorship

The College is sponsoring the Awards this year to raise its profile as a lead player in supporting the local skills agenda. The cost of the annual sponsorship is £12k.

Skills England Report

The Skills England report: driving growth and widening opportunities was forwarded to governors this week. The Government has suggested that webinars and roundtables will take place this autumn.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

The Government is consulting on a Curriculum and Assessment Review to ensure that curriculum and assessment meets the needs of young people. The College will respond to the consultation.

Governors asked questions to which Sally responded:

> ***What is the impact of the growth in student numbers e.g. on staff recruitment?***
>
> The impact is felt across the College e.g. pressure on teaching staff, increased class sizes, busy food outlets, more students with safeguarding issues etc.
>
> ***The gap between student numbers and the funding allocation could mean that significant additional costs are unbudgeted; how is this being managed?***
>
> We have increased class sizes rather than adding additional classes which will not impact on the budget but could impact the student experience.

If eligible, we will request in year growth funding but in the meantime, we are managing the additional students within the existing budget.

The prisons contract represents a significant proportion of the College's income; what would be the impact of not continuing with this contract?

It would have an impact on both income and costs, as teaching staff would be TUPEd to an alternative provider.

The dashboard reports that Strategic Priority 2 is 'Amber' yet Paper 2.4B gives us assurance that this is on track. However, Campus staff sickness and campus staff turnover are reported as 'Green' so does this mean the College is complacent about staff sickness and staff turnover? Also, in general, more explanation in the Dashboard would be helpful.

We are not complacent and our actions to address staff absence and turnover will be included in the strategic workforce plan which is being developed this year (and will sit alongside the Curriculum Strategy). Staff vacancies and staff turnover will also be tracked through the new balanced scorecard which will highlight the curriculum areas with the most issues.

The Board:
- ***Received the CEO Report***
- ***Approved the Key Performance Indicators for 2024/25***

2.2   Safeguarding & Prevent: Interim Report *(previously circulated as Paper 2.2)*

Amy Langford, Group Director: Inclusion and Head of Safeguarding, highlighted some headlines from her report:

- Over 2,000 safeguarding files have been received from feeder schools relating to students joining the College this term; reviewing and prioritising these files is a significant task for the team. Not all of these students have current safeguarding issues, (some are minor behaviour infringements), but this is not obvious until the files are reviewed.

- The Safeguarding, Wellbeing and ALS (Additional Learning Support) teams are experiencing increased pressure from external agencies to accept students whose level of risk is assessed internally as unmanageable. After day 42, Amy will report on the scale and impact of this issue and identify next steps in terms of escalation.

- Two thirds of Study Programme students have safeguarding issues, with mental health being the biggest presenting need.

- Overall, it has been a good start to the term and there are good levels of staff due to new roles having been recruited e.g. Campus Managers. Resourcing will be re-assessed after day 42.

- Ian Revell is the Link Governor for Safeguarding & Prevent.

In response to a question from governors, Amy confirmed that her team does have sufficient support through Arthur Ellis whose support services are available to staff and students.

The Safeguarding & Prevent Link Governor added that he meets regularly with Amy and is impressed with the work of her team and is satisfied that safeguarding

controls are effective. The College Leadership Team will challenge the Local Authority, if necessary, as the College is being put under undue pressure to accept students when it cannot meet their needs. Society is seeing the impact of COVID on young people.

The Board received the Interim Report on Safeguarding & Prevent

2.3 **Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and High Needs Annual Report 2024** *(previously circulated as Papers 2.3)*

Amy Langford highlighted some headlines from the annual report:

- The College continues to meet its statutory responsibilities with regards to the SEND Code of Practice.

2023/24

- In 2023/24 there were:
    - 336 students with an EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan).
    - 127 students in receipt of High Needs Funding within mainstream provision.
    - 142 High Needs funded students (all with EHCPs) within Inclusive Learning and subcontracted provision (broadly in line with the previous year).

- Overall predicted achievement for those with High Needs was 87.1% (87.2% 22/23) including subcontractors. Achievement was in line with those without High Needs across the College except in Functional Skills English.

- The College's High Needs Provision was graded Outstanding by Ofsted (February 2024). The College was highlighted as an example of best practice in the SEND Local Area Inspection by Ofsted and Quality Care Commission (March 2024)

2024/25

- The College is the biggest provider of alternative provision in Milton Keynes.

