MILTON KEYNES COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
**Minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2021, G6 Chaffron Way,
17:00 – 19:00**

Board Members	Category of Governor	Attendance 2021/22	Present at this meeting
Richard Bartlett-Rawlings	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Rebecca Carrington	Independent	0 of 1	No
Alan Cook	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Peter Cox	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Kaye Dwight	Staff	1 of 1	Yes
Mat Gotkowski	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Liz Marr	Independent	1 of 1	Yes (Via Teams)
David Meadowcroft	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Julie Mills	CEO	1 of 1	Yes
Stephen Norrish	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Ruby Parmar	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Charlynne Pullen	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Ian Revell	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Neil Sainsbury	Independent	0 of 1	No
Aniesa Shah	Staff	1 of 1	Yes
Gwynneth Tan	Independent	1 of 1	Yes
Manish Verma	Independent	0 of 1	No
Attendance % this meeting		82%	14 / 17
Attendance % year to date		82%	14/17

Regular attendees: Sally Alexander (Principal: Quality & Student Experience), Annie Allen (CPO), Alex Warner (Principal: Curriculum Innovation & Pedagogy), Karen Brown (Head of Governance)

Other attendees: Martin Owen (Interim Chief Financial Officer), Lindsey Styles* (in part), Amy Langford* (in part), Anna Clarke* (in part), Georgina Thompson* (in part)
* via Teams

1.1 Welcome and Apologies
- The Chair welcomed Martin Owen to his first meeting.
- Apologies had been received from Rebecca Carrington, Neil Sainsbury, Manish Verma, and Imelda Galvin.
- Liz Marr joined the meeting via MS Teams.
- Gwynneth Tan had advised that she would be joining later due to work commitments.

1.2   Declaration of Interests

There is a standing declaration from Rebecca Carrington who is Director and Principal of Arts1. Rebecca Carrington had sent apologies for this meeting.

2.0   Board Development and Assurance

Lindsey Styles, Group Director: Inclusion and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Amy Langford, Executive Head: Inclusion and Personal Development (SENDCo and Deputy DSL), were welcomed to the meeting.

2.1   Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Report *(Paper 2.1)*
2.2   SEND Annual Report 2020/21 *(Paper 2.2)*

Lindsey and Amy:
- referred governors to the annual reports (Papers 2.1 and 2.2) which provide assurance to the Board that the College is meeting its statutory duties for Safeguarding and SEND
- gave an update on the first few weeks of this new academic year
- responded to questions.

Governors were also reminded that they are required to read the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2021[1]

Safeguarding

- In 2020/21, the number of students being monitored for safeguarding issues decreased but the overall number of safeguarding incidents increased and were more complex. Last year, 39% of incidents had mental health as the primary reason for referral (similar to previous years).

- Most safeguarding incidents are followed up by the Wellbeing and Resilience Team. The wider team of Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) has decreased due to staff changes (they are primarily teaching assistants who support teaching in the classroom, but who also have DSO training).

- The College's role is to 'recognise, respond, refer' (i.e. not to solve by providing mental health services). However, during lockdown, the College did organise some mental health support for students e.g. YiS and Arthur Ellis.

- The College continues to meet its obligations under the Government's Prevent Strategy and is represented on the Milton Keynes Prevent Board and at Channel Panel Meetings

- Safeguarding and SEND overlaps; students with SEND are more likely to have safeguarding issues. Meeting the mental health needs of students and building their resilience and wellbeing is a priority.

SEND

- The SENDCo assesses resource requirements to support students with additional needs. A SEND Strategy group meets termly to ensure that the College is meeting the needs of students. The College also works closely with several Local Authorities and Virtual Schools

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[1] A link was circulated after the meeting

- Achievement for High Needs Funded students in 2020/21 was:
  - Vocational component: 94%
  - All aspects of the Study Programme: 82% (the breakdown will be circulated after the meeting)

- The number of students identified as High Needs Funded (HNF) within mainstream provision has doubled this year i.e. 72 students to date compared to 36 in 2020/21 (COVID has significantly impacted students with autistic needs) which is a challenge for staffing. Additional Occasional Workers (OW) have been recruited and are being offered fixed term contracts as a temporary solution.

Governors asked questions:

Are there sufficient trained members of staff to provide safeguarding cover? How many DSO were in post previously?

There have been up to 30 DSOs in post previously (currently 23 and we are recruiting). In the meantime, the Wellbeing and Resilience Team is stretched.

