# MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE

**CORPORATION BOARD MEETING**
**Minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2021 via Microsoft Teams**
**17:00 – 18:50**

| Board Members | Category of Governor | Attendance 2020/21 | Present at this meeting |
|---|---|---|---|
| Richard Bartlett-Rawlings | Independent | 5 of 6 | No |
| Rebecca Carrington | Independent | 5 of 6 | No |
| Alan Cook | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Peter Cox | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Kaye Dwight | Staff | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Mat Gotkowski | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Liz Marr | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| David Meadowcroft | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Julie Mills | CEO | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Asad Mir | Student | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Stephen Norrish | Independent | 5 of 6 | Yes |
| Ruby Parmar | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Georgia Pongourou | Student | 3 of 4 | No |
| Charlynne Pullen | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Neil Sainsbury | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Aniesa Shah | Staff | 5 of 6 | No |
| Gwynneth Tan | Independent | 6 of 6 | Yes |
| Manish Verma | Independent | 5 of 6 | No |
| | | | |
| Tony Berwick resigned 5/11/20 | Independent | 1 of 1 | |
| Attendance % this meeting | | 72% | 13 / 18 |
| Attendance % year to date | | 94% | 101 / 108 |

Regular attendees: Sally Alexander (Principal), Annie Allen (CPO), Imelda Galvin (COO), Alex Warner (Principal), Karen Brown (Head of Governance)

Other attendees in part: Arv Kaushal (EDI Manager), Marc Gillham (Director of Funding, MIS & IT), Georgina Thompson (Project Manager)

Presentations from this meeting have been saved to Sharepoint.

1.1 Apologies had been received from Richard Bartlett-Rawlings, Rebecca Carrington, Georgia Pongourou and Manish Verma. Arv Kaushal was welcomed to the meeting.

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).

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## 2.0   Board Development and Assurance

### 2.1  Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) *(Paper 2.1 and Presentation)*

Arv Kaushal, who joined the College in January, gave a presentation on
- Reflections on his first 100 days
- An update on the 2020/21 EDI objectives and projects
- Current activity and EDI priorities for 2021/22

The College has an established reputation for promoting and modelling best practice in EDI and 'Fairer Futures' is at the heart of the new Strategic Plan.

First 100 Days

Since January 2021, Arv has analysed the College's current position in relation to EDI, reviewed progress made in 2020/21 and identified priorities for 2021/2022.

Progress of 2020/21 projects and other EDI activity

- The Friends & Allies Network (FAN) was launched virtually. Membership includes staff, students, faith groups, charities, employers, and local government. Discussion topics have included anti-racism and anti-poverty.
- The HR Information System (HRIS) was implemented. In the future, HRIS will support the development and monitoring of Employee KPIs.
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are used however there needs to be greater consistency and application.
- Updating the website, Moodle (students) and Sharepoint (staff) to reflect EDI good practice (beyond EDI compliance) is ongoing.
- The Leaders in Diversity and the Cultural Cohesion Quality Mark is under review
- The Peakon Survey (Employee Pulse Survey) was launched, and feedback is informing cultural and organisational development.
- An external consultant from Diverse Matters carried out a review of EDI provision; the review informed the priorities for the EDI Manager.
- The 2018/19 annual Gender Pay Report (which is published on the website) highlighted that:
  - the percentage of females in the organisation had increased from 68% to 71%
  - the mean gender pay gap was very small however men outnumbered women in senior roles.

With HRIS providing better reporting capability, gender pay will be reviewed more frequently in future so that timely action can be taken.

Current Activity and 2021/22 priorities

EDI work will be centred on three areas:

1. **Students – examples are:**
   - Ongoing guidance and support for the student experience and curriculum delivery (e.g. an EIA informed the curriculum planning project).
   - In collaboration with the curriculum teams, monitor and report on learner data including attainment) and respond with actions.
   - Support the student voice e.g. through the NUS / BAME officer.

