

Colchester Institute Corporation

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board
held on 10th October 2018
at the Sheepen Road Campus**

Present:

Christopher Bridge, <i>in the Chair</i>	Liz Goodall
Alison Andreas	David Gronland
Brenda Baker	Scott Piper
Daniel Clarke	Kevin Prince
Mark Davies	Terry Smyth
Martin Fordham	Richard Wainwright
David Gask	

In Attendance:

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 Sue Thomson-Arnold and Ian Thurgood

Liz Goodall was welcomed to her first meeting of the Corporation Board

BOARD BRIEFING

The meeting was preceded with a presentation from the Executive Director: Human Resources on the HR Strategy 2018-2020. The presentation focused on the main components of the strategy and how the College will achieve the aims of the strategy: “ensuring we have the right **person**, in the right **place**, at the right **time**”.

The HR Strategy links directly to the staff focused priority in the College's overarching Strategic Plan 2017-2020:

“Colchester Institute will be valued as a great place to work by staff and recognised as a good employer within the community. This will be achieved by:

- *Listening to employees and communicating well.*
- *Focussing on the essential and productive, and working smarter.*
- *Placing importance on supporting staff, their wellbeing and staff engagement.*
- *A staff resourcing and reward approach that is fit for today - and tomorrow.*
- *Adopting a ‘One CI’ culture to achieve individual, team and organisational goals.”*

Underpinning the strategy are various success measures, key performance indicators, action plans and the annual HR Plan. The HR Plan has a number of strands each with their own action plans:

- (i) Apprenticeships: to ensure that the College gets a return on the investment it makes as a levy-paying employer a key part of the resource strategy (as an organisation and within departments) is the recruitment of apprentices and offering apprenticeships as CPD opportunities.
- (ii) Absence management, particularly sickness absence management.
- (iii) Equality and Diversity (fulfilling the staff aspects of the College’s Equality and Diversity plan which covers both staff and students)
- (iv) Staff development, including management development and industrial updating.
- (v) Staff communication - this is crucial for staff engagement.
- (vi) Staff engagement - this is a key determinant of how successful the College is an organisation.

- (vii) Staff wellbeing - the new staff wellbeing policy is due to be launched over the next few weeks.
- (viii) Organisational Development - this involves interventions in a systematic way to improve performance. There is a desire to move to and embed a One CI culture within the organisation.
- (ix) Resourcing and reward - considerations include terms and conditions, pay and non-financial rewards.
- (x) HR Service Delivery - there is an intention to move to a more proactive delivery model from HR staff. The department has been restructured to allow HR Advisors to support management as required. As part of meeting the overarching strategy an HR Service Level Agreement is to be developed.
- (xi) Department people plans - going forward there will be departmental people plans to identify staff development and resourcing issues at a local level.

The HR Strategy document references HR capability to deliver the strategy and the associated plans, using relevant frameworks and tools. The Executive Director: Human Resources is an active member of the CIPD professional body, giving him access to local and regional branches, individual members and the CIPD professional standards framework.

Arising from the discussion it was noted that the College has an ageing staff profile and a number of experienced staff were due to retire within the next few years. Governors asked how this was reflected in the risk register and how the College was preparing for this. It was reported that this should be reflected in the departmental risk registers and in people plans that the HR Advisors will be working on with Department Managers covering issues such as this and areas such as succession planning.

Governors asked what the biggest challenge was to achieving the Strategy and were advised that the main issue was capacity both within HR and within the organisation.

The Executive Director: Human Resources was thanked for his presentation.

PART I

1. Declarations of any conflicts of interest

None.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2018 (CIC/18/4/1) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

None, other than on the agenda.

4. Chair's Announcements/Action since last meeting

4.1. It was reported that the Chair had approved updates to Campus names. Going forward The College at Braintree and The College at Clacton will be known as Colchester Institute Braintree Campus and Colchester Institute Clacton Campus respectively. The name changes will be phased in as documents, such as the prospectus, are reprinted.

4.2. It was reported that the Chair and Principal had signed (02.10.18) and the Corporation Seal had been affixed to Deeds of Appointment, Novation and Collateral Warranty in respect of the South Wing 2 Development. CIC/18/4/2, list of documents which had been signed under seal, was received and accepted.

