

Colchester Institute Corporation

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board
held on 15th December 2015
at the Sheepen Road Campus**

Present

Christopher Bridge, *in the Chair*
Alison Andreas
Brenda Baker
John Baugh
Lisa Clampin
David Gask
David Gronland

Peter Hempstead
David Kerridge
Bryn Morris
Kevin Prince
Karen Tarling
Sue Thompson-Arnold
Richard Wainwright

In Attendance

Gary Horne
Tim O'Connor
Hazel Paton
Jill Wognum

Vice Principal: Finance and Operations
Scrutton Bland, Financial Statements Auditor (item 4 only)
Clerk to the Governors
Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality

Apologies for absence were received from Will Chapman.

Board Briefing

The meeting was preceded with an updated on Safeguarding from the Assistant Principal: Student Services and Support, on Safeguarding. The updated included:

- an overview of safeguarding and the Prevent agenda;
- the legislation and College policies;
- how safeguarding is managed at Colchester Institute, the roles within the College and how referrals are made;
- safer recruitment;
- what Ofsted look at in terms of safeguarding and Prevent.

Governors were issued with copies of:

- Part I Statutory Guidance Keeping children safe in education – information for all school and college staff July 2015; and
- College leaflet – an introduction to the College's Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines for Good Practice for Staff and what you need to do to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and how to recognise signs of abuse.

The statutory guidance sets out the College's responsibilities as an educational provider and everything within the guidance has been incorporated into the College's policies, procedures and practices. All staff have received a copy of the Part 1 statutory guidance.

In a change from current policy, from January 2016 all staff and governors will have an enhanced DBS check and staff in a regulated activity will be checked against the barred list.

Governors were asked to familiarise themselves with the Statutory Guidance and College policies and complete two online training packages:

- Safeguarding Essentials On-line training course run through Moodle; and
- Foundation online learning: preventing radicalisation.

Arising from the discussion Governors asked how the College ensures student get access to information on keeping safe and Prevent, and were advised that a themed period on wellbeing covering all aspects of keeping students safe and British values is just coming to an end. Information on how to access safeguarding featured in the Principal's start of term assemblies for students, and is included in student planners and on the back of student ID cards.

The Ofsted Inspection will include a judgement on the effectiveness of safeguarding, and on how well students know how to keep themselves safe. In a recent student survey 99% of students said that they feel safe at College and considered themselves to be safe.

Maeve Borges was thanked for her presentation.

1. Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest

None.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2015 (CIC/15/5/1) and special meeting held on 13th October 2015 (CIC/15/5/2) were received and confirmed. The Chair signed the minute book.

The notes of the planning meeting held on 13th October 2015 (CIC/15/5/3) were received and noted.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None, other than on the agenda.

4. Report and Financial Statements

The Board received and considered:

- CIC/15/5/4, Report and Financial Statements 31 July 2015
- CIC/15/5/5, Management Letter (including Letter of Representation)

The Resources Committee and Audit and Compliance Committee had considered the Report and Financial Statements in detail and were recommending them to the Board for approval.

The Financial Statements Auditor drew Governors attention to key areas in the accounts. The Income and expenditure results were significantly improved by the profit on the sale of land at Gainsford Avenue. There was significant capital investment during year on the South Wing and the completion of the work in B/D blocks. The liability on the defined benefit pension scheme continues to increase largely due to a change in the discount rate. The balance sheet has strengthened and cash generated in year increased. There was an unqualified audit opinion in respect of the financial statements and the reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity was also a clean opinion.

In terms of financial health, the finance records return to the SFA (Skills Funding Agency) at the end of December will record 160 financial health points (Satisfactory). Governors noted that the College is still being asked to report monthly to the SFA and will be very disappointed if these requirements are not removed in light of the satisfactory financial performance over the last two financial years.

The Board APPROVED the Report and Financial Statements 31 July 2015, Management Letter and Letter of Representation for signature by Chair and Principal.

Tim O'Connor was thanked for his input and left the meeting.

5. **Chair's Announcements/Action since last meeting**

- 5.1. CIC/15/5/6, Chair's annual report to the Board 2015, was received and noted. At the time the report was written, it was expected that the College would be inspected by Ofsted before Christmas, and the timing of the Area Review was unknown. It is now known that Essex will be in the last wave of Areas Reviews, scheduled for November 2016. However, Essex has applied for devolved powers and the timing of the Area Review might be brought forward as part of a devolution deal.