2. **Colleagues (Employees) – examples are:**
   o Develop the Employee Life Cycle end to end.
   o When recruiting ensure that job posting activities, job descriptions, shortlisting/interview practices etc. are inclusive and supportive of applicants with different backgrounds and experiences.
   o Ensure that working practices prioritise EDI and allyship.
   o Use the Race at Work Charter as a template to drive change for any marginalised and under-represented groups (i.e. it does not just apply to race). The Charter includes five 'calls for action':
      a) Appoint an Executive Sponsor (Liz Marr has agreed to be the Link Governor for EDI)
      b) Capture ethnicity data and publish progress
      c) Commit at Board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying
      d) Ensure supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility for all leaders and managers
      e) Take action to support ethnic minority career progression (which will be a consequence of points a-d)
   o Improve the collection, reporting and benchmarking of ethnicity data. Use data to identify gaps, develop aspirational employee KPIs and track progress. Address gender pay gaps if they exist.
   o Support employee (and student) networks so that under-represented groups have a 'voice' to increase their feeling of belonging and inclusion.
   o Include EDI awareness and allyship in all staff training.
   o Develop the work of the ESRG (Equality Strategic Review Group) ensuring it is a driver for change.
   o Review the purpose and impact of accreditations (e.g. Leaders in Diversity, Mindful Employer, Disability Confident etc).

3. **Communities – examples include:**
   o Build on and develop existing relationships e.g. embed the FAN.
   o Further develop local and national networks e.g. the College is running three live sessions under the banner of FE Voices.

Governors responded to the report and presentation:
   o Ruby Parmar is an ambassador for 'Change the Race Ratio' (which may be relevant for the College).
   o In some organisations, senior managers have a specific performance objective relating to EDI.
   o Employee networks work best when they allow members to learn from each other and to influence change (i.e. they are not just discussion groups).
   o The ETF has workforce data on EDI which may be useful.
   o Gender targets (which are in place for the IoT), could be extended to other provision (e.g. women in engineering) in terms of staff recruitment.
   o Arv's key ambition for the next twelve months is that every strategic leader is championing EDI.

*The Board:*
- ***Received the presentation from the EDI Manager***
- ***Noted progress against previously agreed EDI objectives and approved the objectives for 2021/22***
- ***Noted the Gender Pay Report 2018/19 (which has been approved by the CEO and Chair of Governors)***
- ***Received assurance (in part) that the College is meeting its responsibilities for EDI (there will be a follow up session at a future meeting)***
- ***Endorsed the priorities for 2021/22***

*Arv was thanked for attending and he left the meeting.*

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### 3.0 Strategic Priorities

**3.1 CEO's Report to the Board** *(Paper 3.1)*

Julie Mills referred to her report and highlighted:

**Strategic Plan for 2021-26** *(Annex 1 and Presentation)*

At the last meeting, the Board approved the content of the Strategic Plan for the MK College Group (the Plan) including the Group's Vision, Purpose and Strategic Aims (with success measures and targets) and the strapline 'Building Fairer Futures'. The earlier presentation from the EDI Manager demonstrated how 'Fairer Futures' is gaining traction.

Since the last meeting, feedback from governors has been reviewed and contributory objectives have been added to this final pre-publication version of the Plan; with the addition of a foreword from the Chair, the Plan will be launched internally and externally in July.

The Plan, is relevant across the whole MK College Group, and colleagues at all levels and locations will be able to relate to the vision, statements, objectives etc. Each area of the Group will have its respective targets and objectives.

The Group Vision, Purpose and Strategic Statement collectively make it clear that the College Group is an educational institution which is championing talent and building fairer futures. When compared to the previous strategy, this Plan focuses both internally (e.g. culture change) but also externally e.g. the Group's role in influencing and supporting its communities locally and nationally.

At the last meeting, governors agreed Board priorities which are aligned to the Strategic Plan.

Julie explained the detail of the objectives and measures. The Board has extensively discussed the developing Plan at previous meetings, so no further questions were asked

***The Board received the CEO's Report and approved the Strategic Plan for 2021-2026***

**3.2 Data Warehouse Project** *(Paper 3.2 and Presentation)*

Marc Gillham and Georgina Thompson were welcomed to the meeting and they gave a presentation on the Data Warehouse project highlighting the following:

- The context for the project is the wider Data and Digital Strategy. Over the last four years Marc has been developing IT and Data strategies through the College's Digital Transformation Steering Group.

- The College had recognised that data was not informing decision making. Reporting was currently disparate, time consuming to compile and not readily accessible. Future reporting, using Power BI (the preferred analytical tool) will be available from a single source providing accurate data, analytics and insights in real time, to support decision making and to evidence impact.

