MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE GROUP

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 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	7 of 7	Sally Alexander
Jawad Al Midani (from 24.10.25)	Student	4 of 6	Jawad Al Midani
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	7 of 7	Richard Bartlett-Rawlings
Ian Bickers	Independent	5 of 7	Ian Bickers (Teams)
Ajira Bouchada	Independent	5 of 7	Ajira Bouchada
Emily Bousfield (from 29.9.25)	Staff	7 of 7	Emily Bousfield (in part)
Carla Derriscott (from 30.9.25)	Student	6 of 7	*Sent apologies*
Mark Homans	Independent	7 of 7	Mark Homans
Ajay Kabra	Independent	5 of 7	Ajay Kabra (Teams in part)
Rebecca Myrie	Staff	7 of 7	Rebecca Myrie (in part)
Amit Nayyar	Independent	4 of 7	*Sent apologies*
Hiran Odedra (from 2.10.25)	Independent	4 of 7	Hiran Odedra
Ruby Parmar	Independent	6 of 7	Ruby Parmar
Ian Revell	Independent	7 of 7	Ian Revell
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	6 of 7	Neil Sainsbury
Lindsey Styles	Independent	7 of 7	Lindsey Styles
Manish Verma	Independent	4 of 7	*Sent apologies*
Jeremy Wilsdon	Independent	7 of 7	Jeremy Wilsdon
Tom Wraight	Independent	6 of 7	*Sent apologies*
Attendance % this meeting		79%	15 / 19
Attendance % year to date		87%	111 / 127

Regular Attendees at this meeting: Jason Mansell (Chief Operating Officer), Cat Marin (Executive Principal), Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Sam Samuels (Governance Partner)

Other attendees in part: Sarah Thompson (Deputy Director: Apprenticeships and Teacher Education), Liana Sinclair (Group Director: Estates), Susan Akhtar (Group Director of Finance).

1.0 Procedural

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

Apologies had been received from Tom Wraight, Manish Verma, Carla Derriscott and Sharon Frost.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

None

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2025/26

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

Sally Alexander highlighted some items from her report:

a) **Digital & Technologies Technical Excellence College (TEC)**

- The formal launch meeting has taken place and funding confirmed as:
  - £5m capital to support delivery partners (up to four FE colleges, including MK College). Final capital bids are required by the end of September 2026.
  - £2m revenue (over 3 years) to be retained by the College to drive digital excellence. This will be paid in equal parts across three financial years.

- The initial delivery plan is due by 29th June, with final submission by the end of July.

- Implementation:
  - There will be a full launch in September.
  - We are collaborating with regional FE partners (FESA group) across the Oxford–Cambridge Growth Corridor.
  - The College is now recruiting for the TEC (internally and externally)

- Sally attended the Scientific Superpower Conference earlier today. Hosted by the Oxford–Cambridge Supercluster, it is a platform for senior figures from government, employers, investors, and academic institutions to explore how the UK can strengthen its position as a global scientific superpower. Milton Keynes featured in discussions although the FE Sector had lower visibility compared to universities. The Chancellor took the opportunity to announce funding for the eastern entrance to Bletchley station.

- TEC status will be a significant opportunity to maintain status and further develop regional and national partnerships. Timelines are tight but the College will be in a position to enhance its profile, influence, and impact in the digital and skills agenda.

b) **Milburn Review (Young People and Work)**

The interim review was published this week and states there are now over 1 million NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training). The final report will include recommendations, but the published context is closely aligned with our strategic aim to open The Key at Chaffron Way in September to accommodate 90 students at risk of becoming NEET. The Curriculum model will be designed for re-engagement (with employment, education or training) with strong employer engagement, progression pathways and support (e.g. mental health, SEND, safeguarding, mentoring, careers, financial etc).

c) **Vacancies**
Minuted as confidential

Governors asked questions to which Sally responded:

Is the Milburn Review aligned to DWP initiatives e.g. the new Youth Jobs Grant offering businesses £3,000 for every young person aged 18-24 they hire who has been on Universal Credit and seeking work for at least six months.