Governors were reminded that it was agreed to hold a further planning meeting in the New Year and it was agreed to convert the February Board meeting to a planning meeting, starting at the earlier time of 2.00pm.

The Chair asked if any Governor was interested in taking over as Chair and asked members to give serious consideration to taking on this role. The Chair said he is happy to continue until the Area Review, but would then look to stand down.

- 5.2. It was noted that the Chair and Principal signed, and the seal was affixed, to a Deed of Warranty between Colchester Institute Corporation and Milbank Concrete Products Ltd, relating to the new South Wing Building.

6. **FE Commissioner's Termly Letter**

CIC/15/5/7, FE Commissioner's autumn 2015 letter to the sector "Areas Reviews and the reshaping of the college sector", was received and the key messages noted and discussed. Class size is an issue for Colchester Institute which is being addressed. Governors noted the emphasis on efficiency and value for money, and the considerable variability between colleges, and asked if benchmarking data for other colleges is available. It is not clear whether the outcomes of area reviews will be published but it is hoped that reports will be published to give some guidance on this.

7. **Principal's Report**

The Principal presented her December 2015 report (CIC/15/5/7). It was still too early in the year to draw conclusions from performance against the high level performance targets. Attendance was improving and was 3-4% higher than at the same time last year.

Governors asked about the consultation around the opening of a sixth form at Tabor High School, and the likely impact on recruitment at the College at Braintree. It was reported that the consultation document talks about offering an academic and vocational timetable, but beyond that there is very little information. If the proposal goes ahead it will be another competitor for the College at Braintree.

Governors noted that one high level performance target, 24+ loan income, was red rated and asked how likely it was that the College would achieve its revised forecast outcome. It was reported that meetings had been held with individual Directors of Faculty earlier that day to discuss performance in a number of areas, including this. Some mid-year starts are planned in 2-3 areas (accounting, early years, and health and social care) which might attract learners who qualify for 24+ loans, but it is unlikely that the revised target will be reached.

Recruitment was discussed. Apprenticeship numbers were encouraging but HE had recruited less well than anticipated.

Governors noted that around 200 ideas had been put forward at a CMG planning session to look at reducing expenditure and raising income in-year and asked how many of these ideas were 'big hitters'. It was reported about six suggestions were 'big hitters' and were things that the College was already looking at, such as efficiencies around group sizes, better use of building etc. A good start has been made to the priority areas and the College Executive is working through the general ideas.

The Principal updated Governors on FE learner destinations 2014-15. Of the 4035, mostly 16-19, learners the College knew that 2217 had continued on a programme of learning at Colchester Institute, and had known destinations for a number of other learners from data collected as the students left. A third party organisation was engaged to follow up the 1818 learners where there were no known destinations. This work was carried out by phone (up to 15 phone calls per learner) over a six week period in October/November. Out of the 4035 learners there are 376 (9.3%) learners that the College does not have known destinations for. This is low compared to the sector average of 12-14% unknown destinations. The headline figures from the external report were that 40% (745) of learners had gone into employment, 26 had gone into self-employment or voluntary work, 318 into higher education and 6.6% were NEET or economically inactive. The report included destination areas by sector and employer, providing a rich database for the College to use in the future. Some students were not in jobs related to the course they were on and this information will be used to inform curriculum planning. Construction was top in terms of learners going into related employment. Around 60% of learners responded positively to questions on how well they had been prepared for the job role they do and for work in general. There is a greater focus this year on planned destinations. The College is working with learners to get them external work experience and would like to see the percentage of students that feel prepared for work significantly increase next year as a result of this focus. Governors would like to see this work continue as an annual cycle. Governors asked how the data is used to inform curriculum design and continuous improvement in the support provided to students in terms of employability skills, and for evidence of how students engage with that. Governors were also interested in how relevant employment is identified and how the College benchmarks itself against this. Further analysis of the data will be carried out and a report on how it is used for curriculum planning prepared for the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

8. **One Year Action Plan and Key Performance Indicators – September 2015 – August 2016**

CIC/15/5/9, One Year Action Plan and Key Performance Indicators – September 2015 - August 2016, was received and presented by the Principal. The plan covered the second year of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 with new actions and key performance indicators for 2015-16 and three year success indicators. The five ambitions were considered.

