BOARD MEETING

21 October 2025
16:30 - 18:30
Colchester Campus

PRESENT

Adam Fair

Ali Davies

Alison Andreas

Alison Bennett

Caroline Williams

Gary Horne MBE

Lisa Blake

Marco Iciek

Mark Emerson

Nicola Jay

Richard Block

Sally Messenger

Simon Attwood

Stephanie Bettinson

ABSENT

Christopher Donovan

Lee Bingham

Kay Adelani

Sanjeev Arya

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and **APPROVED** from Chris Donovan, Sanjeev Arya, Lee Bingham and Michael Asare Bediako.

2. DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No member of the committee or staff to declared any financial or other interests in any of the items of business to be considered at the meeting.

3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

It was noted that not all Independent Governors had yet confirmed, via the voting facility, whether they were happy for their personal email addresses to be shared with fellow Governors. It was clarified that this request applies only to Independent Governors, as college staff, staff and student Governors will be contacted via their College email accounts.

ACTION: Independent Governors to inform Head of Governance if they do not want their personal email address to be shared.

4. CIC/25/4/1 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2025 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

5. ACTION SHEET AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Updates were provided on outstanding actions:
- The Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee (GRSC) will consider whether a formal College response to the review should be published on the College website. This will be discussed at the next GRSC meeting.
- Item 11: The College Executive will explore the use of the Strategic Plan – One-Year Action Plan as the basis for the qualitative element of the Balanced Scorecard. An update will be presented at the December meeting, with a further follow-up scheduled for March.

6. CIC/25/4/2 BALANCED SCORECARD

The Vice Principal presented an early iteration of the Balanced Scorecard. It was acknowledged that further development is required, to improve clarity of data explanations and rationale behind RAG ratings.
The Vice Principal also noted that two areas require further refinement and appropriate metrics need to be identified to provide effective assurance to the Board.
The report was taken as read, and questions were invited from Governors.

Governors welcomed the format and content of the document.

Unqualified Teachers: A Governor **ASKED** whether the reported figure of 56 referred to individuals or a percentage. The Vice Principal confirmed that it represents 56 individuals, equating to approximately 10% of teaching staff. It was agreed that future reports will include both the percentage and volume figure for clarity.

Mandatory Training: Governors noted that current compliance is below target and requested contextual information to better understand associated risks. The Chair assured the Board that mandatory training compliance had been discussed in the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee (GRSC). Staff Training Compliance: The Deputy Chief Executive reported that while the overall mandatory training completion rate in July 2025 was higher, the onboarding of new staff in September 2025 has led to a slight decrease. Despite this, the current figure remains above the target of 87%.

Concerns were raised regarding the low number of staff with recorded objectives. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the objectives system was implemented late in the previous academic year, and while many staff are aware of their objectives, they are yet to be input into the system. The Board requested that the College Executive ensure progress towards the 95% target is made ahead of the December Board meeting.

Safeguarding Awareness: Governors **ASKED** whether data on student awareness of safeguarding policies and procedures could be included. The Deputy Principal advised that this data is collected and will be reported through the Curriculum and Quality Committee, as the figure remains consistent over the academic year. Following discussion Governors requested that the safeguarding training completion rate be reported separately from the overall mandatory training figure in future updates of the Balanced Scorecard.

Adult income streams: Governors **QUESTIONNED** whether contextual information should be provided for adult income streams, in line with detail included for other areas. The Vice Principal confirmed that future versions of the report are expected to include this.

ACTIONS:
- Principal to ensure progress is made towards the 95% staff objectives completion target by the December Board meeting.
- Safeguarding training completion rates to be reported separately from overall mandatory training figures
- Future reports to include both the percentage and absolute number (volume) of unqualified teachers for clarity

7. CIC/25/4/3 STRATEGIC PLAN – ANNUAL MILESTONES

Information item   Speaker: Principal

The meeting **RECEIVED** an update on progress against the Strategic Plan One-Year Action Plan. The paper was taken as read and questions were invited from Governors.

The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee (CQC) commented that she had requested a discussion with the Deputy Principal to gain further insight into aspects of the action plan, in order to ensure assurance of certain areas.