Yes; Pat McFadden is the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

The College works very closely with the regional lead for the DWP (there was a DWP representative at the Employer Board this week) and we are ensuring that we are promoting DWP initiatives relating to young people.

The College participated in a workshop at the UKREiiF show (the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum). Can you elaborate?

National and local MK stakeholders in attendance included employers, local authorities, MPs, investors and partners.

It was an opportunity to promote Milton Keynes as an investment location. The College contributed by emphasising the importance of further education in addressing local skills gaps, supported by strong employer and local authority perspectives.

Governor Tom Wraigt attended as an employer as did Lord Patrick Vallance, the Government's newly appointed Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor Champion.

It was another opportunity to raise the profile of FE.

How have the five objectives for the Digital TEC been determined?

The same objectives have been set for every TEC in all sectors.

Cat Marin will be collaborating with the four Digital TECs, and TECs in other sectors, to ensure there is no duplication.

As part of the MK Civic University Agreement, the College is leading on the Entrepreneurship and Skills Development workstream. What tangible progress has been made – is there a tight and coherent plan and are the outcomes and success criteria defined?

Sally will meet separately with Mark Homans to discuss progress and include an update in the next CEO report.

The Student Governor added that volunteering is a good way for students to develop communication skills and build confidence.

Action 2: Sally Alexander by 15/7/26

The Board received the CEO Report and Board Dashboard

2.2 Educational Character and Mission *(previously circulated as Paper 2.2)*

Jason Mansell introduced the item and reminded governors that a core Board responsibility is '*the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the institution and the oversight of its activities.'* He highlighted that:

- The new Strategic Plan, *'Fairer Futures for All'*, builds on the previous *'Building Fairer Futures'* strategy and has been informed by extensive stakeholder consultation to identify local skills needs.
- The Board has shaped the strategy through the Annual Strategic Events in 2025 and 2026, the Strategy Development Group, and discussions at the February Board meeting. Consultation has included engagement with the community, employers, staff and students, alongside externally commissioned research, thereby meeting the Local Needs Duty.
- Since the Board Strategy event on 6 May, only minor amendments have been made to the Strategy, the Marketing & Communications Plan, and the accompanying infographic.
- The Accountability Statement for 2026/27 sets out how the College will contribute to national, regional and local skills priorities in return for public funding. The Board's

Strategic Priorities for 2026/27 align fully with the commitments set out in the Accountability Statement.

- The soft launch of the Strategic Plan will be in July with the main launch in September when the case studies will be available via the QR Codes.

Governors asked questions to which Jason and Sally responded:

Can the Board receive more detail on the 95% positive destinations as this is a significant key performance indicator and demonstrates impact.

Yes. This may be based on intended destinations; the College is exploring how to efficiently and effectively capture actual destinations next year, alongside developing the Alumni network.

Action 3: Cat Marin by 15/7/26

How is the College targeting different audiences when launching the strategy? How do you intend to measure whether the launch has been successful i.e. changed stakeholder perceptions and / or behaviour.

We will probably commission external research (along the lines of the consultation research) when the plan is embedded e.g. in 1 to 2 years' time.

Governors requested links to the case studies (videos) before the launch.

Action 4: Jason Mansell by 31st August 2026

The Board approved the:
- ***Strategic Plan 2026-2031***
- ***Infographic Strategic Summary***
- ***Accountability Statement 2026 / 2027***
- ***Board Strategic Priorities 2026/27***
- ***Public Value Statement for publication on the website***

Sharon Thompson was welcomed to the meeting.

Ajay Kabra left the meeting at 17:35 (temporarily)

2.3 Apprenticeships - Current Year Performance and Future Planning *(previously circulated as Paper 2.3)*

Cat Marin and Sarah Thompson highlighted some key points from Paper 2.3:

- Overall, apprenticeship provision is in a strong position, both in terms of current performance and future strategic opportunity.

- Current achievement rate is 61.4% which compares favourably to the national rate last year (60%). The final achievement rate is expected to be close to target (68%). Withdrawals from longer programmes in previous years might affect this year's achievement rates.

- This performance has been achieved despite a challenging national landscape (including changes to apprenticeship standards), alongside internal staffing pressures and delivery complexities.

