

COLCHESTER INSTITUTE CORPORATION

**Meeting of the
CORPORATION BOARD
To be held on Thursday 27 February 2025
4.30pm, at the Colchester Campus**

Members:

Lisa Blake – Corporation Board Chair
Lee Bingham – HE Student Governor
Alison Andreas – Principal and Chief Executive
Sanjeev Arya – Governor
Simon Attwood - Governor
Stephanie Bettinson - Governor
Richard Block - Governor
Chris Donovan - Governor
Adam Fair – Staff Governor
Marco Iciek - Governor
Nicola Jay – Staff Governor
Sally Messenger - Governor
Tim Triffitt – FE Student Governor
Caroline Williams – Governor

In attendance:

Gary Horne – Deputy Chief Executive
Ali Davies – Deputy Principal
Mark Emerson – Vice Principal
Alison Bennett – Head of Governance

PRE-BOARD BRIEFING

Subject: Emerging Risks

Presenter: Claire Lavery - Audit Manager, TIAA

MINUTES

The meeting started at 16:40

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received. Simon Attwood and Michael Asare Bediako were not present.

The Chair welcomed Lee Bingham, HE Student Governor and Mark Emerson, Vice Principal to the meeting.

2. Declaration of any conflicts of interest

None.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

CIC/25/1/01, minutes of the 17 December 2024 meeting were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

4. Action Sheet and Matters Arising from the Minutes

CIC/25/01/02, Corporation Board Action Sheet, was received and noted.

5. **Membership Matters**

It was noted that Lee Bingham had been appointed as Student Governor, as elected by the higher education students, for a term of up to two years from 13.02.24.

6. **Chair's Action/ Announcements**

The Chair reported that no Chair's actions had been undertaken since the last meeting.

Appointment of Vice Chair

Governors had been asked, ahead of the meeting, to consider nominations for the role of Corporation Board Vice Chair. One nomination had been received, Sally Messenger, ahead of the meeting and no additional nominations were received at that point in the agenda. SM was asked to leave the meeting. Following a vote, it was unanimously **AGREED** that Sally Messenger would be appointed as Vice Chair with immediate effect.

Annual Board Planning day. Governors were reminded of the Annual Board planning day taking place on 28 March 2025.

7. **Risk**

CIC/25/1/3, Corporate Risk Register last updated 18/02/25, was received and presented by the Deputy Chief Executive. It was reported that:

- The number 1 risk continues to be teaching staff recruitment with focus areas being Construction, Engineering, English and maths and Health. The College continues to build on the pay position but recognises that there is a long way to go for this to move closer to industry salaries. During 2024, 118 staff left the college of which 68 were teaching staff. A new People Operations Manager has been recruited, to start in May, bringing a strong background in talent acquisition to the role. Sector specific recruitment events will be held going forward, among a range of other initiatives.

The Board were informed that the risk level is reasonable but as the College heads towards the middle/end of 2024-25, there is a need to ensure a strong position for the start of the new academic year.

Discussion took place around the potential use of employee voice to ascertain why staff want to work at the college as there are a high number of long servicing staff. Governors **COMMENTED** on the need to be aware of local competition, and what other employers can offer.

The Management development programme will continue and it is widely agreed that good line management is key to staff feeling happy in their role.

- Failure to provide delivery space for September 2025. College Condition Funding is expected from the Government, however there has been no confirmation as to when this will be received. Enabling work is being carried out ahead of the funding announcement and risks being mitigated via surveys etc.

Governors **ASKED** whether the College has considered alternative teaching methods to mitigate risk in this area, such as remote delivery. The Deputy Principal replied saying moving back online would be too close to the previous experience in 2020, which for many learners was not a positive one. Employability skills are key for the College to deliver, and online learning can be a lonely experience and consequently impact employability. The exception to this is one adult course for school teaching assistants, which is delivered fully online.

Governors **ASKED** about the risks that show no movement, and whether it was due to lack of improvement in the area. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that scoring and movement is very risk dependant. Risks such as safeguarding and incidents, regardless of the mitigation, do not go away. Industrial relations have been removed from the register. Discussion took place around Board and College risk appetite. It was agreed that Governors would review the target level and risk rank for the next meeting. Governors requested that the Risk Register be presented at the next meeting with a more strategic

cover report highlighting what's new, what has been removed and areas of concern. To assist board focus discussions in this area.

ACTION: Risk Register to include strategic cover report identifying movement and areas of concern.

ACTION: A discussion took place around target scores against risks and the interplay with risk appetite. It was agreed this would be a focus at the next review of the Corporate Risk Register, and Governors were asked to consider this aspect ahead of the next review. In the meantime, it was agreed the College Executive will also discuss this aspect with risk owners.

- The Board were made aware of a new risk that is being tracked in relation to devolution. It was explained that it had been added to the risk register as it will affect some funding streams.

Tim Triffitt left the meeting.

8. **Strategic Plan**

CIC/25/1/4, progress on the Sub-Strategies, was received and presented by the Principal.

It was reported that:

- All sub strategies have been linked to one or more goals and a series of Success Factors in the Strategic Plan.
- At this point in the year the update is reporting on progress against milestones, including priorities for the remainder of the year. Governors will be provided with a summary of progress against the success factors, in the Summer term.
- The Principal assured the Board that progress is on track.

Governors **ASKED** that future updates be RAG rated to highlight areas of concern.

