

Colchester Institute Corporation

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board  
held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018  
at the Sheepen Road Campus**

**Present**

Christopher Bridge, *in the Chair*  
Alison Andreas  
Brenda Baker  
Christopher-Alan Churley  
Mark Davies  
Martin Fordham

David Gask  
David Gronland  
David Kerridge  
Kevin Prince  
Karen Tarling  
Richard Wainwright

**In Attendance**

Gary Horne	Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development
Shaun McConnell	Executive Director: Human Resources
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors
Jill Wognum	Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality

**Apologies for absence** were received from Summer Mace, Sue Thompson-Arnold and Ian Thurgood

**1. Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest**

None.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 (CIC/18/1/2) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.

The notes of the Chair's meeting with the member of the College Management Group (CMG) on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 (CIC/18/1/3) were received and noted.

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None, other than on the agenda.

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

There was nothing to report under this agenda item.

**5. Principal's Report**

CIC/18/1/4, Principal's Report – February 2018, was received and considered. It was noted that following an examination of the recently published guidance, which contains a number of new criteria which were not known at the time of the submission of an Expression of Interest, a decision has been taken not to proceed with an Institutes of Technology bid. It is likely that there will only be one bid for an Institute of Technology at this stage in this LEP area covering Essex and Kent.

It was reported that Ofsted had been visiting local schools and colleges. In addition to the inspections noted in the Principals' Report, two more inspections were taking place that week in the County's Colleges

It was noted that the School and College Performance tables for summer 2018 were issued in late January. The College performed better than in the previous year in all ten measures and results were in many areas comparable to a number of local colleges more recently judged as “Good” by Ofsted. Work is continuing on trying to increase attendance at GCSE classes and examinations to improve overall achievement rates.

Progress against the High Level Performance Targets approved by the Corporation Board in July 2017 was noted. There are no major concerns on recruitment. The College would like to see more apprenticeship starts and is doing everything it can to increase numbers. The financial targets for apprenticeships are being achieved because enrolments are largely on higher value frameworks.

The College has produced a new Digital Transformation Strategy which will be taken forward by a new Director of Information and Learning Technologies. Interviews for this new post were scheduled to commence the following day.

## **6. Corporate Risk Register**

- 6.1. CIC/18/1/5, Corporate Strategic Risk Register as at 14 February 2018, was received and considered. This represents the key strategic risks to the organisation and is a subset of the larger Corporate Risk Register updated at least monthly by the College Executive. It was noted that good progress was being made on each risk. The Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development suggested that the risk around cash flow could now be reclassified as an operational risk given the concerns were now more around short term rather than longer term cash flow. It was reported that HR plans are coming forward to address staff recruitment and retention concerns.
- 6.2. CIC/18/1/6, Identification of Key Risks, was received. Governors were asked to identify the risk areas that they believe the College will need to address over the next 12 to 18 months, and hand their completed forms to the Clerk at the end of the meeting.

## **7. Resources Committee**

CIC/18/1/7, Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018, were received and presented by the Committee Chair, Richard Wainwright.

### **7.1.1. Sickness Absence Report**

The Committee had received a report on staff sickness absence which had shown that the average days absence per employee for the previous 12 months had increased compared to the same time for the previous year, which is a cause for concern. A more detailed report will be received at the next meeting, including external benchmark data. Action is being taken to reduce absence rates, based on new policies.

### **7.1.2. Work Placement Capacity Building Fund**

Governors were advised that from September 2018 students on Study Programmes will be expected to undertake between 45 and 60 days of quality, subject specific, work experience over the course of their programme, a significant increase on the current requirement for 30 hours work experience. Two hundred students will be impacted by this new requirement in the first year; this number will increase to about 2000 students in subsequent years. The College will need to put in place significant systems and processes to comply with this requirement, and the Government has put some generous funding in place to help colleges in the first year. The College expects to receive in excess of £400k (first paid in August) to cover the period April 2018 to July 2019. It is unclear whether funding will be available for future years.