What percentage of staff have not completed the safeguarding training?

It is mandatory so all staff complete this.

You are dealing with some challenging cases – has the complexity increased?

Yes, both the complexity and number of students requiring support has increased. The College is working with other agencies across Milton Keynes. The College must keep reminding agencies that its role is to 'recognise, respond, refer' and not to provide services. Other agencies are stretched too.

With the increased recognition of peer on peer abuse, do you monitor and report this as a category?

Yes, we must keep clear records. Peer on peer abuse is a challenging area as both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator could be students on campus, and both require support.

You highlight 'pressure from external agencies to enrol students considered unsuitable' as a risk – please explain

This relates to EHCPs where the College is named as the provider. Due to an increase in needs because of the pandemic, we have had to accept students who in previous years would have been assessed by the College and by an external agency as unsuitable for a mainstream environment. Unsuitability could relate to high complex mental health needs, safeguarding concerns (e.g. risk of self-harm) etc. We collaborate with the Local Authority and other channels to achieve the best outcomes for these students.

In addition, we are being asked to accept students with known behavioural issues, whom we would have previously refused. Whilst most students are excited to be back onsite (and the College is noisy and vibrant), since the start of term the College has been unusually targeted by small gangs of youths carrying knives. This is a new challenge to manage this year and we have had to permanently exclude some students. We are working with the Local Authority, Thames Valley Police, local schools, and other colleges but some of these young people cannot be in education, so it pushes the issue back into the community. We have introduced

additional security measures to keep staff and students safe; we expect matters to calm down and it is a minority, but it is a risk and is taking up resource.

The number of referrals to the DSL reduced last year and the number of DSOs reduced. Was this connected?

No and staff were always available online.

As we are back onsite, the numbers of students we are working with is already higher than last year (183 to date compared to 166 at the same time last year) but from experience, we expect this to level off.

As the 'declarations of need' have reduced, are any students slipping through the cracks?

No. We were not on site last year so would expect the number to increase this year as students see a member of staff and want to disclose.

There are c.150 students with an EHCP (72 of which are classed as high needs) in mainstream provision - what is in place to help staff to support those students to ensure they are fully integrated?

Support plans are available on ProMonitor and are circulated to curriculum teams outlining the support needs for individual students. All students with an EHCP are initially RAG-rated as red to highlight to Course Team Leaders that they have a support plan. It is the intention to offer training to curriculum colleagues on EHCPs and the SEND Code of Practice.

There has been a drop in Inclusive Learning students this year as specialist schools are retaining students as long as they can.

How does the College compare against the sector regarding fights / knife incidents and what can we learn from the sector?

It is a national picture and other colleges are reporting a similar start to term and staff fatigue. The sector anticipated this would be the case coming out of lockdown.

A governor confirmed that what the College is experiencing aligns to the 'Vital Signs' work undertaken by the MK Community Foundation and nationally. Suicide rates are highest in the transgender community.

What is your overall assessment of the current position and what are your main concerns?

The impact of a suicide attempt on staff and other students.
A situation being missed.
Recruitment challenges (we have seven vacancies for teaching assistants who are part of the broader DSO team).

What support is there for your team?

We review workloads together every day. Morale is always lower in September and October as workloads are higher and with current vacancies, colleagues feel over stretched. Sally Alexander and Alex Warner will be reviewing the resource model after half-term. We are feeling the impact of the pandemic.

What is the short term action?

We are advertising (there are interviews next week) and in the meantime, we are working with supply agencies. The position is reviewed daily, and staff and students are being supported. The start of a new academic year is always challenging (but more so this year due to the pandemic) and consequently resilience is lower. Colleagues are being supported collaboratively and resources are being shared e.g. Inclusive Learning numbers have dropped and staff are being redeployed.

The higher number of referrals is also generating an increased administration workload which is being addressed through recruitment.

The Board noted that the briefing had raised a few issues and offered a direct line of communication to the Board should it be needed.

The Board requested the CEO to provide assurance at the next meeting on immediate actions and initiatives to address longer term issues.

Action 1: Julie Mills

The Board:
- ***Approved the Safeguarding Report for 2020/21 and received assurance that the College is meeting its statutory responsibilities.***
- ***Approved the SEND Report for 2020/21 and received assurance that the College is meeting its statutory responsibilities.***
- ***Delegated authority to the CEO and Link Governor for Safeguarding & Prevent to approve revisions to the Safeguarding and Prevent Strategy, Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy***
- ***Requested assurance at the next meeting on actions taken***

Lindsey and Amy were thanked for attending and they left the meeting

3.0	Strategic Priorities

3.1   CEO's Report *(Paper 3.1)*

Julie Mills referred to her report which includes an overview of Board Strategic Priorities.

