CI BOARD MEETING

15 December 2025
16:30 - 18:30
Board room, Colchester Campus
This is an in person meeting with Teams access if required

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT

Adam Fair
Ali Davies
Alison Andreas
Alison Bennett
Bryan Cunningham
Caroline Williams
Christopher Donovan
Gary Horne MBE
Kay Adelani
Lisa Blake
Mark Emerson
Nicola Jay
Richard Block
Sally Messenger
Sanjeev Arya
Simon Attwood
Stephanie Bettinson

ABSENT

Lee Bingham
Marco Iciek
Marie-Ann Capps
Varun Verma

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and **APPROVED** from:
Varun Verma
Marie-Ann Capps
Marco Iciek

Lee Bingham was not present.

Bryan Cunningham was welcomed to his first meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No member of the committee or staff declared any financial or other interests in any of the items of business to be considered at the meeting.

3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business received.

4. CIC25501 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2025 were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate record.

5. ACTION TRACKER AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

The Chair requested that as part of prep for the meetings, all members with actions assigned to them, update their actions before meetings.

The following updates were noted:

- Environmental Targets: These are not currently included within the Balanced Scorecard but are referenced in other College documents. Governors were invited to advise the Principal of any specific areas they felt should be included. It was agreed that this action be closed.
- Balanced Scorecard Content: Governors were asked, at the October meeting, to notify the Chair if there were any additional items they felt should be included. No requests were received. It was agreed that this action be closed.
- Staff Objectives: This item remains under review. More detailed reporting has been produced, identifying that the largest gaps relate to hourly paid staff (e.g. exam invigilators).The Principal confirmed that managers are aware of the importance of setting staff objectives, ensuring that they are in date, and that they are recorded on the central system.
- Unqualified Teachers: It was confirmed that this information will continue to be included in future reports and that the Balanced Scorecard contains the relevant figures as well as a percentage.
- B/F Item 10, EDI data collection: The Chair stated that Governors should mirror the College's data collection process.

6. CIC25502 - BALANCED SCORECARD

CIC25502, Balanced Scorecard, was received by Governors.

The Board were advised that:

- The data represents the most current validated information available at the time of writing. Some November data has not yet been fully validated, including funding information (December R04 return), selected staffing measures and financial information from the month-end accounts. In these cases, the most recent validated data (October) has been provided. The column the figures appear show when the data was from.

The Board were assured that:

- 16-18 funded learners are strong - 167 above our funded allocation at the R04 ILR return.
- Whilst adult forecast income is currently below target this is broadly in line with expectations at this time of year due to higher levels of in-year activity than other funding streams.
- Apprenticeship recruitment is in line with target and, at this early stage, currently forecast to meet or exceed financial targets
- As previously reported, the percentage of Staff with objectives recorded on the system reported at the end of September was low. This issue has been raised with managers through the College Leadership & Management Group, who have confirmed that in some areas the current figure reflects a lack of recording in the central system, rather than a lack of objective-setting. Work is now underway to ensure entries are updated. As part of this work, alternative solutions are being considered as part of the potential HR system replacement which commences in the new calendar year. This is expected to deliver a significant improvement in accuracy, timeliness and depth of reporting across all HR related data.

Governors **QUERIED** the number of unqualified teachers, noting that the figure remains static, as do Higher Education (HE) student numbers. The Vice Principal advised that HE student numbers are not expected to increase during the year. It was explained that the number of unqualified teachers will only change through the recruitment of additional unqualified staff, as several existing staff are currently undertaking teacher training programmes. Governors **QUESTIONED** whether the target figure remains appropriate if the College is content with the current position and suggested that the number of staff undertaking teacher training is shown alongside the headline figure.

Governors **QUESTIONED** the overall staff absence figure and **ASKED** whether future reporting could be disaggregated to distinguish between teaching and support staff. Governors were reassured that teaching staff absence does not usually result in class cancellations.

Governors **ASKED** about the number of observations completed. The Deputy Principal explained that staff undertaking teacher training are observed as part of their training programme, and staff on the New to Teaching programme are observed via that programme.

Governors **QUERIED** whether the average days lost figure should be rated green. It was agreed that this should be amended accordingly.

ACTIONS:

- Unqualified Teachers Reporting: Deputy Principal to consider presenting, for clarity, the number of staff currently undertaking teacher training alongside the headline figure for unqualified teachers.
- Staff Absence Data: Vice Principal to explore whether future staff absence reporting can be disaggregated to show teaching staff absence separately from support staff absence.
- Performance Indicator Status: Vice Principal to update the RAG rating for the average days lost figure to green.

7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

7.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

7.2 CIC25503 - AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE – CHAIR'S REPORT

CIC25503, Audit and Risk Committee Chair's report, was received by the Board. The Committee Chair presented the report to the meeting.

Governors' attention was drawn to the disclosure in the Report and Financial Statements relating to a failure to comply with Managing Public Money (MPM). The circumstances were explained and external audit (MHA) confirmed that, while disappointing, such breaches are not uncommon in the public sector. The Committee **CHALLENGED** the adequacy of controls and the advice received at the time. It was confirmed that the breach has been reported to the DfE and Governors were assured that the non-compliance issue referenced in the report and accounts had been considered in detail by the Committee, college management, and the external auditors, to establish how the issue arose and to confirm the controls now in place to prevent recurrence.