### 7.1.3. **Management Report**

CIC/18/1/8, Management Report and Accounts December 2017 [Period 5], was received and considered. The Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development reported that there were improvements against the budget surplus during Period 5 but the College Executive were taking a prudent view on the year end forecast because there were still some uncertainties over income lines. The performance to date will put the College in a good position for its next monitoring meeting with the ESFA. The cash position remains tight, and if necessary the Chairman may exercise, before the April income due, the best short-term loan facility discussed by governors previously.

Governors welcomed the savings that were being achieved, but questioned whether the savings were having an impact on the student experience. It was acknowledged that some of the budget improvements were as a consequence of an underspend on the salary line due to difficulties recruiting to some posts. Other savings were the result of a number of financial strategies, including site rationalisation to reduce operating costs, and plans that are in place to make IT services more cost effective in a number of areas.

### 7.1.4. **College Insolvency Regime**

CIC/18/1/9, Association of Colleges briefing note on the College Insolvency Regime, was received and noted. Arising from the discussion it was confirmed that the College has in place indemnity insurance for Governors. A Governor questioned whether the level of indemnity insurance was adequate and was advised that the insurance would cover the cost of defending any claims against the Corporation.

### 7.1.5. **Wellbeing Annual report**

CIC/18/1/10, Report to the Resources Committee on activity to promote Staff Wellbeing during 2017, was received and considered. It was noted that the Wellbeing Policy is currently being reviewed and the refreshed policy will underpin wellbeing activity within the College.

## 8. **Marketing Plan - update on implementation**

CIC/18/1/11, update on progress in taking forward key areas in the Marketing Plan, was received and presented by the Principal. Following approval of the Marketing Plan last summer a number of priorities were agreed. The UCC Strategic Plan identified the importance of marketing the UCC brand and at an initial meeting between the College Executive and the Marketing Team it was agreed to focus a lot of time and resource on the UCC brand. The UCC website, which is believed to be a key aspect of promoting the brand, is being completely refreshed and republished from June 2018.

There was also discussion about how the College was promoting the other two key brands – Colchester Institute and CI Business Solutions.

A key area of focus is also The College at Braintree. The report identified a number of activities that were underway to support the promotion of the STEM agenda at Braintree. In respect of further education, the priority continues to be talking to students in the schools about professional and technical routes.

To coincide with National Apprenticeship Week 2018 (week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> March) the College will be holding two large events. On 5<sup>th</sup> March the College is hosting a mid-Essex Apprenticeship event at The College at Braintree and is expecting 1200 students to attend to talk to representatives from the College and other providers of apprenticeships and employers in the area. This is an annual event, which has previously been held at venues such as the Essex Showground. This event will be part of

the progression fair for internal students, and on 6<sup>th</sup> March an internal progression day will be held in Colchester followed by an apprenticeship event in the evening.

Another aspect of the Marketing Plan was to look at which elements of marketing campaigns were working and which were not. Following a review the decision was made to stop some marketing activity because there was no evidence of any impact and to look at different marketing opportunities.

Governors noted an extract from the marketing documents which was appended to the report as an example of the planning of activities to meet priority objectives.

It was reported that the work that has gone into open evenings has led to an increase in applications despite the fact that this year's Year 11 cohort is smaller than in previous years. Governors thanked the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support for the work that is being done to take forward the Marketing Plan.

**9. Feedback on Governor Link Visits**

Governors briefly reported on the link visits they had undertaken. Visits included tours of Digital Media, Music and Performing Arts and the STEM Centre at Braintree. Governors commented on the enthusiasm of the students.

**10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Corporation Board is scheduled for 11.00am on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018. If required, the meeting will be preceded with a Board briefing at 10.30am.

**11. Any Other Urgent Business**

Governors were encouraged to attend the final year Musical Theatre degree students' performance of Honk! The musical is to be performed at the Mercury Theatre on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**PART II – These minutes are not confidential but the supporting papers are confidential**

**12. Minutes**

The Part IIB minutes of the Board meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 (CIC/18/1/12) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.

**13. Resources Committee**

CIC/18/1/13, Part IIB minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018, were received and noted.