

CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2020 via Microsoft Teams
17:00 – 19:05

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance 2020/21	Present at this meeting
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Rebecca Carrington	Independent	2 of 2	Yes (in part)
Alan Cook	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Kaye Dwight	Staff	2 of 2	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Liz Marr	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
David Meadowcroft	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Julie Mills	CEO	2 of 2	Yes
Asad Mir	Student	2 of 2	Yes
Stephen Norrish	Independent	1 of 2	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Charlynn Pullen	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Aniesa Shah	Staff	2 of 2	Yes
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	2 of 2	Yes (in part)
Manish Verma	Independent	2 of 2	Yes
Tony Berwick resigned 5/11/20	Independent	1 of 1	
Attendance % this meeting		100%	17 / 17
Attendance % year to date		97%	34 / 35

In attendance: Sally Alexander (Principal), Annie Allen (CPO), Imelda Galvin (COO), Alex Warner (Principal), Karen Brown (Head of Governance), Lee Parker, Director of Marketing (in part)

- 1.1 Rebecca Carrington and Gwynneth Tan had sent apologies that they would be late. Tony Berwick has resigned from the Board and the Chair expressed thanks for his contribution.
- 1.2 There is a standing declaration from Peter Cox and Gwynneth Tan relating to the IoT. There is a standing declaration from Rebecca Carrington (Director and Principal of Arts1) which means that she will not be in attendance for item 3.3.

2.0 Strategic Priorities 2020/21

Lee Parker was welcomed to the meeting

2.1 Strategic Review (Board Strategic Priority 1)

The 'Strategy Insights, October 2020' report was previously circulated as Paper 2.1. Extensive research papers supporting this summary document are available on request.

The Board has agreed that the College should undertake a robust strategic review during the Autumn term, to determine the Strategic Plan for the next five years, and that this would be a Board focus for the first three meetings this cycle. The Board Awayday has also been brought forward to 19th November.

Imelda Galvin reminded governors of the timeline for the strategic review and Lee Parker, summarised the findings from the research (sector analysis, regional analysis, local analysis, MK stakeholder perceptions, product mix and ELT/SLT interviews). The presentation has since been circulated.

SLT and ELT members are meeting regularly to review the findings and are engaging with other staff, students, and stakeholders. The new Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board for approval on 16th December. A link to a Padlet will be circulated after this meeting for Board feedback prior to the Awayday on 19th November.

The discussion was minuted as confidential.

The Board provided input to the strategic review and agreed to feedback further comments via Padlet.

Lee Parker was thanked for attending and he left the meeting.

2.2 CEO's Report to the Board (previously circulated as Paper 2.2)

Julie Mills referred to her report and drew attention to the following:

Financial Health

The ESFA has confirmed that the Early Intervention status has been lifted in recognition of the improved financial health (now 'Good') however, the College is still focusing on financial sustainability as a key part of the strategic review.

Governors congratulated the College on moving to 'Good' Financial Health a year earlier than planned.

Student Experience

There have been no significant changes to government guidelines in respect of COVID since the last Board meeting. The College continues to maintain safety and ensuring that students feel safe. Students are regularly surveyed and have affirmed that they want to be in college. There was a drop in morale when the country went into the second national lockdown.

Partnerships

The College is actively engaging with elected and non-elected council representatives e.g. the MK Council Economic Recovery Plan - Restart Project (Sally Alexander) and the Estates Regeneration Project (Tracey Matthews).

Institute of Technology capital project (IoT)

There have been no significant developments however the College is now very close to signing the legal agreements. The DfE capital team is still raising questions; these are not new issues but relate to the DfE's sequencing of activities. The College has informed the DfE that it will start to use the IoT branding e.g. in a webinar with EMSI next week, and has had no pushback. The local MPs have been briefed should their assistance be required to influence the DfE.

In response to questions from governors at the last meeting, a paper on the relationship with Activate Learning was attached to the PDMG report (Paper 2.2A) and the IoT governance model will be discussed by the Search & Governance Committee at its meeting on 16th November.