Internal Audit (Scrutton Bland) presented the Risk and Assurance Progress Report and confirmed that the audit plan remains aligned to the College's strategy, providing coverage across financial controls, strategic risk, compliance, operations and learner focus. Substantial assurance was reported for Risk Management, with the Health and Safety audit nearing completion and no matters requiring Board attention.

Governors reviewed the External Auditors' Report to the Audit and Risk Committee, which reported no corrected or uncorrected misstatements and highlighted a continued positive improvement trajectory in financial management. Aside from the MPM breach, three minor Grade C findings were noted. Governors also met privately with external audit and raised no concerns.

The Value for Money Report 2024/25 and the Health and Safety Annual Report were reviewed, both providing assurance with no matters requiring Board attention.

The Audit and Risk Committee recommended to the Board for approval:

- The Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2025, reflecting a 'Good' financial health position and a year-end surplus of just over £1m.
- The Letter of Representation, confirmed as standard with no non-standard items.
- The Going Concern assessment, supported by robust sensitivity analysis and strong cash reserves.
- The Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report, noting that recent committee appointments have mitigated previously identified membership risks.

The Corporation Chair noted that, aside from the MPM issue which is being addressed, the audit report was exceptional and thanked the Deputy Chief Executive and the Finance team for their work.

Governors were reminded that the following papers were recommended for approval by the Audit and Risk Committee, which had undertaken the detailed scrutiny.

7.3 CIC25504 - REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 31 JULY 2025

CIC25504, Report and Financial Statements 31 July 2025, was received. There were no comments or questions from Governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Report and Financial Statements 31 July 2025

7.4 CIC25505 - EXTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT TO THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

CIC25505, External Auditors report to the Audit and Risk Committee, was received. There were no comments or questions from Governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the External Auditors report to the Audit and Risk Committee

7.5 CIC25506 - LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

CIC25506, Letter of Representation, was received. There were no comments or questions from Governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Letter of Representation.

7.6 CIC25507 - REPORT ON GOING CONCERN

CIC25507, Report on Going Concern, was received. There were no comments or questions from Governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Report on Going Concern.

7.7 CIC25507 - AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

CIC25507, Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report, was received.

In response to questions regarding the annual savings figure, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the procurement team works hard to balance cost with value for money, and that the College has also benefited from a number of equipment donations.

It was noted on page 3, in relation to the Internal Audit TIAA follow-up, that there were no areas of concern. The Deputy Chief Executive explained for context, that only three TIAA recommendations remain outstanding.

7.8 FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7.9 CIC25508 - FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (FRC) CHAIR'S REPORT

CIC25508, Finance and Resources Committee Chairs report, was received. The Committee Chair presented the report to the meeting.

The Board was advised that the Committee had reviewed and approved the Future Net Zero Strategy, noting significant achievements to date.

Progress against the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Report was also reviewed and while overall reductions have been achieved, increases in CO_2 emissions and gas usage in 2024/25 were noted due to one-off air conditioning re-gassing and higher catering demand, with mitigating actions in place.

The updated Bullying and Harassment (including Sexual Harassment) Policy was approved to ensure compliance with new legislation, with further compliance reporting to follow.

The Board was assured that early 2025/26 financial performance is strong, cash reserves remain healthy, and financial health is expected to remain 'Good'.

The UCC Student Contract for 2026–27 was approved with minor amendments, and progress in People and Culture priorities, including sickness absence, recruitment and retention, was reviewed.

The Committee agreed the Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (year ended 2025), subject to minor amendments, including confirmation of whether any issues of concern arose during the year.

The Finance and Resources Committee recommended to the Board for approval:

- Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (year ended 2025)
- Net Zero Strategy

There were no questions or comments from Governors.

Governors were reminded that the following papers were recommended for approval by the Finance and Resources Committee, which had undertaken the detailed scrutiny.

7.10 CIC25509 - STATEMENT ON MODERN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025

CIC25509, Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for year ended 31 July 2025, was received. There were no questions or comments from Governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for year ended 31 July 2025.

7.11 CIC25510 - NET ZERO STRATEGY

CIC25510, Net Zero Strategy, was received. There were no questions or comments from Governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Net Zero Strategy.

7.12 CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE
7.13 CIC25511 - CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE (CQC) CHAIR'S REPORT

CIC25511, Curriculum and Quality Committee Chairs report, was received. The Committee Chair presented the report to the meeting.

Enrolment September 2025: Recruitment of 16–19 learners is strong, with a 5% increase compared to the same point last year, and apprenticeship recruitment is up by 7%. Adult learner recruitment is currently 13% lower than last year and will continue to be monitored. The Committee recognised that recruitment within this provision type is dynamic and that the recruitment of adults is to be monitored to establish whether targets are met.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment report: The Committee received the first annual Teaching, Learning and Assessment report, which showed that 94% of observed lessons were graded at 'secure' or 'mastery' and 6% at 'developing'. While the report was welcomed the Committee questioned leaders on how lesson observation processes will be strengthened to build further improvement.