- Students with an identified SEND need may have an EHCP (Educational Health Care Plan) which sets out the additional educational provision which the College must provide; the College must be consulted before being named in an EHCP.

- The number of consultations has doubled (482 in 24/25 to date compared to 220 in 23/24) of which 122 were assessed as "No to Consultation". As with Safeguarding, the team is experiencing increasing pressures from external agencies to accept students where the College has assessed it cannot meet their SEND needs. When this has been challenged, some decisions have been overturned because the information in the EHCP was found to be inaccurate or out of date.

- The College is masking a local area need for additional resource. We are aware of at least 100 young people who are now potentially NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

- Angie Novell is the Link Governor for SEND.

Governors asked questions to which Amy responded:

Does the Local Authority prepare the EHCP?

Schools usually draft the plan for approval by the Local Authority (generally 20 – 50 pages in length). It is then 'owned' by the Local Authority which has an obligation to provide education in accordance with the EHCP in collaboration with any named education provider.

There are a significant number of young people who have declared a SEND need but do not have an EHCP. How are these students achieving in comparison to their peers? It would be helpful for the Board to receive this broader analysis.

They are achieving in line with their non-SEND peers. This analysis is not included in the SEND annual report but will be reported in the SAR (Self-Assessment Report) which will come to the Board in December.

Action 2: Mark Fell by 11th December 2024

There is an annual process to update an EHCP so should the College challenge where this is not being done and feedback?

Yes. Amy meets monthly with the Local Authority EHCP Lead. It is a wide issue co-owned by schools and the Local Authority. We will undertake an analysis in November.

Having an EHCP linked to behaviour can be a barrier as the young person's behaviour may be no more of a challenge than a young person without an EHCP.

We are considering a new role of school liaison officer to work with feeder schools to assess a young person's needs prior to enrollment.

Governors commended the College for its support for SEND and urged the Leadership Team to continue to raise this with the Local Authority and the MPs. It is a consideration for the Council's Growth Strategy as the issue will only increase as the population grows.

The Board received the update including the assurance that the College is meeting its responsibilities for SEND

Amy was thanked for attending and she left the meeting
Maria Bowness was welcomed to the meeting

2.4   **Student Experience: Quality Strategy / Curriculum Strategy** *(previously circulated as Papers 2.4)*

Mark Fell and Maria Bowness highlighted the following:

Quality Strategy / Quality Framework (Paper 2.4A)

* The Quality Strategy gives clarity and guidance on quality assurance and improvement activities during 2024/25 to ensure consistency across curriculum areas and prison education. The aspiration is to be 'exceptional' i.e. the highest possible operating standards will ensure that students receive the highest possible experience.

- The Quality Framework, which underpins the Quality Strategy at an operational level, includes the range of activities undertaken by the Quality Team and monitored by the SLT/ELT.

- MESMA will replace ProObserve, as a platform to record lesson observations.

- The CQG reviewed the Quality Strategy in more depth at its recent meeting.

Two quality aspects are new to the College this year:

1. The introduction of the balanced scorecard to assess performance at six intervals throughout the year leading to interventions or sharing good practice (the presentation on balanced scorecards was circulated after the meeting).

2. A blueprint for success, i.e. guidance on teaching, learning and assessment underpinning pedagogical practice. The blueprint will support consistency of practice across campus and prisons.

Governors asked questions to which Mark responded:

> ***How can governors evaluate the impact of the Quality Strategy on an ongoing basis?***
>
> The impact will be measured through the metrics in the balanced scorecards (which will be reported to CQG and Board).
>
> ***Are the existing Board KPIs sufficient or will there be more?***
>
> We will not increase the number of strategic KPIs in the Board dashboard but there are 65 metrics in the balanced scorecard. We will not review every metric at each meeting but will focus on those most relevant for the time of year.
>
> Governors added that the balanced scorecards will assist the CQG to focus on where its additional scrutiny is required. The balanced scorecard and blueprint for success will give CQG greater levels of assurance on the quality of teaching and learning (including areas of strength and areas for development) which will be key for self-assessment and quality improvement going forward.
>
> ***How will the Quality Strategy work for prisons?***
>
> We will use the same framework but adapt it where necessary (e.g. the use of digital for delivery must be different in prisons).

