

MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2026

Pitching Room, SCIoT, Bletchley

13:00 – 14:00

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance Record 2025/26	Present at this meeting
Sally Alexander	CEO	6 of 6	Sally Alexander
Jawad Al Midani (from 24.10.25)	Student	3 of 5	<i>Sent apologies</i>
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	6 of 6	Richard Bartlett-Rawlings
Ian Bickers	Independent	4 of 6	<i>Sent apologies</i>
Ajira Bouchada	Independent	4 of 6	Ajira Bouchada
Emily Bousfield (from 29.9.25)	Staff	6 of 6	Emily Bousfield (in part)
Carla Derriscott (from 30.9.25)	Student	6 of 6	Carla Derriscott (in part)
Mark Homans	Independent	6 of 6	Mark Homans
Ajay Kabra	Independent	4 of 6	Ajay Kabra
Rebecca Myrie	Staff	6 of 6	Rebecca Myrie (in part)
Amit Nayyar	Independent	4 of 6	<i>Sent apologies</i>
Hiran Odedra (from 2.10.25)	Independent	3 of 6	Hiran Odedra
Ruby Parmar	Independent	5 of 6	Ruby Parmar
Ian Revell	Independent	6 of 6	Ian Revell
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	5 of 6	Neil Sainsbury
Lindsey Styles	Independent	6 of 6	Lindsey Styles
Manish Verma	Independent	4 of 6	<i>Sent apologies</i>
Jeremy Wilsdon	Independent	6 of 6	Jeremy Wilsdon
Tom Wraight	Independent	6 of 6	Tom Wraight
Attendance % this meeting		79%	15 / 19
Attendance % year to date		86%	96 / 112

Regular Attendees at this meeting: Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Cat Marin (Executive Principal), Sharon Frost (Executive Director People Services and Marketing), Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner)

Other attendees in part: Maria Bowness (Group Director Curriculum and Pedagogy), Laura Black (Group Director IoT, Adult and Higher Education), Arv Kaushal (Head of People Development and EDI)

1.0 Procedural

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Maria Bowness, Laura Black and Arv Kaushal were welcomed to the meeting,

Apologies had been received from Manish Verma, Amit Nayyar, Ian Bickers and Jawad Al Midani.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

Tom Wraight (item 3.7 and 3.9D) (neither are discussion items)

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2025/26

2.1 Curriculum Plan Overview (previously circulated as Paper 2.1)

Maria Bowness and Laura Black highlighted some headlines from the report:

- Government reforms continue to impact the curriculum offer. The Industrial Strategy and LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan), provide the external economic rationale, while the Strategic Plan ensures this is delivered through a coherent, high-quality learner experience.
- Level 3 - as BTEC qualifications are phased out, new Vocational (V) Level qualifications are being introduced from September 2027 to sit alongside A Level and T Level pathways. In response, most colleges have expanded their A Level offer. The College has delivered A Levels for the past two years and is planning further growth in 2026/27 through the introduction of additional subjects. T- Levels are also expanding to include new sectors.
- Level 2 - from September 2027, there will be new one-year pathways designed to support progression to further education e.g. T Levels, V Levels, Study Programme and two years pathways to support progression into employment.
- Apprenticeships – there will be a new Foundation Level apprenticeship. The College plans to grow, refine or deprioritise provision based on local skills shortages or strategic priorities.
- Higher Education - the College did not achieve its overall growth target this year, although growth was seen in selected areas, including Digital. The College has secured institutional validation from the Open University, with two programmes (Digital/Games and Early Childhood Studies) due to commence in September. Formal confirmation from the OU is expected shortly, after which student offers can be issued. In addition, a new Construction Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) will launch in September. Engineering applications are currently below target; however, a funding bid has been submitted to the Office for Students to support the development of a pilot enrichment programme for Digital and Engineering students progressing towards careers in the defence sector.
- Adult provision continues to be impacted by reductions in funding, with the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) allocation decreasing by 11% per annum for the past two years, limiting opportunities for growth. Following over-delivery in Term 1, the College is taking mitigating action to manage demand within the allocation, including pursuing additional funding, reducing enrolments in targeted areas (e.g. ESOL and Adult English & Maths), and deferring intakes in areas (Construction).