The Committee was assured of the robustness of the College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and associated performance data for 2024/25. Governors agreed with the judgments and grades, including the 'Outstanding' self-assessment for apprenticeships, and noted that the SAR was well evidenced, data-informed and consistent with reports received throughout the year.

The SAR was recommended to the Board for approval.

The Committee reviewed the end-of-year position against the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024/25 and were assured that strong progress had been made against targets. The QIP 2025/26 was also reviewed, the committee were assured that it aligns with the new Ofsted inspection framework, with a strong focus on disadvantaged learners and evidencing sustained improvement.

The complaints and compliments report was reviewed the Committee were assured that complaint levels were typical for an institution of this size and gave no cause for concern.

Learning Survey outcomes were reviewed. Governors noted that overall learner satisfaction was 79%, impacted by a decline in responses relating to careers guidance due to earlier survey timing. When this factor was excluded, satisfaction exceeded 90%. Apprentice satisfaction remained high. Governors were also advised of the 2025 National Student Survey results, which showed an overall satisfaction rate of 84%, representing a significant year-on-year improvement and performance above national averages in most categories.

Governors received the Annual Safeguarding Report and were assured that safeguarding arrangements are effective and underpinned by an open and informed safeguarding culture.

Governors agreed the UCC Quality Assurance Policy and the UCC Teaching and Learning and Safeguarding Policies for recommendation to the Board.

The Curriculum and Quality Committee recommended to the Board for approval:

- College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2024/25
- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024/25 (Completed)
- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2025/26
- Revised Safeguarding Policy

There were no questions or comments from Governors.

Governors were reminded that the following papers were recommended for approval by the Curriculum and Quality Committee, which had undertaken the detailed scrutiny.

7.14 CIC25512 - SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR) 2024-25

CIC25512, Self Assessment Report 2024-25 including appendix of QIP round up for 2024-25, was received. There were no questions or comments from Governors.

The meeting noted that the round up of 2024-25 had not been included in the papers and so accepted the recommendation of the Committee with the paper to be circulated.

ACTION: Head of Governance to circulate the QIP round up for 2024-25

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Self Assessment Report 2024-25 including appendix of QIP round up for 2024-25.

7.15 CIC25513 - QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP) 2025-26

CIC25513, Quality Improvement Plan 2025-26, was received.

The Student Governor **QUERIED** how the College will monitor tangible outcomes. The Deputy Principal explained that each curriculum area has its own Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and that the learner voice element continues to be developed.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Quality Improvement Plan 2025-26

Following discussion it was agreed that the Staff wellbeing survey should go to the Finance and Resources Committee.

ACTION: Staff wellbeing survey to be included on Finance and Resources Committee schedule of work for review at the March meeting.

8. CIC25514 - KPIS 2024/25 (OUTCOMES) AND FINAL TARGETS 2025-26

CIC25514, KPIs 2024/25 (outcomes) and Final Targets 2025-26, were received.

The Committee was reminded that the Board approved the draft targets in July 2025. The Principal advised that the changes noted in the document reflect 2024/25 student outcomes which had not been available at the time the KPIs were originally set, and that in a few places, additional contextual information has been included.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the final KPI targets for 2025-26

9. CIC25515 - SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT

CIC25515, Safeguarding Annual report, was received and noted. There were no questions or comments from governors.

10. POLICY REVIEW

10.1 CIC25516 - SAFEGUARDING POLICY

CIC25516, Safeguarding Policy, was recommended for approval by the Curriculum and Quality Committee. There were no questions or comments from governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Safeguarding Policy.

10.2 CIC25517 - SENIOR POST HOLDER REMUNERATION POLICY

CIC25517, Senior Post Holder Remuneration Policy, was recommended for approval by the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee. There were no questions or comments from Governors.

DECISION: The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Policy.

11. CIC25518 - REGISTER OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

CIC25518, Register of Members Interests, was received and noted. There were no questions or comments from Governors.

12. MEETING DATES

1.To note the upcoming meeting dates:

- 19 March 2026
- 7 May 2026 (09:30)
- 21 July 2026

2.To note the circulation of the 26-27 meeting dates

3.To discuss holding a meeting at the Braintree Campus

The meeting noted the remaining meeting dates for the year and discussed the potential of holding a meeting at the Braintree campus. Governors agreed that it would be beneficial to spend time there to gain a better understanding of the work of the campus. It was agreed that the 19 March would be held at the Braintree campus with an opportunity to tour the campus ahead of the meeting.

ACTION: Deputy Principal to arrange Braintree campus tour prior to the March Board meeting.

13. CIC25519 - REVIEW OF MEETING

Governors were asked to:

- Consider whether any matters discussed should be treated confidentially
- Review the upcoming schedule of business for the Board and consider its completeness and accuracy

No items were considered to be confidential.

Following review of the upcoming schedule of business, no amendments were made for the March Board meeting.

14. PART II

Part II meeting will take place without Staff or Student Governors present.
Part II discussions were recorded as confidential.