

COLCHESTER INSTITUTE CORPORATION

**Meeting of the
CORPORATION BOARD
held on Tuesday 22 July 2025
4.00pm, at the Colchester Campus**

Members:

Lisa Blake – Corporation Board Chair
Alison Andreas – Principal and Chief Executive
Sanjeev Arya – Governor
Simon Attwood - Governor
Chris Donovan - Governor
Adam Fair – Staff Governor
Marco Iciek - Governor
Nicola Jay – Staff Governor
Caroline Williams – Governor

In attendance:

Gary Horne MBE – Deputy Chief Executive
Ali Davies – Deputy Principal
Mark Emerson – Vice Principal
Alison Bennett – Head of Governance

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from.

- Sally Messenger
- Michael Asare Bediako
- Richard Block

Lee Bingham, Tim Triffitt and Stephanie Bettinson were not present.

2. Declaration of any conflicts of interest

No member or staff declared any financial, or other interest, in the business to be discussed.

3. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

4. Minutes of meeting held on 30 April 2025

Minutes of the following meetings were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record:

- CIC/25/5/1, minutes of the meetings held on 30 April 2025
- CIC/25/5/2, extra-ordinary meeting of the Board held on 26 June 2025

5. Action Sheet and Matters Arising from the Minutes

CIC/25/5/3, Action Sheet, was received and updates received outstanding progress against actions.

6. Targets 2025-26

CIC/25/5/4, College Targets for the academic year 2025-26, was received and considered.

The Board was informed that the proposed targets had been discussed in detail at the 26.06.25 meeting of Curriculum and Quality Committee.

Further Education: The targets set for 2025/26 are generally more ambitious than the actual or most likely outturn this year and are above known national rates. This supports the ambition in the Strategic Plan to be above national rates for all measures and in all provision types. These targets were taken to the Curriculum and Quality Committee, where they were approved. Final quality performance data for 2024/25 will be

presented to Governors as part of the Self-Assessment Report, at the Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting in November and the Board in December.

Higher Education: Finalised figures are now available for 2023/24, however for some measures, only the predictions for 2024/25 are available. Targets have been set to reach or exceed these predictions and/or to reflect national rates. Final quality performance data for HE will be presented to Governors at the October Board meeting, when targets can be tweaked if necessary.

The Board was informed that since the Curriculum and Quality Committee met in late June, the National Student Survey (NSS) results have become available. The 2025 outcomes have been added and three of the proposed targets have been increased as a result of the NSS. Targets have also been brought in line with the latest Office for Students (OfS) performance measures.

HR and Finance targets will be taken to the autumn term meeting of Finance and Resources Committee (FRC), and the Board for approval.

The Curriculum and Quality Committee Chair assured Governors that the targets were reviewed in detail at the June meeting.

The meeting unanimously agreed to approve the targets for 2025-26.

DECISION: The Board **APPROVED** the College Targets for the academic year 2025-26.

7. Policy review

The Board received, considered and **APPROVED**:

- CIC/25/5/5, UCC Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

It was explained that under the new registration requirement E6 from the Office for Students, a separate University College Colchester (UCC) policy on sexual misconduct is required. The policy has been drafted in line with the Office for Students guidance. The Principal assured the meeting that UCC is compliant with the policy. The Chair **ASKED** whether the College is confident that we have all of the policies that we need to have that are UCC specific and how do we know. The Principal stated that there is a mechanism in place where by somebody within UCC is responsible for monitoring this and ensuring policies were in place and compliant. Where a separate policy is needed the Principal said she was confident that it is in place.