- Demand for apprenticeships is high, with approximately 10 applications per vacancy.

- The College continues to benefit from strong employer partnerships and repeat business across a range of sectors and programme levels.

- Leadership of the provision has strengthened strategic oversight, including alignment between the delivery and sales teams, supporting both current performance and future growth.

- Apprenticeships continue to be a key national priority for the government. The College is well positioned to respond to this, including:
  - Proactively planning for upcoming assessment reforms
  - Adjusting enrolments for new starts from September to October to enable employers to take advantage of various employer incentives
  - Continuing to align provision with employer needs and labour market demand.

- Targeted interventions are delivering sustained impact in previously low-performing areas. Interventions include enhanced monitoring, regular at-risk reviews, and more frequent tracking towards year-end. The Electrical provision, previously identified as an area of concern, has improved but there are still some challenges relating to staffing stability, employer compliance, and high levels of apprentice movement between employers.

- The College is working closely with employers to understand both current and future (3–5 year) skills needs. Employer Boards are informing curriculum improvements.

Governors asked questions to which Cat and Sarah responded:

Is the final achievement based on college assessments?

No, they are evaluated by an independent examiner. In construction for example, an end point assessor will assess apprentices at the College on a series of tasks. For electrical, apprentices attend a test centre and are assessed over three days using test boards.

What is the reason for some apprentices going beyond their planned end dates?

End dates are fixed at the start of the programme and can only be amended in limited circumstances (e.g. sickness or BIL- break in learning). Delays have arisen due to a combination of factors:

- Employer-related issues (e.g. in some cases, employers do not release apprentices to complete required elements of their training)
- Internal capacity issues – staff shortages.

The most affected areas are Electrical and Engineering, but it is expected that most apprentices currently beyond their end date will complete by the end of the year.

There are currently limited consequences for employers who do not support timely completion, so we are reviewing future employer agreements to include a fairer sanction process.

How will the College engage employers to inform them of upcoming apprenticeship reforms and their implications?

Employer engagement has already started through Sector Skills Boards, with further activity planned once reform details are confirmed. There will be a multi-channel approach including:

- Direct engagement via the Employer Engagement Team
- Specialist-led sessions to explain changes to standards and assessment requirements

- Joint sessions with End Point Assessment Organisations

Employer briefings will be face-to-face events, online sessions, and targeted communications, supported by written guidance. Existing forums (e.g. Employer Boards) and wider networks (including local partners such as the Council, the Chamber and DWP) will be used to reach both current and prospective employers.

A phased approach is required due to national uncertainty, but the College is actively positioning itself to provide clear and timely updates.

What is the College's response to the defunding of certain apprenticeship standards, and what alternative pathways are being considered?

Defunding, particularly in popular areas such as team leader/operations, presents a significant challenge, including reduced options for levy-paying employers.

These could be offered as a professional course; however, these are not levy-funded, which may limit employer uptake.

National reforms are still evolving, and it is anticipated that some provision may be reconfigured into new apprenticeship units.

There is a sector-wide concern regarding the removal of popular standards, and the College will respond once clearer national direction is provided.

If the FE Commissioner benchmark is 15% contribution, is the College considering an appropriate level of investment in apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships represent a significant provision, with over 800 learners currently enrolled. The College will continue to assess resourcing levels, performance, and strategic priorities to ensure investment is appropriate.

Sarah will be attending a year-long AOC apprenticeship leadership course which will provide benchmarking opportunities. It will be made up of 3 modules covering: Commercial leadership; Sales, marketing and employer engagement and Operational implementation.

The Board received the progress update and noted the proposed actions

Sarah was thanked for attending and she left the meeting.

Liana Sinclair was welcomed to the meeting.

2.4 Estates Plan Phase 2 *(previously circulated as Paper 2.4)*

Jason Mansell led on this item reminding governors that the Phase 2 plan had been discussed at the Board's Strategy event on 6th May and subsequently by the CPMG on 12th May and with the Estates Link Governor.

This phase 2 plan sets out short- to medium-term priorities ahead of the full Estates Strategy, due for approval in October.