Governors asked questions to which Maria, Laura and Cat Marin responded:

Will the reforms impact the Futures Academy?

No, the Futures Academy, which supports progression to Level 2 pathways, is one of the few areas which will not be impacted. The model has generated significant interest, with a number of colleges seeking to engage with us on this approach and our proposals to support the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) cohort.

How will the blend of A Level and V Level work and how will this be marketed?

V Levels are being introduced in waves from September 2027; the first wave subjects will sit within the A Level school.

The College will offer advice and guidance on career pathways to ensure the subjects chosen are cohesive.

Do Universities recognise T-Levels and V-Levels as entry qualifications?

These qualifications carry (or will carry) UCAS tariff points. While there was initially some uncertainty among universities, they now recognise that T Levels are equivalent to three A Levels. However, financial pressures within the higher education sector are leading many institutions to lower entry requirements, with some making unconditional offers (which is not helpful as students are questioning the value of sitting their final assessments).

Is the College able to meet the demand for apprenticeships as more young people are choosing an apprenticeship pathway rather than university? What are the gaps and how are we encouraging employers to take apprentices?

Demand varies across sectors, so it is a mixed picture.

The Employer Engagement Team actively monitors demand to identify priority sectors for targeted engagement. Employer Boards, convened by the College, play a key role in informing curriculum development, including apprenticeships and work experience. In addition, the Team delivers engagement events for new employers, providing guidance on areas such as apprenticeship regulations.

A report on apprenticeships will be presented at the June Board meeting, including an analysis of sector demand and identified gaps.

The dates of the Employer Board meetings will be circulated as governors may wish to attend.

Action 1: Karen Brown by 3rd June 2026

How is the College supporting businesses to navigate the complexity of the apprenticeships processes which is a challenge for even the large corporates; this complexity could be acting as a barrier and may deter some employers from offering apprenticeship opportunities.

There are changes on the horizon e.g. funding and levy incentives for SMEs, a new Foundation Apprenticeship and apprenticeship units. The Employer Engagement hosted events explain to employers how the College can provide support.

The Board received assurance on curriculum planning and alignment to local needs.

Laura Black was thanked for attending and she left the meeting.

2.2 Pay Gap report / Update on EDI priorities (previously circulated as Paper 2.2)

Sharon Frost thanked Arv Kaushal for producing the report well ahead of the deadline (March 2027) and Arv highlighted the following:

- The College is currently required to publish its gender pay gap; however, it also voluntarily reports on ethnicity and disability, both of which will become statutory requirements from next year. Disability disclosure rates are high at 85%.
- Mean pay gaps exist across all three categories (gender 7.5%, ethnicity 5.5%, and disability 2.6%). The gender pay gap, remains below the national average (13%) and the education sector as a whole (15%)¹. These gaps are primarily driven by under-representation in senior roles, rather than unequal pay for comparable roles.

¹ There is no benchmark for the FE sector. Local colleges report mean gender pay gaps between 7.5% and 11.9%.

- Gender and ethnicity pay gaps have increased marginally since last year (by 0.5 and 1.8 percentage points respectively). This reflects the time lag associated with structural interventions, such as succession planning required to improve representation.
- The action plan is aligned to the College's Fairer Futures Strategy, the EDI Strategy (approved by the Board in November 2025) and the People Strategy (approved by Board June 2025).

Governors asked questions to which Arv responded:

What has been the impact of the previous action plan – what has been done and what was the impact.

These actions are incorporated within the People and EDI strategies and will be reported through the respective annual reports.

Action 2: Arv Kaushal by 15th July

What are the main challenges for the College in addressing pay gaps?

Inconsistent management practice across the Group.

How is the College viewed externally?

We have evidence that being a top ten inclusive employer is assisting our recruitment.

Internally however, people have a narrower view of their immediate environment.

