



MidKent College

GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on Thursday 21 March 2024 at 17.00hrs in the Corporate room at Medway.

Present: (76% attendance)

Mr M Cook	Chair	Mr D Gagie	Remote	Mr C Reeves	
Mr N Baveystock	MKCTS Chair	Miss B Jossi	Staff Governor	Mrs L Snedden	Staff Governor
Mr A Cole		Mr O Omomehin	Student Governor	Mrs A Woodhouse	
Mr S Cook	Principal CEO	Ms A Orhiere		Mrs M Woolston	
Ms A Currie		Mr A Oseyenum	Student Governor		
Mrs J Dyakova		Mr M Prentis			

In attendance:

Ms C Burkin	Clerk to the Governing Body
Mr C Hare	Executive Director of Employers & Corporate Services (Remote)
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 (Remote)
Observers	
Ms L Ford	Director of MIS
Mr P Hogben	Director of ICT (Remote)

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 Professor M Abdel-Maguid, Mrs M Quadri, Mr C Reynolds, Mrs C Richardson and Mr J Williams

The Chair welcomed Observers to the meeting.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 December 2023 - Paper SGB23/1778

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 December 2023 and confidential minutes were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising Document – Paper SGB23/1779

The following outstanding matters were discussed:

- Joint meeting – the letter from the External Auditors regarding the delay in producing the financial statements has been received and shared with Governors.
- College Self-Assessment Report (SAR)/Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):
 - The Chair discussed 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. It was noted that hardcopies were available for all members to collect after the meeting or from the Clerk.
 - Communicating with Staff – J Mawby updated members and confirmed that the SAR has been posted on the Newsroom/Must Knows on MyDay in January 2024 and on 21st March 2024.

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

STRATEGY

5 Environment, Policy & Strategy Report - Paper SGB23/1780

Simon Cook introduced the paper which informed members of a range of potential changes to education policy and regulation and their potential or actual impact on the College and its future direction, plus some suggestions in respect of the current Strategic Plan.

Members noted the key discussions and policy announcements since the beginning of 2024 and also discussed the option of refreshing the Strategic Plan in 2024/25 by holding the Strategic Away Day later in the meeting cycle to allow for the landscape to settle and the Executive to create scenario plans for the Board to consider.

Members discussed at length the potential risks and impact related to policy reforms such as the proposed increase in delivery hours for English and maths. It was noted that the QTL Committee are focusing on curriculum reform at their next meeting to which all Governors are welcome to attend and that the Executive are modelling against possible changes.

S Cook assured Governors that the sector is lobbying the Government to ensure they are informed of possible policy impact. He also assured members of the strong relationships the College has with local MPs as College stakeholders.

Members felt it would be useful to include, in the next Principal's report, the short-term priorities of the Executive with simple mapping to show Governors other areas where work is taking place.

Action: S Cook

Members thanked S Cook for the informative paper.

6 Update from the Strategic Away Day - Paper SGB23/1781

Members noted that the Chair and other members of the Board and Executive reviewed the notes from the recent Strategic Away Day and agreed the following actions for consideration:

- Formal and comprehensive refresh of the Strategic Plan in 2024/25.
- Refresh and publish the Governor Handbook. A comparator is being sought to help support improvement to the current Governors handbook.
- Expand the time on the agenda of the July Board meeting for considering the future cycle of business.
- Extra support for Student Governors.
- Explore options for improving support from better use of Board Intelligence. It was noted that a demonstration from Bi is being made to Committee Chairs on 2 May 2024.

Members discussed and agreed the proposals and were offered the opportunity to feedback further to the Chair.

Action: Governors

David Gagie joined the meeting remotely.

SCRUTINY

7 Principal's Report – Paper SGB23/1782

Simon Cook Principal/CEO presented his report to members which included the data report, an update on the current Accountability Statement and the changed expectations for 2024/25, a proposal for Governors visiting the College and focussed update on the Education Pillar.

Members challenged the attendance data and although noting it had been discussed at length at the QTL Committee, they remained concerned due to the correlation between retention and attendance. They were assured by the Executive that attendance is robustly monitored by team in line with the Quality Improvement plan (QIP). They also received assurance that work is being done to improve attendance at English and Maths classes but noted the significant increase in student numbers and motivational challenges in this area. They noted that the attendance figures are similar to last year but still below target. The College is working to improve the quality of teaching in English and Maths to ensure students received consistent delivery.

Members also explored the apprenticeship data and were informed that an improvement plan had been agreed with the ESFA and is being adhered to. They were reminded of the challenges with end point assessments due to limited external providers which impacted the apprentices, and that the College has targeted the Apprenticeship provision to meet local need. Member were assured that this is all taken into account in the ESFA plan. Members queried whether we should be seeking to be as good as the best providers rather than just reporting we were on a par with most colleges.

The Principal highlighted three current strengths as: student retention, high numbers of applications and attrition rates. Members noted one concern as staff recruitment, but this is being mitigated with early planning for next academic year.

Annual Accountability Statement – Chris Hare reminded members that the accountability statement and local need duty have been combined into one document for this year. The statement will be brought to the Governing Body on 23 May 2024 for approval and submission by the June 2024 deadline. It was also noted that the three KFE Colleges had agreed a common paragraph to be included in each statement as a collective response to meeting the needs of the region.

It was agreed a working group of Governors and Executive members would be formed to review the draft document. He agreed to reach out to members and arrange a meeting in April 2024. If any member would like to volunteer, please contact the Clerk.

