



MidKent College

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 14 December 2023 at 17.00hrs in the Corporate Room at Medway.

Present: (90% attendance)

Mr M Cook	Chair	Miss B Jossi	Staff Governor	Mrs C Richardson	
Professor M Abdel-Maguid		Mr O Omomehin	Student Governor	Mrs L Snedden	Staff Governor
Mr N Baveystock	MKCTS Chair	Mr A Oseyenum	Student Governor	Mr J Williams	
Mr S Cook	Principal CEO	Mr M Prentis		Mrs A Woodhouse	
Ms A Currie		Mrs M Quadri		Mrs M Woolston	
Mrs J Dyakova		Mr C Reeves			
Mr D Gagie		Mr C Reynolds			

In attendance:

Ms C Burkin	Clerk to the Governing Body
Mr C Hare	Executive Director of Employers & Corporate Services
Ms C Hart	Executive Director of Student Experience
Dr Jim Mawby	Executive Director for Curriculum & Quality
Mr M Peat	Executive Director of Finance and Estates
Ms N Wakefield	External Auditors, Mazars for item 5 only
Observers	
Mrs J Burtenshaw	Director of Curriculum
Mr J Egan	Director of Quality

1 Declaration of Interests

All members' interests are numbered and referenced on the Declaration of Interest log available from the Clerk.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Cole and Ms A Orhiere.

The Chair welcomed the new Student Governors and observers to the meeting.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 October 2023 - Paper SGB23/1764

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2023 and confidential minutes, were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising Document – Paper SGB23/1765

All the outstanding matters were either actioned, completed or on the agenda.

Mazars, N Wakefield joined the meeting.

STRATEGY

5 Minutes of the Joint F&R and GR&A Committee meeting held on 23 November 2023 and the Closed Session minutes. Paper SGB23/1766 a-g.

Alison Currie introduced the minutes of the Joint F&R and GR&A Committee held on 23 November 2023 and papers that provided details of the review of the financial statements. She highlighted the outcomes of the positive year end external audit and the satisfactory end of year financial outturn.

Members noted the Committee held a closed session with the External Audit partner to receive their views of working with the College, all of which were extremely positive regarding the process and quality of financial statements.

The Committee scrutinised the financial outturn noting it would result in a very positive position being maintained in ESFA assessments.

Mazars confirmed to the Board there were no areas of concern and did not anticipate any material changes to the documents already presented. Members agreed they could not allow the statements to be signed before the audit is completed but did approve delegated authority to Martin Cook and Simon Cook to sign the documents once finalised, as long as there were no material changes to those presented at the meeting but noting there may be minor changes.

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

Delegate authority for **approval** to Chair, CEO and Chair of MKCTS, to sign off the year-end financial statements for submission to relevant authorities, subject to successful completion of final small number of minor outstanding tasks of the audit.

Approve the Management Representation letters to be signed.

Governors **accepted** the minutes and **approved** the recommendations.

N Wakefield left the meeting.

Chris Reynolds presented the minutes of the **Group Risk & Audit Committee** held on 23 November 2023 and highlighted:

- The Committee noted the Information Security report and were content that there were no severe incidents to report.
- The deep dive focused on Student Progression and Destination. The challenges of obtaining destination data from students who had left the College, were noted.
- The Committee accepted the draft annual report for recommendation to the Governing Board for final approval.
- The Internal Auditors, Validera, provided an update on the internal audits for this year.

Governors **accepted** the minutes and **approved** the annual report for publication with the financial statements.

SCRUTINY**6 Minutes of the Quality, Teaching and Learning Committee 27 November 2023 - Paper SGB23/1767**

Chris Reeves presented the minutes and highlighted the following key points:

- Student Experience – members were updated on the recent Student Voice forums, the introduction of retention panels, additional clubs and the MKC Student Union. They were also updated on the current challenges in Additional Learning Support (ALS) where numbers have increased significantly and staff are working at capacity. Members were encouraged to hear the College's systems for identifying additional need and supporting students were working well and the culture has improved.
- Safeguarding – members scrutinised an update on the significant increase in Safeguarding referrals and considered the College's vital role in this area and the accompanying risks.
- Safeguarding Policy – had been updated and was approved for **recommendation** to the Governing Body under item 11.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - members were updated on the College's performance against KPIs for 2022-23 and discussed the proposed KPIs for 2023-24. It was agreed that Jim Mawby and Andy Cole would meet to discuss the revised proposal. This was subsequently circulated and agreed by Committee for monitoring.

- Feedback from Governor Visits – a significant number of visits were reported, for which the Chair and Principal were very grateful and encouraged all Governors to participate.