There is no comparative by quartile, limiting the Board's ability to identify priority areas for intervention. Greater clarity is required on the two or three key actions within each quartile that would deliver the most significant impact.

The comparative quartile data (with accompanying narrative) is available and will be circulated to the Board.

Action 3A: Arv Kaushal by 30th May

The key actions to within each quartile will be reported in the People Strategy Annual Report.

Action 3B: Arv Kaushal / Sharon Frost by 15th July

The Link Governor for People, Culture and EDI (who is an EDI specialist), added that she was reassured by the report. Voluntary sharing of ethnicity and disability data reflects a positive culture.

The Board

- ***Received assurance that the Group is meeting its statutory responsibilities for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.***
- ***Noted the emerging themes from the analysis of 2025/26 Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap data and the actions planned to address the pay gaps.***
- ***Noted that good progress has been made against the EDI priorities agreed in April 2025***
- ***Requested further information be reported in the People Strategy Annual report (July 2026)***

Arv and Maria were thanked for attending and they left the meeting

Staff Governors and the Student Governor Staff Governors and Student Governors were thanked for attending and they left the meeting.

2.3 Legal Matter

Minuted as confidential

3.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

- 3.1 CEO Report and Board Dashboard** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.1)*
- 3.2 Student Experience Report (CPR4 / Campus learner survey)** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.2)*
- 3.3 Audit & Risk Committee 27th March 2026** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.3):*
 - **Report of the Meeting**
 - **Strategic Risk Register**
 - **Re-appointment of Validera as Internal Auditors for 2026/27**
- 3.4 Curriculum & Quality Group (CQG) Meeting 20th April 2026** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.4):*
 - **Report of the Meeting**
- 3.5 Capital projects Monitoring Group (CPMG) Meeting 21st April 2026** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.5):*
 - **Report of the Meeting**
 - **Delegation of authority to two members of the CMPG to approve the schedule listed in Section 13.3 of the Financial Regulations including the headline project plan, cost plan and timelines, in relation to the NEETs capital works.**
(see also paper 3.7)
- 3.6 Link Governor Report** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.6)*
- 3.7 Written resolution re submission of Capital Funding Bids (Post 16 Capacity Fund (P16CF) and Construction Skills Capacity Fund (CSCF)** *(previously approved via the Board portal and circulated² as Paper 3.7).*
- 3.8 Policies** *(previously circulated as Paper 3.8)*
 - 3.8A: Business Continuity Plan**
 - 3.8B: Anti-Fraud & Corruption**
 - 3.8C: Information Security**
 - 3.8D: Reserves**
 - 3.8E: Safeguarding**
 - 3.8F: Whistleblowing**
 - 3.8G: Complaints Policy (Further Education Public and other parties)**
 - 3.8H: Complaints Policy (Higher Education)**
- 3.9 Minutes of the last meeting (18th March 2026)** *(previously circulated as Papers 3.9A, Confidential 3.9B, Confidential 3.9C¹ and Confidential 3.9D¹).*

Matters arising

² Restricted circulation

Date Raised	Action	Owner	Status
18/3/26	1. Promote the English and maths progress outcomes for 2024/25	CM	Carry Forward: When the article is published the link will be circulated to Governors.
	2. Arrange a prison visit	Governors / CA	Carry Forward: A schedule of visits will be circulated
	3. Report on an apprenticeships action plan	CM	Carry Forward: diarised for the 3 rd June Board meeting
10/12/25	6. Review space used by third parties as part of the Estates Strategy	JM	Complete: the third party has been served notice to vacate

3.10 MKC Commercial Ltd / The Code Makers Academy Ltd Board of Directors Meetings 27th April 2026 (previously circulated as Paper 3.10):

- *Report of the Meetings*

3.10 Items for the next meeting:

- Apprenticeships
- Meeting Local Needs / Draft Accountability Statement / Board priorities
- Stakeholder Strategy / Annual report (may be July)
- Strategic Plan 2026-2031(sign-off)
- Capex Budget for 2026/27

Next Meeting 3rd June 2026



Approved 6th May 2026
 Ruby Parmar
 Chair of Governors