Action: C Hare/Members

The Principal also noted to members that the new College Financial Handbook had been published by the ESFA, since the time of writing, and this will be reviewed with any relevant information reported to Committee or Board.

Action: S Cook/M Peat/Clerk

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

8 Safeguarding Update – Paper SGB23/1783

Marie Woolston, Safeguarding Governor, presented the report which updated Governors regarding Safeguarding & Welfare noting the report had already been scrutinised at the QTL Committee.

She highlighted the increased number of students with external agency support, the number of welfare referrals, the increase in mental health concerns plus an update on low level concerns and filtering and monitoring.

Members asked if the increase in referrals was in one particular co-hort but were informed the increase is across the College. They were assured that if any individual areas were highlighted, they would receive targeted support. Members requested comparisons with other colleges or regions but were told that this would not necessarily be helpful. They were assured that all referrals are closely tracked and monitored and, as far as possible, this continues after the student has left the College by passing on the required information.

The Principal informed members of the increased amount of trust between the team and students which has proved to reduce certain risks. The Student Governors concurred with this.

Governors thanked M Woolston and **accepted** the report.

9 Update from Chair of MidKent College Training Services Ltd (MKCTS) - Paper SGB23/1784

Nick Baveystock introduced the update from the Chair of MKCTS Ltd. which provided an update on current MKCTS activity and plans.

[This item was minuted as confidential.](#)

Governors accepted the report.

10 Quality, Teaching and Learning Committee (QTL) Meeting held on 5 March 2024 - Paper SGB23/1785

Andy Cole introduced the minutes of the QTL Committee and members noted the updates received from the Executive Directors of Student Experience and Quality and Curriculum.

He reported that the Committee had held a robust conversation regarding attendance highlighted in the KPIs and noted the continued improvements for support for students with additional needs and related challenges. Members noted the continued increase and high volume of referrals and emerging issues with regard to Safeguarding. It was also noted that a Careers Link Governor is required, and S&G Committee will be seeking to make an appointment.

Members noted the College has relaunched the Student Union (SU). The Committee considered the Student Union Constitution and **recommended** it for approval by the Governing Body. Members thanked the Student Governors for their contributions to drafting the SU Constitution.

Members of the Committee had reviewed the KPI Performance Management Internal Audit, noting the Substantial overall assurance given. They also scrutinised and challenged the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) monitoring document.

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

- Student Union Constitution – **approved**.

Governors **accepted** the minutes and **agreed** with the recommendation of the Committee.

11 Minutes of the Group Risk & Audit Committee Meeting held on 6 February 2024 - Paper SGB23/1786

In the absence of Chris Reynolds, Julia Dyakova, a GR&A Committee member, introduced the minutes and confidential minutes. Members noted the following was discussed at the meeting:

- The latest information security report showed no major issues.
- The strategic risk paper was discussed, and it was decided that the cost-of-living risk regarding the impact on students would be downgraded.
- The Committee also discussed how staff morale is monitored through pulse surveys. The Chair noted that as Link Governor for this area, he has access to HR data.
- A deep dive into meeting employer needs was conducted. The Committee noted that the accountability statement and review of meeting local employer needs, are taken annually by the Governing Board and an update will be given at the March 2024 Governing Body meeting.
- Health & Safety (H&S) Annual report and an update including the decarbonisation project was provided. It was noted that the Committee Chair sits on the H&S Committee. The Committee **recommend** the H&S Annual Report to the Board for noting the improved position.
- A draft Risk Policy was reviewed by the Committee and **recommended** for Governing Body approval under item 13.
- Internal Auditors, Validera updated the Committee, with all planned audits being progressed and no concerns have raised.

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

- Health & Safety Annual Report – **noted**.
- Risk Policy – **approved**.

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

12 Minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee Meetings held on 28 February 2024 - Paper SGB23/1787.

Alison Currie introduced the minutes and confidential of the Finance & Resources Committee.

This was minuted as confidential.

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

- Security Policy - **approved**.

Governors **accepted** the minutes and **agreed** with the recommendation of the Committee.

13 Policies for approval

- Risk Management Policy 2023.24 - GR&A Committee had scrutinised this policy which had been updated to include the new risk appetite agreed by the Governing Body in October 2023. – **Approved**.

- Security Policy 2024 - F&R Committee had scrutinised this new policy which combining previous policies under a single document. This policy had been reviewed by the Director of Safeguarding, the Facilities managers and the Security Supervisor as well as the Exec Director of Finance and Estates – **Approved**.

14 Any Other Business

There was not any other business.

15 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 23 May 2024 at 17.00hrs the Maidstone Campus TBC.

16 Next Governor training session

The next training session is scheduled for 16 May 2024 – topic EDI.

17 Review of the meeting

Any feedback to be sent to the Clerk following the meeting.

The Chair thanked Chris Reeves on behalf of the Governors, for his huge contributions to the Board and College during his time as a Governor and wished him all the best for the future.

The Chair, Staff and Student Governors left the meeting.

Confidential Item

18 Minutes of the Search & Governance Committee meeting held on 29 February 2024 – Paper SGB23/1790.

Angela Woodhouse introduced the minutes and confidential minutes of the Search and Governance Committee.

She explained the items were **confidential** as the Committee discussed the options for the appointment process for the incoming Chair and the Chairs evaluation going forward.

Recommendations for approval by the Governing Body:

- Process for Chair appointment – **approved**.
- Process for Chair evaluation – **approved**.

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

The meeting closed at 19.45hrs.