4.3. The Chair reported how much he had enjoyed the graduation ceremonies the previous week. A souvenir pull-out was available in the local press, with photographs of the events on social media.

5. Principal's Report

The Principal presented her written report for October 2018 (CIC/18/4/3).

- 5.1. Governors noted the activities that were being organised as part of Colleges Week (week commencing 15th October). The purpose of Colleges Week is to celebrate all the great work that colleges do. Colchester Institute is investing in a spread in the local press, coinciding with the start of open events for the current year, and celebrating the work the College is doing and has done. The focus will be on the achievements of students at Level 3.

The other element of Colleges Week is to support the campaign for fair funding for FE and bring funding issues to the attention of policy and decision makers. Staff, students and stakeholders are encouraged to write to their local MP and the Minister of State, and a march and rally at Westminster has been arranged for Wednesday, 17th October. A group of eight from the College, including the President of the Students' Union, three Union representatives, the Executive Director: Human Resources and the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support will be travelling to London to join the march and rally. The College has also secured a meeting in the parliamentary building with Will Quince MP and Bernard Jenkin MP to discuss funding. The College is also hoping to be on BBC Radio Essex to get coverage for the campaign.

A parliamentary petition has been set up and is waiting to be approved. If it gets 100k signature the issue will be considered for debate in parliament.

- 5.2. The College has pledged its support for Colchester Citizens Alliance. Once the alliance is formally founded, the work is likely to focus on projects to tackle mental health, in particular providing better support for young people with mental ill health, locally and addressing issues such as housing and hate crime locally.
- 5.3. It was noted that the College enrolled around 300 fewer 16-18 learners in September than it has been funded for. Under the lagged learner funding methodology this will have a significant impact in terms of this funding line in 2019-20 (about £1.5m reduction).

Arising from the discussion it was noted that there was rapidly increasing competition from schools with sixth forms, and in particular in a number of local school sixth forms, there had been notable growth in vocational programmes in direct competition with the College's offer. This is the case in Tendring, Colchester and Braintree.

Governors discussed whether Colchester Institute should focus on those areas of provision that it excels at and become more of a technical college, and agreed that this may be something to look at in the future. It was pointed out that the vocational courses offered in most sixth forms were equivalent to just one A level, whereas the applied general programmes that Colchester Institute runs are the two, and mainly, three A level equivalent programmes that provide students with the breadth and depth to prepared them for Higher Education or employment. It was suggested that the College is also well placed geographically to attract learners and the range of courses offered by the College is also significant. Targeted marketing and the messages the College puts out was also seen as important.

6. **Update on Quality Performance against Targets**

The Principal reported on performance against targets 2017/18, noting that some results are not due until January/March 2019. A paper on overall achievement rates will be reported to the next meeting. Achievement rates were reported as:

- Achievement including English and math: 81%. This represents a 9% improvement on last year, but the College did not quite achieve the target (83%) or the national average.
- Success on main vocational qualifications: 85.3% (target 90%) which is an improvement on last year (82%).
- GCSE Maths/English (Grades 1-9): 82% compared to 71% last year. The progress made is much better than previously and is above the most recent national averages.

- Apprenticeships: 74% - this is a few points higher than the national average.
- Higher education - the number of students achieving good degrees increased from 68% to 71%. Student satisfaction was also up 11 points to 82%. Module feedback increased from 75% overall to 79%, below the ambitious target of 82%.

The data will be looked at in more detail in the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

Governors asked about the 18% of students who did not achieve GCSE English/maths and were advised that some learners did not make it to that point in the year; some did not turn up the examination (although the numbers were much fewer than last year); and some learners did not do enough in the examination to be graded.

The Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance was thanked for all the work he had done in getting learners to attend the final examinations.

Governors asked about the impact of not quite achieving the national averages. It was reported that the national picture will not be known until February/March 2019. The College will need to continue this positive trajectory following the two poor years previously to this one. It was reported that some national performance figures indicate that there could be some fluctuations between colleges depending on how much they embraced the new technical qualifications and how well they performed.