Prison Services
- Learners do not have access to virtual learning; the College creates paper based learning packs.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
- Liz Marr, who is the new EDI Link Governor, has been meeting with Arv Kaushal. The annual EDI Report will come to the Board for approval.

Strategic Partnerships
- Minuted as confidential

The Board:
- ***Received the CEO's Report***
- ***Deferred the Capital Transformation Bid recommendation to item 3.2***

3.2 Strategic Development Fund (SDF) *(Paper 3.2)*

Anna Clarke, Group Director: Employer Engagement and Partnerships and Georgina Thompson, Project Manager were welcomed to the meeting.

Annex 1 of Paper 3.2 summaries the recent bids and expressions of interest submitted by the College and their status. The table below extracts the bids which have been successful or where the outcome is awaited.

This item is focused on item 3 (SDF) but also refers to item 7 (CTF) (recommendation deferred from agenda item 3.1).

Fund / Title	Area	Amount	Delivery Date	Status
1. In Work Skills Pilot (IoT)	IoT	£891k	March 2022	Live
2. MK Council Economic Recovery Fund	Campus	£648k	June 2022	Live
3. Skills Accelerator: Strategic Development Fund (SDF)	**Business Development/ Campus**	**£3.671m[2]**	**March 2022**	**Starting implementation**
4. Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Deal	IoT	£918k	2023 (Start 2022)	Awarded
5. HE Short Course trial – challenge competition	IoT	£100k	March 2022	Awaiting outcome
6. Post-16 Capacity Fund	Campus	£3.227m	April 2022	Awaiting outcome
7. FE Capital Transformation Fund (CTF)	**Campus**	**£8.266m**	**December 2024**	**Invited to bid at stage 2 (October 2021)**

Skills Accelerator: Strategic Development Fund (SDF) Programme

The College has secured funding of £3.671m[2] (College contribution £484k) to develop and host a self-contained College Business Centre at the Chaffron Way Campus. The programme includes:
- Working with employers to identify local skills gaps (projects 1 and 2)
- Working with delivery partners (including the College) to design and deliver bespoke solutions to meet the skills gaps (projects 1 and 2)
- Capital works to refurbish existing rooms at Chaffron Way (G suite and the floor above) (project 3) and purchase of kit and delivery of AI skills.

The £3.671m funding is split between capital (c.£1.987m) and revenue (c.£1.684m). The programme will be delivered through three projects, each co-led by a partner organisation, reporting to the College Project Office / College Project Director (Susie Palmer-Trew who has been recruited on a fixed term contract):

    Project 1 Co-Lead: Biztech
    Project 2 Co-Lead: MK Chamber of Commerce
    Project 3 Co-Leads: MKAI and MK College (capital works)

Susie will report to the Board via the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) (Alex Warner is the ELT sponsor) and to a new Capital Projects Monitoring Group (which Peter Cox has agreed to chair). Anna Clarke is the Project Owner.

The governance model largely mirrors the IoT governance model which has worked well.

There will be sub-contracting agreements in place with partners to mirror the contract between the College and DfE (to mitigate risk).

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[2] Figure updated since Paper 3.2 was circulated

A Partnership Board Steering Group (no delegated powers) will provide a strategic steer. The College is accountable to the DfE for meeting the conditions of the funding.

The delivery date is March 2022.

Governors asked questions:

Can you assure the Board that the College has the capacity to deliver this programme as well as the CTF project (if the stage 2 bid is successful)?

Yes, we have appointed an experienced project director, so we have increased capacity. We know the governance model works from our experience with the IoT. The internal auditor has recently completed an audit of 'programme and project management' and has given positive assurance about our ability to manage projects (there were two recommendations which will be addressed by 31st December).

50% of the project outcomes will be delivered by partners.

How will you be working with employers, which employers and what are the expectations of both parties?

There will be contracts with delivery partners, so they will be accountable for specified outcomes. Page 22 of the paper shows how the funding will be allocated.

Can the SDF programme and CTF projects run alongside each other at Chaffron Way?

Yes, the SDF construction will start in December 2021 and will be completed by March 2022 (delivery must commence by March 2022). If the CTF bid is successful, that project will not commence before March 2022 at the earliest. The CTF project is a four year project.

