

Colchester Institute Corporation

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board
held on 25th April 2018
at the Sheepen Road Campus**

Present

Christopher Bridge, <i>in the Chair</i>	David Kerridge
Alison Andreas	Summer Mace
Brenda Baker	Kevin Prince
Christopher-Alan Churley	Ian Thurgood
Mark Davies	Sue Thompson-Arnold
David Gask	Richard Wainwright
David Gronland	

In Attendance

Maeve Borges	Vice Principal: Student Services and Support
Gary Horne	Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development
Shaun McConnell	Executive Director: Human Resources
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors
Jason Peters	Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance
Jill Wognum	Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Fordham.

Summer Mace was welcomed to her first meeting of the Corporation Board.

1. Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest

None.

2. Membership

It was reported that Karen Tarling has resigned her membership of the Board.

The Chair reported that the Remuneration and Search Committee had been looking for someone with experience in higher education to replace Bryn Morris on the Board and had identified a potential candidate. A small group (Chair, Vice Chair, Principal and Clerk) would be interviewing the candidate later that day.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2018 (CIC/18/2/1) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None, other than on the agenda.

5. Chair's Announcements/Action since last meeting

5.1. The Chair signed (12.03.18):

- The Grant Agreement between Essex County Council and Colchester Institute for the Centre for Health and Development, Colchester; and
- The Grant Agreement between Essex County Council and Colchester Institute for the STEM Innovation Campus, Braintree.

5.2. The Chair and Principal signed (27.03.18):

- The Contract between Colchester Institute Corporation and M Scott Properties Limited for the sale of freehold land with vacant possession (land at Church Lane, Bocking, Braintree, Essex).
- And the seal was affixed to, HM Land Registry Transfer of part of registered title (TP1), Land at Church Lane, Bocking, Braintree, Essex, to M Scott Properties Limited.

5.3. The Chair signed (27.03.18) documentation relating to an Education Finance Facility with Sancus Finance Limited. The Board was aware that the College had a potential cash pinch point in March/April and the Chair authorised (supported by the Chair of the Resources Committee and subsequently members of the Resources Committee) a very short-term loan facility with effect from 1 April 2018 against known income due. The loan was repaid in full on 20th April following the receipt of grant income from the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The alternative would have been to seek an overdraft from the bank, which would have been more expensive in terms of set-up fee and interest payable. Now that the facility has been agreed the College has the potential to draw down funding in the future without further set up costs, should the need arise. Governors asked if requesting an advance from the Funding Agency was an option and were advised that whilst previously advances against funding due were available, any such request would be deemed to be 'Exceptional Support' which would likely result in intervention from the FE Commissioner. Arising from the discussion it was reported that the AoC was now asking questions of the Department for Education about the profiling of funding payments, which, unlike school funding, is not received in equal monthly payments.

The Chair reported that Sancus required a Board resolution in a specified format, but recognised that due to the timing it would be agreed post hoc. The Board APPROVED the following minute:

It was reported to the meeting that from time to time the College intended to recommend to certain of its suppliers (referred to in this Minute as "our Supplier/s") that they become members of Sancus Finance Invoice Trading ("Sancus Finance"). In becoming a user of the Sancus Finance receivables trading platform our Supplier/s will benefit from accelerated payment of invoices which relate to sales of goods and/or services to the College (each such debt being a "Supplier Receivable").

As a condition of our Supplier/s being accepted for membership of Sancus Finance the College has agreed to provide to Sancus Finance (or Belvedere Security Limited (as security trustee)) Promissory Notes in relation to each and every Supplier Receivable which is auctioned over the Sancus Finance receivables trading platform, and in support of such Promissory Notes the College is required to execute a Letter of Undertaking in the form produced to the Meeting. After due and careful consideration of all the circumstances, and on being satisfied that it is for the benefit of the College, and in the interests of the College for the purposes of carrying on its business, to enter into the Letter of Undertaking, it was resolved that the terms of the Letter of Undertaking be approved.

Consequently, it was resolved that any one or more Governors be authorised:

- to execute any Promissory Note, certificate or other document required to be executed by the College in relation to any Supplier Receivable;
- to agree any amendments to the form of any Promissory Note;
- on behalf of the College to execute the Letter of Undertaking and all certificates, notices, letters and other documents required to be executed by the College as a condition of the continued membership of the Supplier as a member of Sancus Finance, in each case in such manner or form as such Governor may in his or her absolute discretion think fit.

It was further resolved that the Clerk be authorised to furnish Sancus Finance with a certified copy of this minute.