Members also discussed the **College Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24 (QIP)**

Jim Mawby introduced the College SAR and QIP and members thanked and commended him and James Egan for the robust, well-managed and transparent process resulting in two excellent, easy to read, documents. Governor engagement was noted throughout the process and those who had participated, commented on how valuable it had been in gaining further understanding of the College. Management thanked the Board for their support and challenge throughout the process. Some of the detail was discussed and agreed to be taken offline. It was recommended, and agreed, that the documents would be shared with staff via a briefing session to recognise good practice.

Action: J Mawby/S Cook

Members felt the SAR/QIP showed that the College knows its strengths and areas for improvement and supported its journey to outstanding. It was agreed the QIP is an excellent document for Governors to refer to on visits and conversations with staff. The Chair would discuss with J Mawby how to produce a Governors set of hardcopies of the Accountability Statement and three-year review document, the SAR and the QIP.

Action: J Mawby/M Cook

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

Approve the revised Safeguarding Policy.

Approve the SAR

Approve the QIP

Approve the KPIs 2023/24

Governors **accepted** the minutes and **approved** the recommendations for publication.

SCRUTINY

7 Principal's Report – Paper SGB23/1768

Simon Cook Principal/CEO presented his report to members. This included an updated data report and information regarding the recent visits of the Secretaries of State to the Local Skills projects and the Institute of Technology (IoT) buildings at the College.

Members discussed the data report highlighting the changes in rag rating. Members challenged some of data and it was agreed S Cook would strengthen sections as national benchmarks become available. Members recognised some of the challenges the College is facing regarding apprenticeships noting these are national issues and a focus of the QTL Committee. They also noted further detail around data can be found in Committee papers such as the “deep dive” at GR&A Committee on Student Destinations.

Chris Hare updated members on the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF), reminding Governors of the successful bids and shared project across the Kent Colleges. He reported good progress with the retrofit building at the Maidstone campus, collaborative working with MKCTS and positioning with the decarbonisation projects. S Cook updated members on the recent and successful VIP visits which included the LSIF projects and Music School of Arts at the Dockyard. Members noted the high-profile visits are useful in raising awareness of the College.

S Cook updated members on enrolment noting that Apprenticeship and Adult enrolment will continue all year. Members were informed about the successful flexible adult learning provision which aimed to remove barriers to learning, plus the encouraging strong recruitment from schools.

Members were also informed of the key successes and challenges of the first term. S Cook reported a dedicated staff who have worked hard as a team to ensure students received a positive experience and support through any challenges. This hard work will be recognised in providing staff with opportunities such as the Wellbeing and Celebration days throughout the year. Members discussed the increasing number of mental health challenges and how the College can support students in a sector where this is an increasing issue. Members were assured that safeguarding remains effective, and any concerns are reported to the Safeguarding lead.

M Cook informed members of the theme for the Strategic Away Day on Friday 2 February 2024 where Governors will come together with the Executive Team to work on how best they can support the College's journey to outstanding. An external consultant will help facilitate discussions regarding high performing boards and strengthening relationships.

Governors thanked S Cook and **accepted** the report.

8 Safeguarding Update – Paper SGB23/1769

Marie Woolston, Safeguarding Governor, updated members on key issues using data from the period September 2023 – November 2023. It was noted that the QTL Committee had already had an opportunity to scrutinise the information at their last meeting. Members noted that threads of information regarding safeguarding and woven into several Board reports.

The update focused on:

- Student Mental Health referrals,
- Interventions following trends,
- Staff training plans & safeguarding data to date this academic year.

Members noted the challenges and impact of the current landscape, on the team who are working to capacity but managing the workload. They were assured that safeguarding is effective, and any risks had been minimised by the actions of the team who are engaging with external agencies were possible. Staff training and increased supervision is supporting colleagues in the team and raising awareness with the wider staff.

Governors thanked M Woolston and the team, for the update.

9 Update from Chair of MidKent College Training Services Ltd (MKCTS) - Paper SGB23/1770

Nick Baveystock introduced the update from the Chair of MKCTS Ltd. regarding the performance of MKCTS since the last meeting. He explained the relationship between the College and the Subsidiary is to provide engineering and construction training for the Royal Engineers.

This was minuted as confidential due to the sensitive nature of the information.

Governors thanked MKCTS and **accepted** the report.

10 Minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee Meetings held on 16 November 2023 and confidential minutes - Paper SGB23/1771.

Alison Currie introduced the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee and highlighted the following points including the summary of accounts to end of October 2023 for MKCTS & MKC.