The Board received, considered and, on the recommendation of Curriculum and Quality Committee, **APPROVED**:

- CIC/25/5/6, Further Education Quality Framework,

The Board received, considered and, on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee, **APPROVED**:

- CIC/25/5/7, Conflict of Interest Policy - Corporation Board members, Co- opted members and Senior Postholders
- CIC/25/5/8, Disciplinary Policy for Staff
- Financial Regulations 2025-26
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The Board received, considered and, on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, **APPROVED**:

- CIC/25/5/9, Health and Safety Policy
- CIC/25/5/10, Risk Management Policy
- CIC/25/5/11, Business Continuity Procedure

The Board received, considered and, on the recommendation of the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee, **APPROVED**:

- CIC/25/5/12, Disciplinary Policy for Senior Post Holders
- CIC/25/5/13, Grievance procedure for Senior Post Holders

8. External Review of Board Effectiveness

CIC/25/5/14, The Board received and considered the Board Portal Solution report. The Vice Principal reported that following a structured selection process involving market research, supplier demonstrations, Governor engagement, and hands-on trials, TeamEngine has been identified as the preferred solution. It offers strong functionality, improved administrative workflows, and represents the best value for money.

A Governor **ASKED** whether the portal can be accessed on personal devices. The Vice Principal confirmed that it is compatible with tablets and laptops and includes mobile functionality. The Chair added that during the trial period, it was tested on a mobile phone and found to be well-optimised for mobile use. Additionally, the product offers a dedicated app. Governors **ASKED** whether the portal can be customised to meet the College's needs. The Vice Principal explained that it is customisable to meet our governance structures and is a bespoke governance portal so includes the features we require.

Governors **ASKED** how the training will be set up to ensure all users are properly equipped to use the portal. The Vice Principal said that the provider has confirmed that they can start the training as soon as required. This will include scheduling several training sessions, with dedicated training for the Chair, Governors and the Head of Governance. There is also the potential for us to create a training package that governors can refer to and can be used by new governors. It was **ASKED** if there will be a protocol on how to use the system. The Chair confirmed that an end-to-end process protocol will be produced by the Head of Governance ahead of implementation.

Governors noted the importance of assessing the return on investment to ensure the system delivers savings. The Chair agreed and advised that a review of the portal will be conducted at the end of the 2025-26 academic year.

DECISION: The Board **APPROVED** the recommendation to proceed with the purchase and implementation of TeamEngine as the College's Board Portal solution and to commence with the next steps as outlined in the report.

ACTIONS:

- Head of Governance to write end-to-end meeting process protocol to be reviewed by the Chair and College Executive and brought to the Board to review at the first meeting of the 2025-26 Autumn year.
- Review of Board Portal to be added to the work plan for the July 2026 meeting.

9. Balanced Scorecard

The Vice Principal introduced the first draft of the Balanced Scorecard to the meeting, explaining that it aims to:

- Provide governors with a clear, concise overview of progress against key strategic priorities and risks
- Enable regular, in-year reporting to offer early visibility of progress, identifying issues or successes.
- Complement, rather than replace, existing Board and committee reporting
- Serve as a high-level strategic tool, not for operational management

The scorecard will report on key areas such as performance, recruitment, staffing, and finances.

The Chair **COMMENTED** that the scorecard would act as an additional reference point, helping Governors gain greater awareness of performance across the College. While recognising its potential value, the Chair said that it should not create additional work for the Executive. A review was recommended 6–12 months after implementation to evaluate its usefulness and impact on staff workload.

A Governor **ASKED** whether departmental or other targets would align with the top-level strategic targets. Principal confirmed that they would – in due course. Governors felt this would allow triangulation of

information that is presented to committees. Governors suggested incorporating national average data where available. It was agreed that this would be of value, where appropriate. Discussion took place around the challenge to ensure it captures both quantitative and qualitative data. It was proposed that the scorecard be mapped against the College's five strategic objectives to identify any gaps and ensure qualitative measures are effectively represented.

The Chair **ASKED** whether the scorecard might usefully replace any current reporting methods, thereby reducing duplication. The Executive agreed to explore this as the scorecard is implemented.

ACTIONS:

- Balanced scorecard to be amended to reflect feedback from the meeting.
- Pilot phase to evaluate whether the Balanced Scorecard delivers added value.
- College Executive to explore methods for incorporating qualitative data into the scorecard.
- Include the Balanced Scorecard in the 2025–26 work plan, with implementation beginning at the first meeting of the 2025–26 academic year.