5.4. The Chair reported that he has spent some time with the Principal, Executive Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality, and Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance, to discuss the College's performance in 2016/17 (FE) and the actions being taken to improve achievement rates in 2017/18. National Performance Tables 2016/17 (published in January and mid-March 2018), were considered at the March meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee and

show that the College has improved over the previous year and that learners who achieve are making good progress. National Achievement Rate Tables released at the end of March show that the College is performing less well in terms of overall achievement rates. This is principally due to the decision taken by the College Executive at the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year to stretch students by putting them onto Level 2 Functional Skills English and maths rather than GCSEs. Colleges who took the decision to put students on GCSE English and maths programmes had better results as a whole. Data within Scorecard highlights that there is a tendency for students not to return after Easter and if the withdrawal rate in the summer term is similar to that of previous years the College could again have results that are less than satisfactory.

The Chair reported that he had attended a meeting with FE Area Heads on 16th April and just before this Board meeting he took the opportunity to visit every English and maths session and he was very encouraged by what he saw and the depth of planning that has gone into keeping students on programme and achieving. He believes that there is a strong will to do better this year. If the College appears to be slipping it could trigger an Ofsted monitoring visit or an early full Inspection.

A Governor reported that he had recently made a link visit during which functional skills was discussed – mainly in relation to Apprenticeships. He was advised that students are resistant to the requirement to continue to study English and maths having previously failed these subjects.

This was discussed further as part of the Principal's Report.

6. **Principal's Report**

6.1. **Principal's Report April 2018**

The Principal presented her written report (CIC/18/2/2).

The Chair of the Post 18 education and funding review attended the AoC Spring Policy Conference. The AoC will be putting out its response to Post 18 review consultation during week commencing 30 April. There was a lot of discussion about maths and English at the conference and a Principal put forward a proposal to DfE policy makers that the content of GCSEs are reviewed so that they are more applied maths and English. The Principal reported that discussions at the conference will help inform decisions over the College's higher education provision over the next few years. It was reported that in common with a number of other Colleges, Harlow College has moved its provision to Levels 4 and 5 technical and apprenticeships and no longer offers three year honours degrees. This may be of interest to Colchester Institute.

The College will be holding its first employer panel for health and care on 27th April. The meeting, which will be chaired by the Principal, will look at what employers would like to be see in the health and care suites in the new extension to the South Wing.

6.2. **FE Final Outcomes 2016/17**

The Principal tabled and presented two additional papers:

- Colchester Institute – Summary of 2016/17 Learning
- National Achievement Rates – 2016/17

The summary of 2016/17 learning data shows that for most of the measures (which focus on retention and progress) Colchester Institute was in the range of a Good college. The national achievement rate tables are concerned with achievement (the percentage of students who achieve their qualifications of those who started). If a student leaves during the year or completes the programme but does not achieve the qualification, it has a negative impact on overall achievement rates.

The College was pleased with its apprenticeship performance. Adult performance overall was less pleasing, but is improving year on year. The College performed well in adult Functional Skills in comparison to other providers, but at 79% achievement in adult functional skills, having so many

students enrolled on Functional Skills has a detrimental impact on overall adult achievement rates because most adult courses offered, nationally, have achievement rates in the high 80s and 90s.

The focus of the College Executive is on 16-18. The College's overall achievement rate for 8026 qualification entries (many students study at least one additional qualification) was poor compared to national benchmarks. The poor performance was largely due to English and maths, which accounts for 45% of 16-18 entries. There were also a few curriculum areas that delivered poor outcomes last year either because of ongoing staffing problems throughout the year or as a result of the introduction of qualifications which are pass/fail and with no or very limited opportunities to resit. About one quarter of all areas performed extremely well.

The Principal presented more detail on the 16-18 performance. It was reported that almost one quarter of the results were GCSE English and maths, and one quarter were in functional skills, split equally between Level 1 and Level 2. The College's strategy had been to put students with a GCSE at Grade E in English/maths (a Level 1 pass) onto a Level 2 so that they could improve their outcome rather than repeat a Level. The College was applauded for its aspirational learning aims around English/maths during the Ofsted Inspection in 2016. Unfortunately, Functional Skills are pass/fail qualifications and too many students did not achieve because it is too much of a stretch from Grade E at GCSE to Level 2. The pass rate on Level 1 Functional Skills was higher, and the pass rate in GCSEs was much better. The failure rate at GCSE suggests that in the majority of cases it was because the student failed to turn up for some element of the examination, and a lot of work is going on this year to encourage students to sit the papers.