BAME Apprenticeships Award

The College has three apprentices in the final (which is being held this evening)

The Board received the CEO's Report

PDMG Meetings (IoT) 21st October 2020 (sub-committee) and 27th October 2020 (previously circulated as Paper 2.2A)

Minuted as confidential

The Board approved the report from the PDMG

2.3 Prison Services Performance Review (previously circulated as Paper 2.3)

Sally Alexander summarised the key points:

1. Contract

Year 1 of the PEF contract (April 2019 – March 2020) has been reconciled as expected, including anticipated clawback. The contract is now in year 2 and there is a third variation (from 1st November) which is a 'costs plus' funding model i.e. the MoJ pays all reasonable costs plus a small 'profit' aligned to the figures in the tender. This is a low risk model for the College and will be in place until COVID is 'not known to be present in the country'. It will be subject to a 5% performance payment linked to the quality of learning. Monthly accounts must be submitted.

2. Quality and Curriculum

There has been no face to face contact with learners since the first lockdown in March. The curriculum is currently based on packages of learning which are delivered to learners in their cells and marked. In September there were c5,000 learners enrolled on packages of learning and success was very good; some learners declined to complete the learning package and others could not complete without support.

3. Impact of COVID and lockdown 2

In a particularly challenging environment, the College is managing health & safety in a robust way. National lockdown 2 does not correlate to prisons as the MoJ has its own rules and tiered approach. Safety is reviewed on a prison by prison basis and where considered safe to do so, the packages of learning are delivered to wings. Risk Assessments and safe systems of work are reviewed regularly. The College is working with the Unions and putting the interests of staff first.

Governors asked questions:

It is good to see that the IT Refresh project is being implemented as it will make a big difference. What is the general mood of staff?

The IT roll-out is a positive impact of COVID as classrooms could be accessed without disrupting learning. Staff are anxious and frustrated with national lockdown and many don't want to wear facemasks at work. Bubbles are strictly observed and are becoming competitive. Communication with staff is important e.g. there is a Prisons Transmit on 13th November.

Nine PEDPS (Prison Education Dynamic Purchasing System) contracts are reported in Paper 2.3 with a 100% success rate. What is the impact on resources e.g. staff capacity?

The table includes contracts which were won before March 2020. Staff are doing what they can but it is challenging e.g. advice and guidance can't be given when

staff cannot meet with a learner. Staff are developing systems and materials, completing training and making quality improvements. The College is being paid in full for these contracts.

Further bids have been on hold since March but are now starting again and the College is keen to expand the work in Information, Advice and Guidance.

The Board reviewed and noted the Prison Services Performance Review

Gwynneth Tan joined the meeting

2.4 People Strategy (previously circulated as Paper 2.3)

Annie Allen presented an update on the implementation of the People Services projects: (presentation since circulated), summarised as follows:

- There is a new strategic leadership structure (ELT and SLT). As part of the strategic review, there will be more work on the structure supporting the two Principals as their responsibilities have broadened. People, Product and Place will be key components of the FE White Paper. The People Strategy in the strategic wheel (subject to concurrent review) is being delivered through the SOAP (Strategy on a Page).
- Good progress has been made. Projects which have been delivered include HRIS (Buddy); this is a significant project and KPIs will be reported when HRIS is embedded. Digitally enabled systems include payroll, manager self-service, employee self-service, data and reporting, on boarding, Applause Recognition Scheme, Speak Out (complaints, grievances and whistleblowing) and Peakon (employee pulse survey) The Remuneration Project is ongoing.
- EDI - the Friends and Allies Network (FAN) has met and Arv Kaushal has been appointed as EDI Manager from January. The College has Leaders in Diversity, Disability Confident Employer and Mindful Employer accreditations. The Gender Pay Gap report has been brought forward and is being analysed now.
- Employee engagement has been effective (working with Marketing) & Comms Team). There has been a successful launch of Transform (a new online Leadership & Development Programme).
- 'Business as Usual' includes Brexit final checks, staff wellbeing and 'EveryMind' (to support staff mental health).

Governors asked questions:

Are processes or partners / vendors affected by Brexit?

The impact of Brexit was reviewed by the Risk Management Group (RMG) and no issues were identified. Brexit is included in the Strategic Risk Register.

How many staff were furloughed in this second lockdown?

Seven staff in the commercial areas were furloughed. The College is not allowed to furlough any staff involved in funded provision.

There was a planned restructure of the catering team in the summer which was planned pre COVID.