- The scope of the project is huge e.g. 69 stories (scenarios), 101 entities (place, event etc), 72 data storage systems and 8 functional areas e.g. prisons, quality, student data etc.

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- It is a two year project which is 25% complete. The College has taken advice from Microsoft and is working in partnership with Simpson Associates.

- Marc shared an example of an interactive report which the Data Warehouse / Power BI will be able to produce. As part of the rollout, training will be offered at all levels and staff are already engaging in the development. The Board will be receiving reports, linking to the strategic priorities, from the start of the next academic year.

Governors shared their experiences of using Power BI:
- It is important to have controls to ensure the ongoing reliability of the data.
- Power BI is a powerful tool, but the challenge is moving from insight to action.

This is a significant investment (time and resources) and a key project for the Group in supporting delivery of the Strategic Plan. More strategic projects will be brought to the Board next cycle.

***The Board received the presentation on the Data Warehouse project.***

*Marc and Georgina were thanked for attending and they left the meeting.*

### 3.3 Student Experience

#### a) Group Update *(Paper 3.3A)*

Sally Alexander and Alex Warner referred to Paper 3.3 and highlighted:

Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)

Sally assured governors that the College has robust plans and processes in place for assessing grades where examinations have been cancelled due to the pandemic. Supported by the Quality Team, Heads of School (HOS), are working with their teams to ensure the process is in line with the guidance issued by the respective examination boards and that TAGs are based on sound evidence.

Group Curriculum Director Roles

Following the restructure of the ELT in 2020, and the move to a Group Principal model, two new posts have been identified. The 'Group Director: Quality and the Student Experience' will report to Sally and the 'Group Director: Curriculum and Innovation' will report to Alex. These post-holders will drive quality and innovation respectively across the Group (campus, IoT and prisons). The Quality and Student Experience role is being advertised currently and the Curriculum and Pedagogy role is being scoped.

OfS Compliance

Alex assured the Board that the College was compliant with OfS requirements. The College had carried out a self-assessment against OfS condition 1 (consumer protection law) and OfS expectations relating to communication with students during the pandemic. The College has also submitted the APP (Access & Participation) annual monitoring form. The supporting documents will be presented for scrutiny at the next CQG meeting on 17th May.

Prison Services Self-Assessment Reports (SARs)

As the cycle for prisons' self-assessment of quality is 1st April to 31st March, the SARs are complete and have been moderated. It was a rigorous process and Stephen Norrish (Link Governor) participated alongside HMPPS and campus colleagues. The next step is to create Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs).

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The self-assessed grades (against the Ofsted framework) demonstrate progress (2020 grades are in brackets):

- Self-assessed as Good: 13 (9)
- Self-assessed as Requiring Improvement 6 (10)

During the pandemic, there has been very little direct access to learners and as previously discussed, the College created learning packs for learners to complete in their cells.

Leadership & management (of prison education) was self-assessed as outstanding at HMP Swaleside.

Governors asked questions:

***Will there be external moderation of the TAGs?***

We are following the guidance from the awarding organisations (which does not include external moderation) and we have a rigorous process and evidence base so we can justify the grades if challenged. Where the same awarding organisation is used by more than one department, we are cross-referencing to ensure consistency.

***What is different at HMP Swaleside to make you self-assess leadership and management as Grade 1 (outstanding)?***

The prison leadership and skills manager is very supportive and allowed significant access to learners (COVID restrictions permitting) including learners who had not previously engaged. In other prisons, leadership and management was strong but without access to learners, we could not justify assessing leadership and management higher than good.

***Pending recruitment to the new Curriculum Director roles, does this leave the College exposed to a gap in skills?***

No because we have appointed temporary roles (e.g. Lead HoS) and engaged external consultants on a short term basis. We want to strengthen our resource and transfer from temporary to permanent roles to increase the pace of transformation and consistency of quality across the Group, to deliver the Strategic Plan.

Ofsted is not resuming regular inspections until September 2021.

***What will be the key legacy issues for students to be addressed post COVID and what will be actions?***

During the recent Options and Opportunities week, there were individual meetings with all 16-18 students to identify gaps and to review the impact on their progression (either horizontally or upwards) next year.