- Key projects are which are critical to delivering the College's new Strategic Plan are:

1) Repurposing space at the main Bletchley campus to expand classroom capacity to support growth in A-Levels, T Levels and AAQs (target completion September 2026). This project will create up to 160 additional full-time equivalent student spaces. If the bid for £2m capital funding is unsuccessful, the work will be funded through college reserves and council tariff and section 106 funding.

2) Repurposing space at Chaffron Way to deliver a self-contained centre for learners not in education, employment or training (NEET). This centre will be known as The Key and will accommodate up to 90 students in total (target open date is September 2026).

3) Development of an offsite construction centre, with potential expansion to create up to 350 additional full-time equivalent student places, subject to planning approval. The project will be delivered over 4 phased options over the next four years depending on the outcome of our capital bid for £5m.

- Due to tight project timelines, the College is increasing its use of framework contracts. These comply with Procurement Guidelines and the College's Financial Regulations, while speeding up the process and ensuring value for money through pre-agreed rates.

Governors asked questions to which Jason responded:

Will the Digital and Technologies TEC impact the Estates Strategy?

Yes, we will be reviewing this. The College is eligible for a share of £5 million capital funding although we expect this to be needed for refurbishment and specialist equipment.

Participation as a 'spoke' in the Construction TEC, meant the College was eligible to submit a capital bid for the construction centre.

Ajay Kabra rejoined the meeting at 18:00

Is the College still pursuing a city centre presence and for what purpose?

Our new Strategic Plan states this intention, and it will be referenced in the Estates Strategy. We will continue to work with the Council and partners to explore opportunities. It could be used for an entrepreneurial hub.

The Board:
- ***Approved the Estates Plan Phase 2 comprising three projects.***
- ***In relation to Bletchley Option B (additional classrooms for A-Levels growth), delegated authority to two members of CPMG to approve:***
  - ***the schedule listed in Section 13.3 of the Financial Regulations including the headline project plan, cost plan and timelines.***
  - ***the main works contract up to a value of £2 million.***

Liana was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

Susan Akhtar was welcomed to the meeting

2.5 Budget 2026/27: Capital Expenditure *(previously circulated as Paper 2.4)*

Susan Akhtar highlighted some key points from Paper 2.5:

Capital Expenditure 202627

- In addition to externally funded capital projects, following a robust prioritisation process the College is proposing £2,500k of Capital Expenditure in 2026/27. The 2026/27 budget will be presented at the next meeting for approval, but the capital expenditure request is brought forward to enable timely ordering, particularly for IT equipment, given long lead-in times.

- A significant portion of the investment relates to the development of The Key (£900k) and replacement of previously leased IT equipment (£220k). Some costs may also be offset by the Digital TEC funding and £1.6m of ringfenced DfE capital funding allocated for condition improvement.

Governors sought assurance that there was sufficient investment in apprenticeships and Susan confirmed that the request from the Apprenticeship team has been met in full.

Financial Health 2024/25

- Following review of the College's Audited Financial Statements and finance record for FY 2025, the DfE has confirmed the Financial Health assessment grade as Outstanding with no financial control concerns.

The Board:
- ***Approved the College Capital Expenditure budget of £2,500k for 2026/27***
- ***Noted the DfE's confirmation of Outstanding Financial Health for 2024/25***

Susan was thanked for attending and she left the meeting

2.6 Stakeholder Engagement

The Chair reminded governors that good stakeholder engagement contributes to effective boards; governors have a duty to review how well the education or training provided by their college meets local skills needs.

Governors gave feedback on their recent engagement with stakeholders.

Governors referred to their attendance at:
- Student of the Year (engagement with staff, students and employers)
- Cultural Diversity Event (engagement with staff and students / EDI strategy).
- Link Governor visits
  - Safeguarding (assurance that the College is compliant)
  - Skills (assurance on meeting skills needs, partnership working, stakeholder satisfaction)
  - Estates (assurance on effective delivery of capital projects, compliance and value for money)
  - Apprenticeships (impact of quality improvements)
- Employer Thank you Event (employer engagement and assurance re meeting local needs)
- Hair & Beauty Employer Board (employer engagement, assurance on how employers are informing the curriculum and how the College is meeting employer needs)
- Attendance at civic events also attended by the College e.g. the MK Civic University Agreement meeting (College's strategic role, meeting local needs, stakeholder perception of the College as an anchor institution)
- Professional interaction with a former barbering student (spoke positively about his experience at College)

The Chair encouraged governors to attend an Employer Board meeting and / or visit a prison (the dates have been circulated).