The Board reviewed and noted the People Services Report

2.5 Financial Health (previously circulated as Paper 2.5)

2020/21 (Period 2 – September 2020)

- Imelda Galvin assured governors that there had been a strong start to the year and at Period 2 (September), overall contribution was YTD £57k ahead of budget. The year-end forecast will be reported from the December meeting.
- For 16-18 Study Programmes, 318 students above allocation have been recruited (which equates to £1.6m income). The lagged funding model usually means this over allocation would not be funded this year but there is a meeting with the ESFA tomorrow to discuss a possible growth case (which if successful could mean additional in-year funding). A demographic dip in 16-19 numbers is forecast for 2021/22.
- The cash balance as at 30th September was £6.92m which was better than budget. The College has received additional funding of £440k for students who have been disadvantaged by COVID-19 (1:1 catch-up tuition) and a £900k capital growth grant for repairs and refurbishment of the estate.
- The Board approved a Campus investment budget of £1.4m for 2020/21 (of which £247k has been spent YTD) and the capital grant could defray this. Due to COVID (i.e. the College being closed to students), some capital works were brought forward and included in the 2019/20 accounts.
- In common with the sector, Apprenticeships has been most impacted by COVID (some apprentices were made redundant) and the second national lockdown may have further impact. The College believes that apprenticeships will grow in the medium to longer term. Adult / ESOL recruitment has been slow but is ongoing throughout the year. The IoT is behind target in terms of student numbers but income is on target for income.
- A planned restructure of commercial areas took place in 2019/20. The College prudently did not budget for commercial income in 2020/21 which is proving to be the correct approach.

2019/20

- The 2019/20 Accounts will be presented for signing at the December Board meeting.
- Full year contribution is forecast to be £1.4m surplus (subject to year-end audit adjustments) which is better than the figure last reported to the Board and is mainly due to unravelling provisions and management of uncertainties (e.g. OLASS 4 accrual releases, higher exceptional payments and lower than predicted clawback).
- This result will achieve an ESFA points score of 180 points which moves the College into 'Good' financial health a year earlier than planned. Consequently, the College has had formal notification that the Early Intervention notice has been lifted (which is against the sector trend).

The Board:

- ***Noted the financial position as at 30th September 2020.***
- ***Noted the forecast year end position at 31st July 2020.***
- ***Noted that the College has received formal notice on 13 October 2020 that it had moved out of 'early intervention' and is now classified as having Good financial health.***

Finance Group

Mat Gotkowski, Chair of the Finance Group, congratulated the Executive on achieving 'Good' Financial Health. As financial sustainability continues to be a priority, the recommendation is that the Finance Group (a task and finish group) continues to meet termly until such time that the Board decides that this additional layer of scrutiny is no longer required. The Board agreed.

The Board approved the recommendation for the Finance Group to meet in 20/21

Governance and Compliance

3.1 CQG 9th November (previously circulated as Paper 3.1)

Liz Marr, Chair of the CQG reported that the CQG had been assured that the College was well prepared should there be an interim visit by Ofsted this term. The purpose of these (ungraded) interim visits is to *'help learners, parents, employers, and the government understand how providers are meeting the needs of students and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and disabilities.'* Inspectors will not wish to speak to governors.

The Board approved the verbal report from the CQG

3.2 Agenda items for the next meeting (16th December 2020)

- Strategic Review / Strategic Plan
- Financial Health
- Financial Statements
- Campus SAR and QIP / Student Experience

Rebecca Carrington left the meeting

3.3 Arts 1 Contract (previously circulated as Paper 3.3)

Discussion minuted as confidential

The Board approved the contract for 2020/21

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

4.1 Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 7th October 2020 (previously circulated as Papers 4.1A and Confidential 4.1B)

Matters arising:

Date raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
7/10/20	Invite governors to comment and ask questions on the strategic themes (via Padlet), prior to the Board Awayday on 19 th November.	IG	Complete. The governor activity will take place after this meeting and prior to the Awayday on 19 th November
	Circulate a report on the projects and risks relating to the IoT developments at Oxford and Reading.	IG	Complete and attached to Paper 2.2A

	Update student recruitment numbers with EDI data and re-circulate	MG	Carry forward
15/7/20	Discuss the Gender Pay Report in the autumn term.	AA	Compete – referenced in Paper 2.3

Next Meeting 16th December 2020 at 5pm