7. **Resources Committee**

CIC/18/4/4, Minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 2nd October 2018, was received and presented by the Committee Chair Richard Wainwright.

7.1. **Management Report**

CIC/18/4/5, Management Report and Accounts July 2018 [Period 12], was received and considered. It was noted that the College performed very well financially last year with both income above budget and costs below budget. This will enable the College to report in the 2017/18 financial report and accounts a financial health rating of Good. The Principal and the College Executive were thanked for their hard work in achieving this result. It was reported that the balance sheet was also improved as a result of a re-evaluation of the Local Government Pension Fund. It is expected that the financial notice of concern will be lifted.

7.2. **Student Enrolments 2018**

It was reported that year to date apprenticeship numbers are close to target, taking into account actual enrolments and learners in the pipeline.

The shortfall in 16-18 enrolments will have a financial impact in 2019-20. It is critical that the College achieves all other income targets and contains costs. This will be closely monitored by the Resources Committee. The College is running fewer groups than planned and in some cases have had to close a group in a particular location because the group size was not viable. Total staff numbers will be reduced during this year.

It was noted that employment levels are at their highest since 1979 and this area is not as politically important as it was. For the first time ever the College has reduced the number of groups working with NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) as well. In Braintree the College had just four enrolments for a course targeted at NEETS so it did not run.

7.3. **Property Issues**

7.3.1. **Sheepen Road Campus**

It was reported that the College was still in pre-planning discussions and is looking to submit the full planning application at the end of October, with a determination in January 2019.

Building is due to start at Easter with handover in December 2019.

7.3.2. **Braintree Campus**

It was reported that since the meeting of the Resources Committee, the main negative comment on the Planning Portal appears to have been withdrawn. There is still an objection to the application from the neighbour.

The College was advised earlier that day that it will be a devolved decision, which is awaiting sign off by the Senior Planning Officer. The Executive were hopeful that the decision would be known by the end of the week. There are likely to be some conditions around the time of day when machinery can be operated etc. The contractor should be able to deliver the new building in time for September 2019.

It was reported that there is one risk to the project in respect of the relocation of the telephone mast. The Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development is in talks with both telecoms providers and is maintaining the momentum with regular communications

It is hoped that the College will be able to show some images of what the new campus will look like at the October open event.

Governors thanked the Principal, Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development and Director of Capital Projects for all the work they have put into getting the project to this stage.

7.3.3. **SELEP Funding Bid**

It was reported that an outline proposal for funding from SELEP to support the development of ground works at the Sheepen Road Campus has been accepted and the College has been invited to submit a detailed application by 19th October 2018. The development is in line with the new LEP Skills Strategy and the College is hoping to receive £300k towards a new grounds works and scaffolding training centre of excellence.

7.4. **Staff Engagement Plan**

CIC/18/4/7, Staff Engagement Plan, was received, considered and APPROVED. The plan is one of the pillars of the HR Strategy. It was noted that some of the timescales in the plan had been revised in response to concerns expressed by the Resources Committee at the short timescales proposed for achieving some of the objectives.

It was agreed that Governors should support the plan through the link governor scheme.

8. **Future meetings**

It was reported that:

- 8.1. A number of staff and students have worked to produce a memorial to celebrate 100 years since the end of the First World War. It is hoped Governors will be able to attend the formal unveiling ceremony at the Colchester campus on the morning of 7th November 2018. There will be an event on the afternoon of 9th November at Braintree at which a piece of student art work will be unveiled.
- 8.2. The next meeting of the Corporation Board is on Wednesday, 12th December 2018 at 4.30pm.
- 8.3. The Chair's briefing to College Management is scheduled for 10.00am on Thursday, 13th December 2018. All Governors are welcome to attend.

9. **Any other Urgent Business**

9.1. **Teachers' Pension Scheme**

CIC/18/4/11, Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) – Position Paper, was received and considered. It was noted that the College was currently paying employer contributions of 16.5% to the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The Government is proposing that the employer contribution rate for the Teachers' Pension Scheme will increase by 7% from September 2019. The financial implications for the College were noted.