Did you consider using collaborative spaces which already exist in Milton Keynes?

Yes, however the aim is for it to be unique:
- We want to bring students into the environment in a controlled way which is why an onsite centre is preferred.
- We are aiming to influence the curriculum through the employer engagement meetings and the learning and training which will happen onsite. It is the DfE's and our ambition that the curriculum is employer led.
- The College is already engaging with schools to involve future students.
- There will be lots of artificial intelligence kit so that employers can learn how to use AI technology to upskill their workforce. It will also be a tool to engage new employers who have not previously engaged.

Can you assure the Board that the College Business Centre will not detract from the student experience e.g. overcrowding in the refectory?

Business customers will not be able to access the refectories.

The student experience will be enhanced because the working experience will be brought on site. The initiative is aligned to the College's strategic aim 'Deliver the skills needed by employers to aid productivity'.

It is a government pilot and an opportunity to do something different and be funded. There is no match funding requirement.

What can we learn from a similar initiative in Ireland?

The Irish model is not quite the same as they have regional colleges. However, the DfE is making this investment because it has been very successful elsewhere.

Through the DfE we are starting to connect with the other SDF pilots so will collaborate.

Capital Transformation Fund Bid (CTF)

The CTF bid is for c.£8.2m to ensure the College's estate is fit for purpose and will support growth. Having passed Stage 1, the College will be submitting a Stage 2 bid in October which, if successful, will require match funding of up to 50% over four years.

It will be a major capital project and the project management and governance framework will be similar to the SDF capital works programme.

The application process requires confirmation that '*at a corporate level, the Board has the capacity to manage the c.£8m Capital Transformation Fund project alongside any other priorities and projects*[3]

The recommendation relates to the approval of the governance structure should the bid be successful.

The Board concluded that it supported both the SDF programme and CTF bid on the basis that they will be properly resourced and governed in accordance with the Financial Regulations e.g. Capital Projects (Section 13), Purchasing and Competitive Tendering (Section 6) etc. Alex confirmed that this assurance for the SDF capital works will be given to the CPMG at its first meeting in November.

The Board:
- ***Approved the project as presented in Paper 3.2 including the timeline, high level cost plan and governance framework***
- ***Approved the terms of reference for the Partnership Board Steering Group (PBSG)***
- ***Approved the terms of reference for the Capital Projects Monitoring Group (CPMG)***
- ***Confirmed that at a corporate level, the Board has the capacity to manage the c.£8m Capital Transformation Fund project alongside any other priorities and projects***

Anna and Georgina were thanked for attending and they left the meeting

3.3   Financial Health

1. Financial Update *(Paper 3.3A)*

Martin Owen referred to Paper 3.3A and highlighted the following:

- The financial statements are on target for submission to the ESFA by the 31st of December 2021.
- The proposed financial KPIs were reviewed and recommended to the Board by the Finance Group at its meeting on 21st of September 2021.

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[3] This form of words is required for the stage 2 bid

<u>Student Recruitment</u>

- A detailed breakdown was included in the paper. Some areas of provision have met target, some are continuing to recruit, and others have not met target and need more analysis of impact (e.g. in some cases target numbers have not been met but income targets have been met).
- Apprentices are recruited on a rolling basis.
- 16-19 is at 96% of target (and will be reviewed after day 42). There is a lagged funding model.
- Adult recruitment is below target but there are multiple enrolment points.
- HE recruitment is below target; the income impact is being analysed and an update will be given at the next meeting. HE is a challenge because these are multi-year courses so there is a knock-on impact in future years
- The prison contract is currently a cost plus model so there is high confidence that the contract will deliver the target contribution.

Governors asked questions:

Are other IoTs meeting recruitment targets? What is the implication of not meeting targets?

We are confident of meeting numbers targets agreed with the DfE and have exceeded the income target.

There is no concern about meeting the targets agreed with the DfE three years ago (pre-pandemic) of 80 full and part-time learners as to date we have recruited 40 full time and 20 part-time (75% of the target). There will be ongoing recruitment as learners can start at multiple points throughout the year. The target for apprenticeships is 100 and applications for apprenticeships are encouraging.

We have also won a bid for £891k to deliver a new one-year in-work skills pilot (3 courses).

We have no knowledge about recruitment by other IoTs but when the UTCs were launched, they did not recruit well at first. It is always a challenge to recruit students for new initiatives.