10. External Review of Board Effectiveness – Action Plan

CIC/25/5/15, The Board received and considered the External Review of Board Effectiveness – Action Plan. The Chair reminded Governors that the External Review of Board Effectiveness was carried out by an external advisor in the 2023-24 academic year. The action plan has been presented to, and reviewed by, the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee (GRSC) and was presented to the Board, to request ongoing oversight be delegated to GRSC.

Governors **QUESTIONED** the purpose of the document. It was explained that the action plan is intended to address the closure of recommendations that came from the review. The opportunity has been taken to ensure that the actions fully address the review's recommendations whilst also incorporating further best practice and current guidance where possible. A challenge was raised regarding whether some items listed as “outstanding” may, in fact, be “in progress.” It was agreed that this would be reviewed and updated accordingly.

DECISION: The meeting **AGREED** to delegate oversight of the action plan to the GRSC, with the requirement that it be reported back to the Board at least once during the academic year.

ACTIONS:

- External Review of Board Effectiveness – Action Plan to be brought back to the Board for an update in the Summer term of the 2025–26 academic year.
- GRSC to consider whether a College response to the review should be published on the College website.
- Head of Governance to review actions to check whether some listed as “outstanding” should be changed to “in progress”.

11. Strategic Plan – One year Action Plan

CIC/25/5/16, The Board received a high-level update on progress towards the goals, and success criteria set in the Strategic Plan 2024-2028. It was explained that each success criterion within the goals has been scored to show the College Executive Team's assessment of progress in relation to that particular criterion or ambition. Governors were reminded that these are four-year goals, however where scores equivalent to 6/10 or below have been awarded, a summary has been provided. These scores will guide the Senior Leadership Team members responsible for the 'Plans on a Page' to set 2025/26 milestones and actions that target areas needing the most progress. The summaries provided in the report had been presented to the Curriculum and Quality Committee (26th) June (1,4,5) and Finance and Resources Committee in (15th) July (2 & 3). A merged paper containing all five goals was presented to the Board.

Governors **SUGGESTED** it be used as the basis for the qualitative aspect of the Balanced Score card.

ACTION:

- College Executive to consider whether the Strategic Plan – One year Action Plan could be used as the basis for the qualitative aspect of the Balanced Score Card.

12. Risk Register Summary Report

CIC/25/5/17, Corporate Risk Register Summary report, was received identifying any movement and areas of concern. It was explained that there has been no movement of the summary risks and this would be reviewed as part of item 14.2.

13. Safeguarding Report

The meeting received a verbal update on safeguarding. The Deputy Principal informed the meeting that following discussions a written report would be provided to the Curriculum and Quality Committee meetings in November, April & June and to full Board in December and July.

ACTION:

- Head of Governance to ensure the annual cycle of business reflects safeguarding reporting dates Curriculum and Quality Committee – November, April & June. Board – December and July.

It was reported that:

- Positive meetings have been held with the St Aubyn centre to strengthen working together and information sharing for enrolments to the College.
- Annual Self Declaration return rate of 100% for all staff currently working
- Mandatory recruitment checks are at 100% across the board
- DBS Barred list checks are 100% compliant with the Single Central Record.
- Safeguarding training is 99.4%, Responding to sexual violence training 99.8%, Prevent for new starters 100%.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training was held on 20 June. Vice Principal and Director of People and Culture have now completed the DSL training.
- New member of staff is joining the safeguarding team ready for the start of September.
- Members of the team have attended the Stay Safe Conference and the Essex Safeguarding Board with all information having been disseminated to staff.
- The ongoing funding for in house counselling has been agreed for the next three years.
- KCSIE 2025-26 draft has been released, and further guidance on PSHE will be released in September.

The Safeguarding Governor commented that the update reflected all areas he is aware of. Governors **COMMENTED** on the pleasing high compliance level with training.

14. Reports from Committees

14.1. Curriculum and Quality Committee

CIC/25/5/18, Report from Chair of Committee, was received.