Governors requested:

- a simple feedback form to record informal engagement with stakeholders and for Link Governor visit forms to be accessible on Team Engine.

Action 5: Karen Brown by 15th July

- Follow up the technical issues at the Cultural Diversity Event**.**

Action 6: Arv Kaushal / Sharon Frost by 7th October 2026

- Review the technology in Room 3 (Chaffron Centre) and the Pitching Room (IoT) and consider whether there is a training need.

Action 7: Jason Mansell by 7th October 2026

The Board gave feedback on recent engagement with students, staff and employers

3.0 GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE

3.1 CPMG Meeting *(previously circulated as Papers 3.1A and 3.1B)*

Jason Mansell referred to the report of the meeting. The Committee welcomed a new co-opted committee member and received assurance on project progress, budget, risks and issues relating to:

a) The tariff project (redevelopment and expansion of internal space to increase post 16-19 education for September 2025). Complete subject to final snagging and final costs.

b) The SALIX 4 project (full decarbonisation of Bletchley campus). On schedule with works due to be completed by 18th September 2026.

The CPMG also reviewed the Phase 2 Estates Plan see item 2.4 above) and noted:

- The Key – the appointment of the contractor with work due to be completed by September 2026
- Bletchley – the Architect has been procured via a Framework.
- Options to develop the Construction Centre subject to funding. The work is not due to start until September 2027 but in the meantime, planning permission will be pursued.

The Board:

- ***Approved the report of the meeting***
- ***Ratified the decision to award the capital works contract for The Key to Borras Construction Ltd, as previously approved by written resolution.***

3.2 Items for the next meeting:

- Safeguarding – Annual Report and Strategy / Inclusion Strategy
- Financial Health – P10 / Budget 2026/27
- Student Experience: CPR 5, Campus predictions, Prisons SAR 25/26, Prisons QIP 26/27
- People Strategy – Annual report and revised KPIs. Pay Policy
- Committee reports: A&R, S&G, CQG, CPMG, MKCC Ltd, CMA Ltd, Rem Co
- Sub-contracting Strategy (C)
- H&S Annual report (C)

The Stakeholder Strategy Annual report will be carried over to early next cycle

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Link Governor Report *(previously circulated as Paper 4.1)*

4.2 Minutes of the last meeting (6th May 2026) *(previously circulated as Papers 4.2A and Confidential 4.2B[1]).*

Matters arising

Date Raised	Action	Owner	Status
6.5.26	1. Circulate dates for the Employer Board meetings and invite governors	Karen Brown	**Complete:** circulated to governors by email 26/5/26
	2. Pay Gaps - report on progress and impact of actions, in the People Strategy Annual Report	Arv Kaushal	**Carry Forward to 15th July**
	3A Pay Gaps - circulate the comparative quartile data (with accompanying narrative) to the Board	Arv Kaushal	**Complete:** circulated to governors by email 27/5/26
	3B. Include the key actions to (per quartile) in the People Strategy Annual report	Arv Kaushal	**Carry Forward to 15th July**
18/3/26	1. Promote the English and maths progress outcomes for 2024/25	Cat Marin	**Complete:** links circulated to governors by email 5/6/26
	2. Governors to visit a prison	Governors / Claire Atkins	**Complete:** the visits schedule was circulated by email on 28/05/26
	3. Report on an apprenticeships action plan	Cat Marin	**Complete:** Agenda item 2.3

Next Meeting 15th July 2026

The Chair noted that this would have been Carla Deriscott's final meeting and, in her absence, thanked her for her contribution and service as Student Governor.

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

5.1 Legal Matter
Minuted as confidential

Approved 15th July 2026
Ruby Parmar
Chair of Governors