9. **Safeguarding update**

The Deputy Principal provided a verbal update on Safeguarding, reporting;

- A previous report identified incidents of bullying having moved into the top 3 safeguarding concerns. Having drilled down into the data the Deputy Principal stated she is confident it is not a growing concern, and any concerns raised are being managed effectively.
- Due to the significant increase in the need for safeguarding and welfare support for learners a new full-time member of staff has been approved to join the team.
- ECC Safeguarding audit is being carried out with a completion deadline of 4 April 2025.
- Senior Mental Health Lead (SMHL) training is being undertaken by the Deputy Principal
- The college currently receives 14 hours per week of funded counselling which it is hoped the Integrated Care Board will continue to fund going forward.
- CATO reports produced that allow for monitoring of any student and staff inappropriate use of IT and the internet.
- There continues to be an increase in Mental health, Self-harm, wellbeing reports.

The Board noted the verbal report given.

10. **Management Report and Accounts**

CIC/25/1/5, Management Report and Accounts January 2025, was received and presented by the Deputy Chief Executive.

It was reported that:

- Income is £657,000 above profiled budget year to date.
- ESFA and apprenticeships funding, FE loans, Grant Income and Interest have over performed year to date.
- The notification of the amount of 16-19 in-year growth funding has been delayed but year-end forecast has been increased in anticipation, based on previous DfE announcements.
- HE & FE Adult tuition fees are behind plan by £52,000 and £153,000 respectively and will not recover.
- Forecast outturn is a £675,000 surplus.
- Cash reserves are ahead of the monthly forecast.
- Strong position for the end of the year however aware that this can change.

The Board noted the report.

11. **Governors College Dashboard October 2024**

CIC25/1/6, The College Governing Body Finance Dashboard, issued by the DfE in October 2024 was received and noted. It was explained that the college dashboard for Governors provides an overview of how the College is performing nationally across various key (financial) measures. Governors were informed that the document was updated in October 2024. Since then, the College Finance Record has been submitted and the opportunity has been taken, by the Deputy Chief Executive, to annotate the report with the actual outturn and current period 6 full year forecast to provide more relevance.

Governors commented on the usefulness of the document and **ASKED** if there is an optimum time for it to be received. Deputy Chief Executive replied that it is a DfE produced document, up to twice per annum. It was agreed that the College Dashboard would be included in future agendas as and when issued by the DfE.

12. **Reports from Committees**

12.1. **Curriculum and Quality Committee**

CIC25/1/7, Curriculum & Quality Committee report, was presented by the Chair of the Committee. The Board's attention was drawn to the main points of discussion at the meeting held on 22 January 2025. It was reported that:

- The Curriculum and Quality Update report was the most substantial agenda item of the meeting and generated the greatest discussion. Additional targets for attendance at GCSE English and mathematics lessons and adult learning lessons were proposed and agreed. Targets for Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and learner groups were also proposed and agreed. The safeguarding aspect of the report and subsequent discussion was very detailed.
- Quality Improvement Plan - Whilst governors were pleased to see the drive for improvement, there was concern that some actions were passed their deadline dates. Governors were informed that the recent Ofsted inspection had diverted the attention of managers. It was agreed that deadline dates would be reviewed in light of the disruption in the Autumn term.
- FE learners and apprentices' induction surveys were positive, particularly in terms of learners and apprentices understanding of safeguarding, were slightly lower in some areas at the point of the survey but were still an improvement on last year's figures in those same areas.
- It was stressed how much positive news was received during the meeting.

The Deputy Principal reported that more work is being done on establishing how we report on learners receiving support and ensuring we are clearly identifying those who require support. A review of the quality and effectiveness of support provided is being undertaken.

CIC/25/1/8, Update on Progress against Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), was received and noted. It was reported that:

The College QIP is produced using a range of information including curriculum area QIPs improvement plans, data, and feedback. Feedback from the recent Ofsted inspection has been used to enhance the QIP. The QIP is a live document; if an action is not bringing about the required improvement, it will be closed, and a review will be conducted to identify alternative solutions. Progress has been made against the actions in the QIP since the Curriculum and Quality meeting in January which is reflected in the most recent update.

The Board requested that they receive a high-level report on progress implementing the QIP highlighting areas of concern, actions being taken and any other areas of note, to provide focus on Board level matters.

ACTION: High-level report on progress implementing the QIP highlighting areas of concern, actions being taken and any other areas of note, to provide focus on Board level matters to be provided to the April meeting.

12.2. **Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee**

The Chair of the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee gave an oral report on the meeting held on 22 January 2025. It was reported that the three key areas of discussion were:

- Membership of the Board and Committees. It was agreed that the Audit & Risk Committee needs an additional member, and it was felt that this should be achieved through the appointment of a co-opted governor.
- 2023-24 attendance.
- Association of Colleges (AoC) Code of Good Governance requirements around self-assessment and the review of governance.

13. **Policy Review**

The following policy was presented for approval:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Governors challenged the wording of some areas of the policy to ensure that it is reflective and progressive and agreed that the policy should include Governors and their responsibilities more comprehensively.

Governors **ASKED** about the AoC EDI charter and whether there will be a single lead for it in college. The Principal confirmed that there will be, and it is currently being driven forward by several postholders.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy subject to the discussed changes being made.

14. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

15. **Meeting Dates**

Those present noted the forthcoming meeting dates:

- Wednesday 30 April 2025 *
- Thursday 22 July 2025