

Colchester Institute Corporation

*Minutes of a Meeting of the Audit and Compliance Committee  
held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
at the Sheepen Road Site*

**Present**

Mark Davies, in the Chair  
Lisa Clampin

Liz Goodall  
Terry Smyth

**In Attendance**

Chris Adams	Director of Information and Learning Technologies (item 4 only)
Alison Andreas	Principal and Chief Executive
Amanda Drew	Director of Apprenticeships and Business Solutions (item 5.2 only)
Gary Horne	Executive Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Development
Anna O'Keeffe	Senior Manager, RSM, Internal Auditor
Hazel Paton	Clerk to the Governors

Apologies for absence were received from Irene Kettle.

1. **Declaration of any conflicts of interest regarding any items on the agenda**

None.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019 (CIC/AC/20/1/1) were received and confirmed. The Chairman signed the minute book.

3. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None, other than on the agenda.

4. **Update on College Cyber Security Controls**

CIC/AC/20/1/2, Information and Learning Technologies – Digital Security Updated March 2020, was received and noted. The Director of Information and Learning Technologies gave an oral report on digital security for the first quarter 2020. The detailed discussion is recorded as a separate, confidential minute.

5. **New Internal Audit Reports**

5.1. **Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing**

CIC/AC/20/1/3, Internal Audit Report 1.19/20 Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing, was received and presented by the Internal Auditor. The review resulted in a substantial assurance opinion. It was reported that a lot of the initiatives had been introduced relatively recently making it difficult to measure the impact they were having. The measures being taken by the College are in line with what other colleges are doing.

Governors asked about outcomes and were advised by the Principal that it was too early to see tangible benefits from the investment. Staff sickness absence has fallen slightly over the last twelve months but not necessarily as a result of the wellbeing package. A lot of the initiatives only started in the last few months.

Governors asked about staff surveys and were advised that the last all staff general satisfaction survey was carried out about 18 months ago. A survey asking about aspects of physical and mental health and wellbeing was carried out in December/January. The results are being used

to inform the Workplace Health Champions on where to focus their efforts and to provide a base line against which to evaluate impact.

Governors observed that different methodologies could be used to obtain staff feedback. A different approach could be to sit down and talk to a sample of people to bring out a different understanding of the issues.

The Internal Auditor was asked if the College was doing anything that was different or better/worse than its other clients. It was reported that the College was already doing most things. The audit did identify that the College might wish to introduce a more standardised approach to raising awareness with regards to communications. For example the names of mental health champions have not been published; this might be because the College is in the early stages of implementation.

Governors asked about the mental health training for line managers provided by Birkett Long LLP. It was reported that the session was delivered by a senior employment solicitor. Its focus was on good practice and how to provide opportunities and space for staff to talk to their manager and how to embrace and take forward those conversations.

Governors noted that the College has a "Working Well" accreditation action plan and asked if an overarching wellbeing strategy is in place. A wellbeing strategy is in development but a lot of activity is already taking place.

In response to a question it was confirmed that a wellbeing week was held during January. This was the first year this activity was undertaken. The College also focusses on wellbeing in late June (at the end of term) with a range of activities as part of an annual wellbeing day.

#### 5.2. **Apprenticeship Funding**

CIC/AC/20/1/4, Apprenticeship Funding Report, was received and considered. The detailed discussion is recorded as a separate, confidential minute.

#### 6. **Internal Audit Tracker**

CIC/AC/20/1/5, Internal Audit Tracker, was received and noted. It was reported that in response to the concerns at the last meeting in respect of the increasing number of outstanding recommendations action owners are being contacted more frequently in order to ensure more actions are completed in a timely manner.

It was noted that there were no outstanding high risk recommendations, but there were a number of older actions that need to be cleared. The Business Continuity Plan report contained 11 recommendations, five of which were outstanding. In light of the current pandemic, the Plan has been updated to ensure it is an up-to-date as it can be.

The Committee asked for future reports to include historic data so they can more easily see the number of actions reducing.

#### 7. **Internal Audit Progress Report**

CIC/AC/20/1/6, Internal Audit Progress Report, was receiving and presented by the Internal Auditor. It was reported that one audit had been completed and that, due to increasing pressure on the Finance Team, the planned audit of Financial Planning and Control had been moved back to the end of the academic year. The audit of the Student Experience was due to start in late March.

Governors questioned whether June was the best time to carry out, and for the College to get best value from, an audit of financial planning and budgetary control and suggested deferring it. It would be abnormal not have a key financial control audit in the plan. The budget cycle started in February,

so it would be appropriate to look at different financial control this year and defer the planned review until October, so the findings can feed into the controls for the new budget year. It was agreed that the College Executive would consider this at its next meeting, having regard to the risk register, and report back to this Committee outside the meeting.

## 8. Risk Management

### 8.1. Notes from Risk Management Committee

CIC/AC/19/3/14, notes of the Risk Management Committee meeting held on 12 November 2019, was received and noted. Items covered included:

- Discussion with the Dean of Higher Education of the risks in UCC (University Centre Colchester) in respect of HE recruitment targets and the expectations for resources from fee-paying students.
- Presentation from the Health and Safety Manger around Coronavirus and current action planning
- New risks added to the HR and Finance departmental risks registers. The Corporate Risk Register was updated accordingly.

### 8.2. Top Five Risk

The Committee received an oral update on the current top five risks. Discussion was focused on the risk of a major health disaster / outbreak (eg potential pandemic), which had been moved from a deferred risk to the top live risk. The detailed discussion is recorded as a separate, confidential minute.

### 8.3. Corporate Risk Register

CIC/AC/20/1/8, Corporate Risk Register as at 27 November 2019, was received and noted.

## 9. Reports under the College's Fraud Policy

It was noted that there had been no reports of suspected fraudulent or irregular acts under the College's Fraud Policy since the last meeting of the Audit and Compliance Committee.

## 10. Data Protection/Freedom of Information Dashboard

CIC/AC/20/1/9, Data Protection/Freedom of Information dashboard, was received and noted.

The Chair reported that he had submitted a Freedom of Information request to the Education and Skills Funding Agency in relation to the IFMC (Integrated Financial Model for College). The request has been acknowledged and a full response is awaited.

## 11. Health and Safety Committee

CIC/AC/20/1/10, Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020, was received and noted. At the time of the meeting, one third of the planned compliance audits for the year had been completed; this had now risen to one half.

A new Security Manager has taken up post, and has introduced a number of changes to the way issues are dealt with. A number of external partnerships are being formed with local groups including the local retail park that adjoins the Colchester campus.

## 12. Date of next meeting

Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 at 4.00pm. The Chairman gave his apologies for that meeting. It was agreed that Lisa Clampin would Chair the meeting in his absence.

**13. Any other Urgent Business**

**13.1. Committee Terms of Reference**

CIC/AC/20/1/11, Audit and Compliance Committee terms of reference, were received and noted. The Committee Chair questioned whether this Committee should be more audit and risk rather than compliance. The Clerk had been asked to look at practice in the FE sector, and reported that of a sample of approx. 12 colleges, just two had an audit and risk committee; the rest had an audit committee. It was agreed that audit and risk would more accurately reflect the work of this committee. It was agreed to seek formal Board approval for a change to the terms of reference. Authority was delegated to the Committee Chair to agree changes to the current terms of reference for Board approval.