- The Committee received an update regarding the Workforce, noting both challenges and improvements in some of key areas such as mandatory training, recruitment, exit interviews and sickness levels.
- The Employee Disciplinary Policy was reviewed noting updates required where police investigations occur. This was agreed and **recommended** for approval.
- Members received amended Tuition and Exam Fee Policy for approval.
- The Committee undertook a deep dive into Workforce Recruitment and Retention noting the ongoing challenges in labour market and steps being taken to manage this.
- The Committee noted it was the last meeting for Julia Thompson, Group Director of People, and thanked her for her contributions to the College and Committee – NB her resignation has since been rescinded.
- The management accounts for September 2023 were received and a summary was presented to the Governing Body.
- It was also noted that the latest ESFA assessment had just been received and the College continued to be classified as having Outstanding financial health.
- An update was provided on the ongoing Estates Strategy work and the full draft Strategy should be received at the next meeting.
- A minor amendment to the ICT policy re Bring your own device (BYOD) was noted and approved ahead of full review next year.
- Further to recent safeguarding training, the Committee were provided with detail on Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) regarding the filtering and monitoring solutions and processes used by the College.
- Members were update on the Sustainability Strategy, noting small delays on both the appointment of main contractor and planning permission. Good progress was reported with the project. Martin Peat updated Governors on the significant progress being made for the College to become carbon neutral.
- Chris Hare advised that the College had been awarded LSIF funding and will provide further

information to ensure approval of the spend is smooth.

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

Approve the Employee Disciplinary Policy.
Approve the Tuition and Exam Fee Policy.
Approve the ICT policy re BYOD amendment.

Governors **accepted** the minutes and **agreed** with the recommendations of the Committee for publication.

11 Policies for approval – Papers SGB23/1772 - 1775

Members were informed the new policy procedure states that if the policy only had minor changes such as title changes, they were not required to be approved by Committee.

The following were presented following review by the relevant Committee:

- Safeguarding Policy - scrutinised and recommended by the QTL Committee
- ICT BYOD amendment - scrutinised and recommended by the F&R Committee.
- Tuition & Exam Fee Policy 2024/25 - scrutinised and recommended by the F&R Committee.
- Employee Disciplinary - scrutinised and recommended by the F&R Committee.

Members **approved** the policies for publication.

GOVERNANCE

12 Update from Search & Governance Committee - Paper SGB23/1776.

Angela Woodhouse updated the Governing Body on a possible new member, Stuart Hardie, who is one of the College's stakeholders and the Contracts Manager/Team Leader for Baxall Construction. Members noted he approached the College regarding joining the Board. Members referred to his CV for skills and experience.

The Search and Governance Committee had scheduled an interview but due to unforeseen circumstances, it was postponed. As the interview will now take place in January 2024, Angela Woodhouse, as Chair of the Search and Governance Committee, asked the Governing Body for delegated authority to offer S Hardie a place on the Board, if the Panel of Governors agree he is a suitable candidate.

This will allow Stuart Hardie to have joined the Board by March 2024 when a vacancy arises, and not have to wait for further Governing Body approval.

Recommendation for approval by the Governing Body:

Approve Delegate authority to S&G Committee to offer a place.

Members **approved** the recommendations above.

13 Any Other Business

Angela Woodhouse informed Governors that she will be circulating a survey regarding their thoughts on governance and how the College could further support them. They also noted that she is continuing to contact Governors individually. This information will be collated and reported to the S&G Committee in January 2024.

Action: Governors

Martin Cook fed back from his meeting with ICT regarding how Governors can support the College to comply with the mandatory elements of Cyber Essentials Plus but also manage their own time and devices realistically. He explained that over the next 6 months Governors will be supported in the transition to using only College devices for Governor related work. Training will be available to help Governors change to using College devices, iPad and or laptops. Some Governors may also be given a College mobile to ensure they can be contacted in an emergency.

To support Governors to manage their College diary, there will be a parallel calendar entry sent to a Governors alternative email address, indicating there is an appointment in their College calendar. It was clear that this cannot include any information about the meeting, it will just act as an alert. To do this, Governors were asked to indicate the email address they want to be use so this can be actioned.

14 Date of Next Meeting

The Strategic Away Day will be held on Friday 2 February 2024 at the Eastwell Manor, Eastwell Park Ashford Kent, TN25 4HR.

The next Governing Body meeting would be held on **Thursday 21 March 2024** at 17.00hrs, venue to be agreed.

Governors were also reminded of the KFE Governors Conference on 12 January 2024. Details to follow.

15 Next Governor training sessions:

Members were reminded of the following training sessions on teams:

11 January - Challenging Questions
16 May 2024 - EDI

16 Review of the meeting

The Chair invited comments from the observers and Student Governors who all found the meeting informative and valuable. The Students were particularly pleased to see the support the Board and College gives to staff and students.

Confidential Item

17 Minutes of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 30 November 2023 – Paper SGB23/1777

Angela Woodhouse introduced the minutes of the Remuneration Committee.

This item was minuted as confidential as it contained personal information.

Members thanked the Committee for the update.

The meeting closed at 19.43hrs.