Governors **ASKED** whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be referenced within the strategic plan. The Vice Principal said that AI is addressed within the College's Digital Strategy. Work is ongoing in this area and the College is taking a measured approach, using AI as a tool to support staff rather than setting it as a standalone objective.

Governors **QUESTIONED** the achievability of the target to implement new Finance/ HR digital systems by July 2026. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that objective was for the new HR system to be identified and introduced within the organisation by that date. This will involve scoping and the potential rollout of selected modules, rather than full implementation.

Course contributions: Governors **ASKED** for clarification on how close the College is to achieving the target. It was noted that the current wording refers to an average contribution across all areas, and it was agreed that the wording should be revised to reflect this.

ACTION: Wording around course contributions to be amended to reflect it being an average contribution across all course areas.

Governors commented that there is expected to be more requests for local employers to provide work experience opportunities so managing current relationships will become even more important for the College as well as there potentially being more competition for some programmes.

Governors sought clarification on the definition of a positive destination. This refers to successful outcomes for learners after completing their education. This includes being in employment or Further Education. It was explained that this is intended to complement the detail that will be included in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Governors referred to the cover sheet which states the greatest risk to non-achievement of the milestones is Senior Leadership capacity and **ASKED** the Principal to provide further detail. The Principal advised that this is linked to workload and high volume of competing initiatives and priorities. While some mitigating support is available e.g. through IT solutions, regular monitoring may lead to certain milestones (and associated activity) take priority over others. Governors were assured that they would be kept informed through progress updates at relevant committees during the year. The Chair of CQC added that any changes in circumstance reported at committee level would be highlighted to the Board through the Chairs' Reports. The Principal noted that the use of annual milestones supports a focused, year-by-year approach to delivering the strategic objectives.

The Board was **ASKED** to approve the annual milestones set out in the strategic plan.

DECISON: The Board **APPROVED** the annual milestones

8. CIC/25/4/4 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The Deputy Chief Executive introduced the strategy, which had been circulated to Governors in advance. The strategy outlines how the College's environmental ambitions align with the overall Strategic Plan and highlights the role the College can play in supporting green skills and providing relevant work experience. The strategy is structured around seven key areas: four led by the members of the Chief Executive (CE) and three by members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Governors welcomed the strategy and noted that it reflects the College's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Governors **QUESTIONNED** how green jobs are defined. The Principal explained that all job have the potential to be green, however some sectors, such as construction and engineering, are particularly significant in creating the green jobs of the future. Other curriculum areas must ensure that students understand skills they can adapt for future sustainable technologies.
The reduction in campus CO_2 emissions was highlighted, with a 34% reduction having been achieved over the past four years. Despite there being an increase in 2024–25,primarily due to the replacement of air-conditioning equipment in one of the College data centres which required a one-off re-gassing and temporarily increased emissions, the College remains confident that further reductions will be achieved ahead of the 2030 target. The focus for the current year will be addressing scope 3 emissions. The College's Climate Action Roadmap enables benchmarking against other providers.
The College owns 10% of the Hillyfields site, providing a further opportunity for replanting and rewilding.

The FE Student Governor **ASKED** how the strategy is being communicated to Students so they understand what is being done and why. The Deputy Principal said that the strategy will be embedded into curriculum development and personal development sessions. Learners will also have opportunities for direct involvement.

The Chair **ASKED** the College Executive and members of the Board to consider whether any of the environmental targets should be elevated for inclusion within the Balanced Scorecard.

ACTION:
- Principal to consider whether any of the College environmental targets should be included in the Balanced Scorecard.
- Governors to provide feedback to the Chair on anything additional they consider should be included in the Balanced Scorecard

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that there is potential financial support available through the Local Skills Improvement Fund. It is anticipated that funding would be a similar level to previous years.

Governors **ASKED** whether there is confidence that the proposed kitchen replacement aligns with current and emerging industry standards. The Deputy Principal confirmed this was the case. Governors **QUESTIONNED** a potential contradiction in training a workforce to build more housing while also pursuing sustainability goals. The Deputy Chief Executive responded that there are increasing opportunities to work with developers using low-carbon strategies and materials.

9. STUDENT ENROLMENTS 2025-26 (VERBAL REPORT)

The Board **RECEIVED** and **NOTED** an update on enrolment figures for 2025–26, including FE Full-time, Apprenticeships, and UCC.