The Principal outlined the actions that have been taken to improve on last year's achievement rates:

- Students with a GCSE at Grade F or above have been put on a GCSE resit programme rather than Functional Skills, almost doubling the number of GCSE entries this year.
- Students without a GCSE at Grade F or above are taking Functional Skills at Level 1. There are far fewer students studying Functional Skills this year.
- Functional Skills used to be delivered across the College. There is now a teaching team of three, located in the English and Maths Department.
- Functional Skills examinations used to be planned locally in areas; they are now managed centrally with resit opportunities for students who do not achieve at the first attempt.
- The GCSE Team will be available to support staff and students with Functional Skills when GCSE teaching has finished.
- There will be a campaign to encourage attendance at GCSE examinations. Incentives will include prizes for one third of students who attend all examinations. Local areas are organising breakfasts and activities to encourage students to attend.
- The College is doing what it can to remove barriers, for example students not attending a maths exam because they do not have a calculator.
- Area progress days are being held to focus on student outcomes.

The Principal anticipated that there will be a 10% improvement in overall achievement rates for 16-19 year old students this year.

In response to a question it was reported that the quality of the teaching in English and maths is not poor, but the College still struggles to motivate the students to attend and achieve. The College stresses the importance of these subjects during induction, and the embedding of English and maths in terms of raising general ability is looked at and reported on in every lesson observed.

7. 2018-19

7.1. Applications

CIC/18/2/3, Further Education Applications Report (Full Time Study Programmes) was received and noted. The cohort of year 11 students in all schools is the smallest of recent years (numbers will start

to increase again next year) but overall applications are steady state compared to last year and the College is still recruiting well at this point. The College has a nominal deadline of 31st January for external applicants and the schools encourage students to apply within this timeframe. Mid-year Progress Boards are held in February/March and students who are expected to continue next year are offered places at this time. There is an increase in the number of applications in Colchester and a slight decrease in Braintree and Clacton. Clacton numbers are down because of changes in some of the Foundation Learning programmes.

It was reported that work will be undertaken at the Clacton campus of the summer to create a Construction and Employment Skills Centre. There will be an improved offer but more limited range of courses. The College has met with Tendring District Council and they are very supportive of what the College is doing at Clacton.

CIC/18/2/4, University Centre Colchester Application report April 2018, was received and noted. It was reported that the downward trend is continuing and it is anticipated that there will be about 50 fewer students starting in September. There are a number of reasons for this. Nationally there are a lot of places available. The College has closed two or three programmes that did not recruit last year. Some programmes are being revamped and the College is waiting until it has a new validating partner to revalidate a new, more suitable offer. Several programmes are ready to revalidate. In line with the Marketing Plan, work is on-going to revamp the website to attract HE students and should be complete this summer. Some HE students are now choosing to go on higher apprenticeships, and they are not included in these application numbers. It is hoped to see an improvement in numbers next year.

7.2. Curriculum Plans

CIC/18/2/5, Overview of Curriculum Changes for 2018-2019, was received and noted. It was reported that a recent AoC briefing is suggesting that the promised changes to the Level 3 vocational curriculum arising from the Sainsbury Report will not now be fully introduced until 2024. OfQual are re-confirming qualifications that were going to end in 2020/2021 and a number of areas are going back to qualifications that do not include the compulsory examination element. Next year the College will start piloting substantive work placements (45-60 days) and is currently talking to employers to develop such placements for 200 students. Currently students undertake 30 hours work experience. If the Sainsbury report is implemented the College will be required to deliver 188,000 days work experience per annum.

8. Reports from Committees

8.1. Audit and Compliance Committee

CIC/18/2/6, Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Compliance Committee held on 18th April 2018, were received and presented by the Committee Chair, Kevin Prince.

8.1.1. Reappointment of Financial Statement Auditors

CIC/18/2/7, Performance Indicators for the Financial Statement Auditors 2016-17, was received and noted. Governors asked about the periodic re-tendering of the service, and were advised that there is a three-yearly review of the auditors work. It was AGREED to reappoint Scrutton Bland as Financial Statements Auditors for the current financial year.

8.1.2. Corporate Risk Register

CIC/18/2/9, Strategic Corporate Risk Register (updated 27 March 2018), was received and considered. It was reported that the College Executive meet every four weeks to review the Risk Register and the corporate risks were changed quite significantly at the last meeting, due to academic performance in English and math. The national achievement tables could trigger an earlier Ofsted visit than planned and an unsatisfactory outcome is a reputational issue. Colleges graded 2 receive a short Ofsted visit every three years to reaffirm the grade; this can be converted to a longer visit if it is felt there is evidence to support a change of grade, either up or down.

The Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development reported that the strategic risk relating to the failure of the Braintree Masterplan will be increased due to an emerging risk around the planning position. Due to the volume of applications that the District Council are dealing with, the College has been unable to secure a pre planning application with the planner. The Principal has spoken to the Chief Executive of the Council and been offered a fifteen-minute telephone conversation with a senior planning advisor to provide advice and guidance prior to the submission of the full planning application.

8.1.3. **Policy Approval**

The Board received, considered and APPROVED:

- CIC/18/2/9, Risk Management Policy and Procedures
- CIC/18/2/11, Equality and Diversity Policy
- CIC/18/2/12, Health and Safety Policy

8.1.4. **Equality and Diversity Report**

CIC/18/2/10, Equality and Diversity Report for year 2016/17, was received noted.

8.2. **Curriculum and Quality Committee**

CIC/18/2/13, Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee held on 20th March 2018, were received and presented by the Committee Chair, David Gask.

8.2.1. **Institutional Annual Review of Courses 2016/17**

CIC/18/2/14, Institutional Annual Review of Courses 2016/17, was received and considered. Governors were pleased to note that the destination data for higher education is still very good with 90% of students having a positive outcome (in employment or further study), and that the percentage of students achieving a good degree increased last year.

8.2.2. **Mid-year re-grading exercise by Curriculum Area**

CIC/18/2/15, Mid-year regrading exercise for Study Programmes February 2018, was received and discussed. It was reported that FE vocational areas were currently inputting predicted outcomes for this year, and this information will be reported to the next meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

8.2.3. **Annual Report to the Board**

CIC/18/2/16, Curriculum and Quality Committee Annual Report to the Board 2016/17, was received, considered and accepted.

8.3. **Resources Committee**

CIC/18/2/17, Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 17th April 2018, were received and presented by the Committee Chair, Richard Wainwright.

8.3.1. **LGPS Request for Security**

The College has a long standing requirement to reduce the long term liability position on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It was agreed at the previous meeting of the Resources Committee to look at the potential of a security option, which was pursued by the College Executive. However, because of the cost, and the uncertainty over whether the Sheepen Road site valuation would achieve the required level to support a second tier charge on the campus, it was agreed that a 17-year deficit repayment period without the need for security was the least risk approach and the best option. This was supported by the Board.

8.3.2. **Management Report February 2018**

CIC/18/2/18, Management Report and Accounts February 2018 [Period 7], was received and considered. Progress against the Financial Recovery Plan targets was noted.

8.3.3. **Feedback from SFA Case Conference**

CIC/18/2/19, Minutes of the Financial Health Case Conference held on 12th March 2018, was received and noted. The date of the next meeting has yet to be agreed.

8.3.4. **Capital Projects Update**

The Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development reported that revised internal layout proposals have been received from curriculum staff for the STEM Building at the College at Braintree. The proposal is to create a digital media hub on the ground floor to meet perceived future demand in this area. The architects have been asked to rework what was a standard three-workshop layout into one single carpentry workshop and convert the other two workshops into a digital media hub. This will involve extra cost and the College is looking at opportunities to mitigate this, such as by reusing some of the booths in the redundant block at Braintree rather than purchasing new. Governors asked about the need for the three workshops in the original layout and were advised that one workshop had not been designated and the other workshop had been identified for construction skills. The College is looking at where construction skills can be located, possibly in the STEM 1 building.

The project at Sheepen Road is going forward as planned. Contractor presentations are scheduled for 26th April. The refurbishment of the gym will take place over the summer 2018 with the main work on the fourth floor of South Wing scheduled to commence in May 2019.

8.3.5. **HR Plan**

The Committee had received an update on progress against the HR Plan 2016/17. It was an ambitious plan and there has been some slippage in the implementation. A staff survey is carried out every two years and the next survey will be carried out during May 2018. The results of the survey will help inform the HR strategy going forward.

9. **Governance Matters**

9.1.1. **Register of Members Interests**

CIC/18/2/21, Summary of changes to the Register of Corporation Member's Interests during the period 20.04.17 to 13.04.18, was received and noted.

9.1.2. **Office for Students Registration**

CIC/18/2/22, The Office for Students Registration, was received and noted. The paper summarised the application requirements, the 'Fit and Proper' Person requirements, and the need to collect and share personal information on Board members as part of the application. Governors were asked complete and return the information requested in the paper to the Clerk as soon as possible.

9.1.3. **Training for Governors**

CIC/18/2/23, Governor Training, was received and accepted. Governors who have not yet undertaken the training were asked to complete online training in Safeguarding, Prevent, GDPR and Equality and Diversity within six weeks.

10. **Next Meeting**

It was agreed to cancel the Board/planning meeting scheduled for 13th June 2018. The next meeting of the Board will be on Wednesday, 25th July at 4.30pm.

11. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items