Amit Nayyar re-joined the meeting at 18:20

Curriculum Strategy (Paper 2.4B)

- An earlier draft of the Curriculum Strategy was seen by the Board in June. This final version includes:
  - growth and sustainability measures
  - aspirational targets to grow adults and apprenticeships
  - clearer stakeholder engagement and partnerships (aligning to the Skills England report)
  - implementation actions

- The Curriculum Strategy references and includes aspects from the AOC EDI Charter and supports the Quality and Estates Strategies to ensure a

consistent approach to short and medium-term planning, assurance and resource allocation.

Governors asked questions to which Mark responded:

Do we adapt the curriculum to meet employer needs and if so, does this require new staff recruitment?

Yes, as much as we can, and we will both recruit and upskill staff. This Curriculum Strategy will align to our strategic aims and workforce and curriculum plans.

The curriculum plan will be based on LMI (labour market intelligence) and meeting local needs from a job perspective but will also offer courses young people want (not linked to jobs); i.e. they gain a qualification in a subject they enjoy whilst developing transferable skills.

From my knowledge as an employer, would you agree that changing the curriculum is not so easy because it requires awarding bodies to change? I would like the curriculum to be more responsive to industry changes.

Yes, and we do challenge the awarding bodies e.g. we have refused to offer a Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in Digital which has not been updated for five years.

We do ensure that our workforce is aware of the latest industry practice so that students develop current skills.

The aims and priorities in this Curriculum Strategy are well considered. Should this be shared with the Council?

Yes, we will reference this strategy when speaking with the Council because it aligns to the future and growth.

How will governors see the new Curriculum Strategy in action e.g. can we hear from a curriculum team on what is current practice compared to what will change as a result of this strategy?

The next step is for Heads to create their own three-year curriculum strategy by the end of October, and we can bring examples to a future meeting.

Action 3: Mak Fell by 11th December 2024

Analysis of A Level Enrolments

- 67 students have enrolled onto the College A Level programme of study

- Two thirds are female. 24% have learning difficulties and disabilities (two have an EHCP) and 45% are non-White British.

- The College was very selective and applicants who did not meet the entry criteria (mostly due to the lower national English results), were not accepted on the A Level programme but many were offered an alternative course.

- The pathway model was restricting so there will more flexibility and a wider choice of subjects and qualifications on offer next year e.g. AAQs (Alternative Academic Qualifications). The high entry criteria, however, will be maintained to protect standards.

- A level tutors are a mix of existing and new to the College.

The Board:
- **_Approved the Quality Strategy_**
- **_Approved the Curriculum Strategy_**

Maria was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

2.5   Curriculum & Quality Group Meeting 23 September 2024 _(previously circulated as Paper 2.5)_

Angie Novell, Chair of the CQG, referred to the report of the meeting. The Group had reviewed the:
- impact of the Campus 2023/24 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and the emerging development themes for 2024/25. The Campus SAR and QIP will come to the Board for approval in December.
- impact of the in-year prisons QIP.
- new balanced scorecard and how this will drive improvement and sharing of good practice
- draft Quality Strategy (Paper 2.4A)

The Board:
- **_Approved the_** _report of the meeting_
- **_Approved the CQG Terms of Reference for 2024/25_**

Lauren Gallyot was welcomed to the meeting

2.6   Climate Action: Report of 2023/24 Activity / Draft Climate Action Plan 20244/25 _previously circulated as Paper 2.6)_

Lauren Gallyot referred Governors to the headlines:

Progress against FE Climate Action Roadmap 2023/24

- The Roadmap, which was developed by the AoC, describes three levels of maturity i.e.
    - _Emerging_: colleges just beginning to address sustainability
    - _Established_: colleges with an established approach to sustainability and structures in place to support it
    - _Leading_: colleges which are models to others on sustainability

- At end of 2023/24, 54% of the actions required to meet _Established_ were complete or in progress. As of September 2024, this increased to 80%. More detail on the actions completed are published on the Sustainability page on the website

- The aim is to achieve _Established_ status by July 2025 and _Leading_ status by July 2026.

- The College's Climate Action Plan (CAP) is aligned to the Roadmap.

Developing the MK College Climate Action Plan (CAP)

- The draft CAP incorporates the four key areas as advised by DfE: Decarbonisation, Adaptation and Resilience, Biodiversity, and Climate Education and Green Careers.