Concern was expressed that the observation process may have lost its rigour following the move away from graded observations. Governors were reassured that the process is much more robust. Unlike the old process, every observation will result in development points, regardless of how good the session was, that will be followed up, and weaker teachers will have action plans and timelines for improvement and re-observation. Learning walks have been very useful in picking up themes which can be addressed quickly with area managers.

The Principal was asked whether the College was on track to realise its ambitions; which of the five she was most pleased with; and which was the most cause for concern. It was reported that in terms of student outcomes the College has seen improvements in just about every indicator. There is a different feel to the organisation and students are much more positive about expectations and engagement. 98% of learners said teaching staff have high expectations of them and 99% were aware of College expectations. A lot of work has been done around the elements of Study Programmes. The work experience element was not good last year but GAP activity has moved on a pace and two weeks ago 1000 learners had been on planned placements in external organisations. English and math is still a challenge and getting it embedded in every class has been slow but attendance in English and maths has improved. Improvements in teaching and learning are more

difficult to evidence now that we no longer have a grade profile. This is an area where the College would have liked to have seen more progress but the standard of teaching and learning is better than it was 18 months ago. Governors asked what needs to be done differently to push further improvements in this area, and what the College needs from the Board to support this. It was reported that more needs to be done to develop Area Heads and give them the skills, such as coaching skills, which they need to be able to support and help teaching staff. There is some great teaching going on, but still not enough. Governors suggested asking three managers to present to Governors how they are leading teaching in their area as a future pre-Board session. This will be considered further.

9. Reports from Committees

9.1. Audit and Compliance Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2015 (CIC/15/5/10) were received and presented by the Committee Chair Kevin Prince.

9.1.1. Minutes of the meeting

The Committee Chair highlighted three items in the minutes:

- the Committee has been looking at the reporting of equality and diversity, which historically has focussed on staff related matters, and has asked for future reports to include more information on individual groups of learners and how they are performing against expectations;
- a considerable amount of work has been undertaken in recent months to improve safeguarding processes;
- thanks were extended to John Baugh for his contribution to the work of the Committee.

9.1.2. Internal Audit Annual Report 2014-15

CIC/15/5/11, Internal Audit Annual Report 2014-15, was received, considered and approved. It was reported that the internal audit service was working very well and the change of service provider had brought a new perspective to audits which was driving forward improvements.

9.1.3. Audit and Compliance Committee Annual Report to the Board 2014-15

CIC/15/5/12, Audit and Compliance Committee Annual Report to the Board and Chief Executive 2014-15, was received, considered and approved. It was noted that a copy of this report would be sent to the funding agency together with the external audit report and the report and financial statements.

9.1.4. Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2014-15

CIC/15/5/13, self-assessment of compliance with requirements, prepared to support the regularity audit, was received and noted.

9.1.5. Corporate Risk Register

CIC/15/5/14, Corporate Risk Register as at 19 November 2015, was received and noted. Lack of student enrolments is a continuing risk.

9.1.6. **Health and Safety Committee Annual Report**

CIC/15/5/15, Health and Safety Committee Annual Report 2014-15, was received and noted.

9.1.7. **Policy Review**

CIC/15/5/16, Vetting Checks and Single Central Record Procedure, was received, considered and approved.

The Chair reported that in view of the other roles that Kevin Prince carries out on behalf of the Board the Remuneration and Search Committee would like to recommend that Lisa Clampin takes over as Chair of this Committee with effect from 1 January 2016. This was approved by the Board.

It was reported that the Remuneration and Search Committee was looking for an additional member with relevant skills for co-option to the Audit and Compliance Committee. Governors were asked to forward nominations to the Chair, Committee Chair or the Clerk to Governors.

Governors extended their thanks to Kevin Prince for his work in Chairing the Audit and Compliance Committee.

9.2. **Curriculum and Quality Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2015 (CIC/15/5/17) were received and presented by the Committee Chair David Gask.

9.2.1. **Scorecard**

Governors' attention was drawn to Scorecard, a new tool available to staff providing live data on student performance, attendance and retention and, since half term, predicted outcomes.

9.2.2. **College Self-Assessment Report 2014-15**

CIC/15/5/18, Self-Assessment Report 2014-15, was received and discussed. Governors debated the grade for Leadership and Management (Good) in the context of the grade for Overall Effectiveness (requires improvement) and agreed that this reflects the distance that has been travelled whilst recognising that more work needs to be done.