Students are getting used to being back in the classroom after a significant period of online learning and curriculum teams are working closely with students to support them individually.

Young people are poorly socialised, and we are seeing increased reliance on the student support team and progress mentors. An AoC survey reported that 75% of 16-18 year old students had been severely impacted by the lockdown and there was a call for the drop in funding rates at age 18 (by 25%) to be paused so that colleges can keep students for an additional year.

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Some students joining in September have not yet been able to visit the College. They will be invited to a 'Discovery Day' in July and from September will have a new and more in-depth induction in the first 4-6 weeks, to confirm right student / right course.

***Are you expecting students joining the College will have a lower level of English and / or Maths?***

It is an unknown. Last year GCSE grades (teacher assessed) were inflated which created a challenge and the same may occur in 2021/22. The curriculum planning has made assumptions that we may have to offer more Level 2 courses if students joining the College are not ready for Level 3 due to learning being missed through COVID. Managing expectations will be crucial as although students may meet the entry grades criteria, if their grades have been artificially inflated, they would struggle which could impact their mental health.

**The Board received the update on the Student Experience**

b) **Curriculum and Quality Group 29ᵗʰ March 2021** *(Paper 3.3B)*

Liz Marr referred governors to Paper 3.3B.

**The Board approved the CQG report of the meeting on 29ᵗʰ March 2021.**

**3.4    Financial Sustainability** *(Paper 3.4)*

**Financial Health 2020/21 - Period 8 Management Accounts:**

- Overall College contribution YTD was £32k behind budget (£9k behind budget for Campus and £23k behind budget for Prisons).

- The College is predicted to come in £58k ahead of budget full year. The College has received additional in-year growth and cap-ex funding.

- The cash balance was £3.7m at the 31ˢᵗ March which was behind budget (£4.9m), partly due to timing delays in receiving IoT payments from the DfE compared to the original monthly cashflow predictions. The full year cash balance is forecast to be £5.5m (budget £4.6m).

- The Board approved a Capex budget of £1.3m of which £724k has been spent year to date. This does not include the additional in-year cap-ex funding.

- The budget will be presented for approval at the July Board meeting having been reviewed by the Finance Group on 5ᵗʰ July.

Governors asked questions:

***What is the reason for delaying estate repairs?***

There has been lots of capital work on campus during lockdown (which has taken priority over repairs). Students are now back on site.

***Is there news on the Capital Transformation Fund (CTF) bid?***

No not yet. Colleges were expecting to hear by 14ᵗʰ May if they have been successful at Stage 1.

*Non-teaching pay costs YTD are significantly over budget. Is this a true position?*

There is a data issue which is incorrectly reporting the breakdown of pay costs. Due to the complexity of reporting, the adjustment is only made at the year-end. Governors can be assured that the College is not under investing in teaching staff at the expense of non-teaching staff. Budgets are regularly scrutinised at the Finance Boards and the CEO's accountability meetings. The staff costs as a percentage of income KPI relates to overall pay costs.

*The Board noted:*
- *The financial position as of 31st March 2021 including financial KPIs*
- *The forecast year end position as of 31st July 2021*
- *The predicted cashflow forecast as of 31st July 2021*
- *The Campus Investment budget (Capex).*

## Governance and Compliance

### 4.1 Meeting Effectiveness

The Board confirmed there had been sufficient time for debate and apart from any specific items minuted elsewhere, there were no further items requiring additional time at a future meeting / follow-up discussion.

### 4.2 Agenda items for the next meeting (9th June 2021)

- Institute of Technology – curriculum
- Student Experience – progress vs targets
- Financial Health 2020/21 (budget)

## CONSENT AGENDA

*The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:*

**5.1** *Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24th March 2021 (Papers 5.1A, Confidential 5.1B and Confidential 5.1C)*

*Matters arising:*

| Date raised | Actions arising from the last and previous meetings | Action Owner | Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24/03/21 | Strategic Plan - in response to feedback from governors, circulate the language revisions | IG | Complete - agenda item 3.1 |
| | Curriculum Planning – Briefing Note | IG | Complete – the confidential minutes of the 24th March Board meeting (and the supporting Board paper) provided governors with a full briefing. |

**Next Meeting 9th June 2021**

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