The Board was alerted to the following:

- An assurance review of English and maths was completed in March 2025. The overall assessment reported limited assurance with four important action points. The most significant of these related to the teaching of GCSE mathematics. Leaders and managers have made rapid progress towards the achievement of all four actions but in particular the planning of teaching of mathematics.
- Safeguarding – Deputy Principal gave a verbal report on safeguarding and assured governors that all indicators had been met and that there was no cause for concern.

The Board was provided with assurance on the following:

- Overall attendance is 86.3%, a slight increase on this time last year and below the ambitious target of 90%
- Predicted achievement rate for students aged 16-19 is 86.5%, 2 percentage points higher than this time last year.
- Retention rate remains high for adult learners which provides leaders and governors with some confidence that adult provision will out turn with a higher achievement rate than that predicted.

- As of April 2025 (RO9) apprenticeship provision is performing well, funding is £120K ahead of target with a projected 639 apprenticeship starts against a target of 622.
- Predicted achievement rate for apprentices is 75.3% and timely achievement rate of 60%, 23 percentage points higher than the final position in 2023/24. Governors recognised the significant improvement predicted for apprenticeship outcomes.
- Apprenticeship achievement gap for learners with a declared learning difficulty or disability is projected to reduce.
- Attendance at the summer GCSE English and mathematics exams was the same or better than last year with all attendance at or above 94%.
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment observation outcomes are currently 92%, 2 percentage points above the target of 90% for secure or mastery.
- Overall senior leaders provided Governors with assurance that college outcomes are continuing to increase and reflect the standards required of a 'good' college.

Governors **QUESTIONED** how confident the College Executive are on the achievement rate for apprentices which are predicted rates. It was explained that this is being monitored closely and to date has not dropped below 75%. If it does drop it is expected that the drop will be by no more than a few percentage points, keeping it above 70%. Discussion took place on the issue of end point assessments being cancelled and the impact that has on the achievement rate. Governors **ASKED** if it is possible to dig into the timely data by area. The Deputy Principal assured the Board that this is done fortnightly.

Actions brought to the Board:

- To receive the recommended draft FE, HE and Apprenticeship targets for academic year 2025-26.
- To approve the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy
- To approve the UCC Research, Knowledge Transfer and Scholarly Activity Policy 2025-26.
- Review the recommendations regarding the Governors Link Scheme and confirm the approach for the 2025–26 academic year.

CIC/25/5/19, FE, HE and Apprenticeships Academic Targets 2025-26 was received, considered and **APPROVED**.

It was noted that the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and UCC Research, Knowledge Transfer and Scholarly Activity Policy 2025-26 were approved under item 7, Policy review.

CIC/25/5/20, Governor Link Scheme and Learning walks 2025-26, was received, discussed and **APPROVED**. Following discussion at the 26.06.25 meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee it was recommended that the Board approve the progression of Option 3: one or two days per academic year where Governors have the opportunity to tour the College, meet Link areas and network with staff – whatever would be most beneficial to them. The additional time commitment required from Governors, was raised as a concern and it was suggested that there could be an option for Governors to attend for a period during the planned days rather than for a whole day. It was agreed that this would form part of the discussion in the next steps and that any new scheme would be piloted and reviewed to see if there has been improved engagement.

DECISION: The meeting **AGREED** to move forward with option 3: to run a hybrid programme, one or two days per academic year, providing a chance to tour areas of the college, meet Link areas and network with staff.

ACTION:

- Next steps, implementation and review of engagement of Link Governor scheme and Learning Walks to be led by the Corporation Board Vice Chair, on behalf of the Board, and Head of Governance.

14.2. Audit and Risk Committee

CIC/25/5/21, Report from Chair of Committee, was received.

The Board was alerted to the following:

- The Internal Audit contract with the current provider TIAA Limited, ended at the end of the 2024-25 academic year. The College's Procurement Team undertook a thorough tender process over a three-month period to identify the best fit internal auditor, initially for three academic years. Four bids were received and following a comprehensive evaluation process Scrutton Bland were awarded the contract.
- An internal audit for English and Maths was reported on by TIAA in June 2025 which concluded 'Limited Assurance'. It was noted that the Curriculum and Quality Committee had undertaken a full discussion in their June 2025 meeting and concluded that significant work is being undertaken in the College to address the four action points, all of which are expected to be completed by 1 October 2025.
- An Assurance Review of Payroll was reported on by TIAA (Final, March 2025). The report concluded 'Reasonable Assurance'. There were two action points which have been completed by the College.
- TIAA produced a draft report on cyber security which the Deputy Chief Executive has provided feedback on to TIAA and therefore the report is pending.