We have lost some learners because they have moved into employment (i.e. to positive destinations)

Is the increased contribution from the prison contract realistic?

We are currently operating with a 'costs plus' model which gives limited opportunity to increase the contribution. The model changes for 2022/23 so a 4% target is considered realistic, but the challenge will be to maintain it. It is also dependent on being able to move away from the cost plus model. The initial four year period of the current prison contract is due to finish in March 2023, but we expect an extension up to the allowable 2 years.

How easy is it to respond (e.g. cost savings) if there is under recruitment of students?

The 16-19 income will be received as budgeted as it is based on a lagged funding model. We will need to make early decisions about professional courses, AEB, and HE and we will report back to the Board. Sally Alexander and Alex Warner will be working on curriculum workforce efficiencies after half-term.

Annex 1 included a proposal to add the Interim Chief Financial Officer to the list of A signatories and to add Group Directors to the B list of signatories. Increasing the number of signatories will add resilience.

The Board:
- ***Noted the financial update***
- ***Approved the Financial KPIs for 2021/22 as presented***
- ***Approved changes to the Financial Regulations Annex A (Bank signatories)***

2. **Finance Group Meeting 21st September 2021** *(Paper 3.3B)*

Mat Gotkowski referred to the report of the meeting and confirmed that in reviewing and recommending the KPIs, the Finance Group had requested 'second tier' KPIs for the Board and Finance Group to monitor.

The Board:
- ***Noted the report from the Finance Group***
- ***Approved the Finance Group Terms of Reference for 2021/22***

4.0 Governance and Compliance

4.1 PDMG 22nd September 2021 *(Paper 4.1)*

Peter Cox referred to the report of the meeting of 22nd September and gave a verbal update on the additional meeting 4th October.

- At the meeting on 22nd September, the PDMG received assurance on project progress, variations from budget and vision / design principles.

- The DfE has agreed to reimburse the abortive costs relating to Block D of £575k

IoT Reading
- The Reading IoT was delivered on time and under budget. With the approval of the DfE, the underspend may be used for roof repairs.

IoT Oxford
- Following a competitive tender process, and in accordance with power previously delegated by the Board, the PDMG agreed to award the contract for the main works to EW Beards. The PDMG, at its meeting on 4th of October, agreed a letter of intent (limited to £300k) in order that EW Beards can start to order construction materials (to secure pricings as the cost of construction materials is rising).

IoT Bletchley
- Following a competitive tender process (detailed in Paper 4,1), a panel (including the Chair of PDMG and a DFE representative), unanimously agreed to award the contract to Ashe Construction. They final value of the contract will be based on RIBA4 (the report is expected mid-October).

- At the meeting on 4th of October, the PDMG considered a proposal to award the enabling works contract to Ashe Construction. The enabling contract value is approx. 4% of the main contract so does not require competitive tendering. There are potential time and cost savings in awarding this contract to Ashe Construction and the DfE has confirmed in writing that it agrees with this approach.

The Board:
- *Noted the report and verbal update from the Property Development Monitoring Group (PDMG)*
- *Approved the PDMG Terms of Reference for 2021/22*
- *Noted that the PDMG has agreed to award the main Oxford contract to EW Beards*
- *Noted that the PDMG had agreed to issue a Letter of Intent to EW Beards limited to £300k*
- *Delegated authority to the PDMG to:*
  - *Approve Ashe Construction as the main contractor for the IoT at Bletchley*
  - *Approve Ashe Construction as the enabling works contractor for the IoT at Bletchley*
  - *Approve the final contract(s) (subject to finalisation of pricing and contractual terms) for the IoT at Bletchley*

4.2   Agenda items for the next meeting
The Board Meeting plan will be presented at the meeting

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were approved by consent / without discussion:

5.1   *Minutes of the Board Meetings held on 14th July 2021 (Papers 5.1A, Confidential 5.1B) and 22nd July 2021 (Papers 5.1C and Confidential 5.1D)*

Actions

Date Raised	Actions arising from the last and previous meetings	Action Owner	Current position
14/7/21	1. Arts1- confirm the final contract value when enrolments are complete	JM / MO	Complete Reported in paper 3.3A
	2. Update the Board on plans for September following the latest government guidance on COVID measures, which allows providers to make local decisions.	JM	Complete Reported in paper 3.1

5.2   **Insurance Contract** *(Paper 5.2)*

The Board approved a one year contract for Hettle Andrews for the annual insurance policy renewal

Next Meeting 10th November 2021