The Board approved the Self-Assessment Report 2014-15.

9.2.3. **Policy Review**

The Board received, considered and approved:

- CIC/15/5/19, Higher Education Peer Review Policy, and
- CIC/15/5/20, Fitness to Study Policy

9.3. **Resources Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st September 2015 (CIC/15/5/21) and 4th November 2015 (CIC/15/5/22) were received and presented by the Committee Chair Richard Wainwright.

9.3.1. **Financial Monitoring**

CIC/15/5/23, Management Report October 2015 [Period 3], was received and considered. The Vice Principal: Finance and Operations reported that overall HE learner numbers were 75 short of budget, accounting for £0.5m underperformance on the tuition fees line. A number of actions have been put in place to improve the position, including February starts. The other area of concern is FE loan income. Work based learning is catching up with the budget with 488 enrolments to date compared to 540 enrolments for 2014-15. Some savings have already been achieved but more needs to be done to address some of the income shortfalls. This, coupled with the overspend on the South Wing, will impact on cash flow and the College will need some extra support during January to March when monthly grant income is low. The College had now received its funding reconciliation statement for last year and will be required to repay £844k to the funding agency for under delivery of adult apprenticeships last year; this will be removed from grant funding over three months in spring 2016.

Governors asked about the shortfall in HE numbers and were advised that there was strong competition this year. More part time learners were recruited and a teacher training course is due to start in February with a target recruitment of 20. The shortfall in years 2 and 3 was higher than anticipated and difficult to plan for. A surprisingly high number of students either withdrew or intermitted (are taking time out before progressing to the next stage of their course).

9.3.2. **HR Plan 2015-16**

CIC/15/5/24, HR Plan 2015-16, was received and considered. Governors asked if moving hourly paid staff into "bank" had implications for the College. It was reported that there were no financial implications and moving staff that are not on active assignment to "bank" means College reports are more accurate and appropriate processes around re-induction and safeguarding/Prevent training are triggered when an individual on "bank" moves back to an active assignment.

9.3.3. **HE Tuition Fees 2015-16**

CIC/15/5/25, HE Tuition Fees 2015-16, was received, considered and approved.

9.3.4. **Annual Report to the Board**

CIC/15/5/26, Resources Committee Annual Report to the Board 2014-15, was received and accepted.

The Chairman thanked all three Committee Chairs for their work during the year.

9.4. **Remuneration and Search Committee**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16th September 2015 (CIC/15/5/27) and 4th December 2015 (CIC/15/5/28) were received and presented by the Committee Chair Christopher Bridge.

9.4.1. **Membership Matters**

It was noted that this would be John Baugh's last meeting and Governors thanked him for his contribution to the work of the Board.

The Remuneration and Search Committee has looked at the skills needs of the Board and feels the membership will be strengthened by the appointment of a large

employer, preferably not someone in the public sector. Governors were asked to forward suggestions/nominations to the Chair, Principal or Clerk for consideration.

9.4.2. **Board Objectives 2015 and 2016**

It was noted that the Board had done reasonably well in two of the three objectives for 2015. Oversight of staff welfare will be carried forward to 2016.

Board objectives for 2016 were discussed and agreed:

- Promote excellence within the College
- Prepare as a Board for Area Review
- Monitor staff wellbeing
- Ensure the short and long term financial viability of the College

9.4.3. **Governor Self-Assessment 2014-15**

CIC/15/5/29, results of the Governor Self-Assessment 2014-15, was received and noted.

9.4.4. **Board Attendance 2014-15**

CIC/15/5/30, Board Attendance report 2015-16, was received and noted.

9.4.5. **Annual Report to the Board**

CIC/15/5/31, Remuneration and Search Committee Annual Report to the Board 2014-15, was received and accepted.

10. **Dates of Future Meetings**

It was noted that there would be a meeting with the College Management Group at 10:00am on Thursday, 17th December 2015 to present the results for 2014-15 and look forward to 2015-16 and beyond.

The Board meeting scheduled for 4.30pm on Tuesday, 9th February 2015 will now be a planning meeting starting at the earlier time of 2.00pm.

11. **Any other Business**

None

Lisa Clampin left the meeting for another engagement.

Part II – These minutes are not confidential but the supporting papers are confidential

12. The Part II minutes of the Resources Committee held on 19th November 2015 (CIC/15/5/32) were received and noted.