The Board was provided assurance on the following:

- ARC noted that MHA will be performing a full scope statutory audit of all the financial statements of the College (business as usual) starting on 22/9/2025 and completing in December. This will enable the accounts to be ready for approval by the Board in December and submitted by the end of 2025 to the Department for Education (DfE).
- The Committee noted the Minutes for the internal Risk Management Committee (June 2025) which highlighted recruitment of teaching staff as the most significant risk, particularly for Electrical. Recruitment is the top entry on the Corporate Risk Register followed by the retention of staff. The Committee was assured that plans are underway to manage the situation if insufficient staff are recruited for a September start. At the time of this report thirty-one vacancies were being advertised but not all were for lecturers.
- The recommendations for all Colleges, arising from the Weston College Intervention Report, were highlighted by the Head of Governance who advised the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee (GRSC) had fully discussed the Report and would be leading on overseeing recommended actions which had been drafted.

Actions brought to the Board:

- The Risk Management Policy and Procedures has been updated and is recommended to the Board for approval.
- The Health and Safety Policy has been updated and is recommended to the Board for approval.

It was noted that Risk Management Policy and Health and Safety Policy were approved under item 7, Policy review.

CIC/25/5/22, Follow-up Report from Prior Audits was received and noted.

CIC/25/5/23, Internal Update Paper – Progress Report was received and noted.

14.3. Finance and Resources Committee

CIC/25/5/24 Report from Chair of Committee was received.

The Board was alerted to the following:

- The Committee welcomed the new digital strategy and felt it was aspirational. The Committee concluded that the strategy should be considered again when the associated prioritised roadmap is developed, including, an estimation of any additional investment required.

The board was provided assurance on the following:

- Management report and accounts were reviewed for the current financial year and noted that the financial position remains positive.
- The predicted Financial Health grade for the year remains "Good" with 210 points.
- A report was received from the Director of People and Culture along with the People and Culture dashboard.

Actions brought to the Board:

- That the Financial Regulations 2025-26 and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Staff be approved

It was noted that the Financial Regulations 2025-26 and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Staff were approved under item 7, Policy review.

Governors **ASKED** when the Digital Strategy will be provided to the Board for information. The Vice Principal explained that it would be overseen by the Finance and Resources Committee with an overview and update at the Board Planning and Development day in early 2026.

A Governor **ASKED** if the delay to the work on the motor vehicle workshop is of concern in relation to student recruitment. The Deputy Chief Executive replied that it is the building surveys that are causing the delay. Work has been done with the area to ensure the College can make the most use of current premises. It is hoped that following the surveys and planning submissions being submitted it may be possible to use the building for part of the 2025-26 academic year

CIC/25/5/25 Monthly Management Report and Accounts June 2025 was received and presented by the Deputy Chief Executive.

14.4. **Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee**

Following the review of its meeting by the GRSC, the Committee felt that each item was either partly or fully confidential and as such this item would be taken in Part II of the meeting.

15. **Annual Cycle of Board Business 2025-26**

CIC/25/5/27, Annual Cycle of Board Business for 2025-26, was received and discussed.

The Chair informed the meeting that it would be used as a live document, to be reviewed at the end of each Board meeting, ensuring that Board business remains on track and to provide a forward view in preparation for the next meeting.

ACTION:

- Annual Cycle of Board Business for 2025-26 to be included on the agenda of the first meeting of the new academic year for information and to note.

16. **Date of Next Meeting**

CIC/25/5/28, Meeting Schedule 2025-26, was received and noted.

ACTIONS:

- 2025-26 meeting dates to be sent out via calendar invites.
- 2026-27 meeting dates to be provided to the first meeting of the Autumn term.