FE enrolments have seen a **significant increase**.
The College's funded target for 16–18-year-olds is 4,155. To date, 4,230 students have enrolled, with an additional 80–85 learners funded under the 16–18 model, despite being over the age of 18.

The upcoming RO4 data return is a critical data collection point and is expected to show an additional 130–150 students. This is projected to result in funding for an additional 30–50 learners, which will then be reflected in next year's funding allocation.
Braintree campus has seen a 12% increase in adult learner enrolments.
There has been a notable increase in attendance at open events in recent weeks, indicating growing interest and engagement from prospective learners.

HE Full-time enrolments stand at 106, which is eight students below target whist part-time enrolments are currently eight students above target.

Apprenticeships
The College has a target of 432 apprenticeship enrolments. 317 apprentices are currently enrolled. When including applicants currently in the system, the total rises to 369 and when accounting for learners with application packs issued, the total increases to 462. Based on current figures, the College is confident it will exceed the Quarter 1 target.
A Governor **ASKED** whether there had been a notable increase in Level 7 enrolments. It was confirmed that while the College offers limited provision at Level 7, there has been an uptake in enrolments for management-related courses at this level.

10. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

10.1 CIC/25/4/5 FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Board **RECIEVED** and **NOTED** the Finance and Resource Committee Chairs Report from the meeting held on 7 October 2025

The Finance and Resources Committee Chairs report was circulated ahead of the meeting and taken as read. It was noted that there are no specific actions for the Board in this report. There were no questions or comments from Governors.

10.2 CIC/25/4/6 MONTHLY MANAGEMENT REPORT

Monthly Management Report for P12 was discussed at the October meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee. The Board were assured that it is a pleasing report over all, showing a strong position for next year, but remains subject to audit clearance.
The Chair expressed thanks to the Deputy Chief Executive for their work, and the work of their team over the course of the year that resulted in these positive outcomes.

11. CIC/25/4/7 GOVERNANCE, REMUNERATION AND SEARCH COMMITTEE

Item recorded as a CONFIDENTIAL Minute

12. CIC/25/4/8 USE OF THE SEAL 2024-25

The Board received and noted the annual report on the use of the Seal 2024-25.

13. GOVERNOR ENGAGEMENT DAYS

An update was provided an update on the Governor Engagement Days, which will be piloted through two initial events scheduled for 8 December 2025 and 7 May 2026.
Governors were asked to identify activities/ areas they would like to see included or excluded from the two events. Suggestions could reflect a balance between educational and support functions. Staff Governors were invited to share ideas on what staff may find valuable in terms of engaging with Governors. Student Governors were invited to consider how students might prefer to engage with Governors and the settings for these interactions to take place. All suggestions should be submitted to the Head of Governance by 31 October 2025.

14. MEETING DATES 2025-26

Monday 15 December 2025
Thursday 19 March 2025
Thursday 7 May 2026*
Tuesday 21 July 2026

All meetings start at 4.30pm at the Colchester Campus with a pre-board briefing at 4pm.
*09:30 meeting followed by Lunch in the Balkerne Restaurant

Meeting dates for 2025-26 were noted.

14.1 CIC/25/4/9 MEETING DATES 2026-27

To **NOTE** the 2026-27 schedule of meetings

Governors received 2026-27 meeting schedule which, it was explained, is based on the current academic year's schedule. Governors were asked to provide any feedback on the proposed dates to the Head of Governance.

15. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Governors were asked to
- Consider whether any matters discussed should be treated confidentially
- Consider the schedule of work for the next meeting
- Feedback on use of Team Engine

Items to be recorded as confidential:
- Item 11 - GRSC discussion

Schedule of work:
- Governors asked how the Post 16 White Paper will start to feature in the schedule of work. It was explained that it will take time to understand the timing of delivery for some of the things planned before it can be included in the schedule of work. It was agreed that there would be a pre-board briefing on the Post 16 White Paper during the year.

Team Engine:
General feedback was positive and consensus was that first impressions are that it is a useful tool and easy to use and should be kept under review as it is used and embedded.

16. PART II

Part II items will be discussed by Independent Governors only.

Part II discussions were recorded as confidential. Members of the College Executive, Student Governors and Staff Governors were not present for this item.