- The CAP has five key ambitions and ten climate aims:

Ambition	Climate Aim
1. We will all lead the way.	1. Pursue a whole group approach. 2. Improve resilience to climate change.
2. We will promote green skills and climate awareness.	3. Embed sustainability and green skills into curriculum and CPD. 4. Raise awareness through partnerships and communications.
3. We will work towards carbon neutrality in operations.	5. Decarbonise our estates 6. Monitor indirect emissions 7. Promote greener transport.
4. We will transition towards a circular economy.	8. Minimise waste through reuse and recycling. 9. Adopt responsible purchasing practices.
5. We will improve our offer to nature.	10. Increase biodiversity on campus.

- The CAP outlines the steps towards achieving carbon neutral by 2030 and a commitment to work towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as pledged through the Race to Zero Charter. It will be aligned to the Estates Strategy.

- Current activity includes establishing baseline data in order to set realistic targets. The final version of the CAP, including KPIs for 2024/25, will come to the Board in December for approval.

- Sustainability is very important to our students and staff.

- Neil Sainsbury is the Link Governor for Sustainability.

Jason Mansell summarised that sustainability is a priority in the Strategic Plan, but the biggest challenge is finance. The College has invested in a fulltime Sustainability Lead and the new green skills centre, but it will cost £10m to decarbonise energy across our campuses. There are funding opportunities e.g. SALIX but this requires time and resources to create the bids, with significant match requirements. There is limited government funding available. The College is addressing decarbonisation in new capital projects including the IoT and Chaffron Centre. The College does not yet have a viewpoint on Carbon Credits.

Governors suggested that sustainability could be a theme for the College in the Community Day.

The Board:
- ***Approved the development of the draft Climate Action Plan for 2024/25***
- ***Noted the progress against the FE Climate Roadmap in 2023/24***

Lauren was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

3.0   GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

3.1   Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) meetings of 17 July 2024 and 17 September 2024 ((*previously circulated as Paper 3.1*)

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

The green skills centre is opening on 18th of October (to which Governors have been invited). The application to the Council for carbon offset funding was successful (to replace the boilers at Bletchley with heat source pumps) but the SALIX bid was unsuccessful.

The Board:
- *Approved the report of the meeting.*
- *Approved the CPMG Terms of Reference for 2024/25*

3.2 Board Appointment

Ian Revell thanked Mat Gotkowski and Leroi Henry for joining the interview panel at the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 19th September. The recommendation on the appointment was subsequently approved by email.

The Board ratified the appointment of Ajira Bouchada to serve a first term of office (three years) subject to a satisfactory DBS check with effect from 2nd October 2024.

3.3 Items for the next meeting (6 November 2024)
- Partnerships (Open University)
- Estates - planning for growth
- Student Experience. Student Experience (final outcomes, stakeholder satisfaction)

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Board Business Plan 2024/25 *(previously circulated as Paper 4.1)*

The Board approved the Board Business Plan on the basis there is flexibility if priorities change

4.2 Use of the College Seal in 2023/24 *(previously circulated as Paper 4.2)*

The Board approved the report on the use of the College Seal in 2023/24

4.3 Student Union Budget 2024/25 *(previously circulated as Paper 4.3)*

The Board approved the Student Union Budget for 2024/25

4.4 Freedom of Speech & Expression Code of Practice *(previously circulated as Paper 4.4)*

The Board approved the Freedom of Speech & Expression Code of Practice

4.5 Minutes of the last meeting (10 July 2024) *(previously circulated as Papers 4.5A and Confidential 4.5B).*

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 July 2024 and noted that all matters arising had been completed.

Matters arising:

Date Raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
10th July 2024	Report to the Board on Safeguarding (with numbers) throughout the year	AL / KB	Complete – added to the Board Business Plan (Paper 4.1)
	Propose the Financial KPIs at the October Board meeting.	SSA	Complete – included in the Board Dashboard (Paper 2.1)
5/6/24	Analyse A Level enrolments for EDI	MF/MB	Complete included in Paper 2.4B above.

1/5/24	Spotlight item at Board or CQG on how EDI is reflected in the curriculum (see EDI Charter)	AK	Complete included in Paper 2,4 above,

Next Meeting 6th November 2024

Approved 6th November 2024
Ruby Parmar
Chair of Governors