FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 12 May 2026
Time: 16:00 - 18:00
Location: Board room, Colchester Campus

Present:	Richard Block	Governor, Chair of Finance and Resources Committee
	Chris Donovan	Governor, Vice-Chair of Finance and Resources Committee
	Jenny Kaye	Co-opted Member
	Lisa Blake	Governor, Chair of Corporation Board and member
	Steve Blake	Co-opted Member
	Alison Andreas	Principal and Chief Executive and member
In attendance:	Mark Emerson	Vice Principal: Curriculum Innovation and Business Transformation
	Gary Horne MBE	Deputy Chief Executive
	Ali Davies	Deputy Principal
	Emma Richens	Director of Finance
	Martin Gwillim	Director of People and Culture
	Heather Clarke	Interim Head of Governance
Observer:	Sally Ellis	Financial Accountant and Payroll Manager

1.	**Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for absence**	**Decision Item**	**Speaker: Committee Chair**

1) To welcome Jenny Kaye, Co-opted Governor, to the meeting
   The Chair welcomed Jenny Kaye, co-opted member to her first meeting.
   The Chair welcome Sally Ellis, observing the meeting ahead of commencing her role as Director of Finance from 01 June 2026.

2) To **RECEIVE** apologies for absence, including reasons given, and to agree whether those apologies are accepted.
   No apologies were received. It was noted that the Chair needed to leave at 5.30pm so the Vice-Chair will step in.

2.	**Declaration of any conflicts of interest**	**Information item**	**Speaker: Chair of Committee**

Members were invited to declare the nature and extent of any financial or other interests they may have in the business to be discussed, including any conflicts of loyalty.

This was recorded as a confidential item in the Part II minutes.

3.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

1) To **RECEIVE** and **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2026. Attached are both a full version and a redacted version.
   The following minor amendments were requested to be made to the previous minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2026:
   - The Principal requested for it to show under attendance whether people are a member of the Committee or in attendance.

   Action_7: Interim Head of Governance will update the format of future meeting minutes to ensure it provides a clear breakdown of members present and others in attendance.

The Chair of Governors raised under Item 13.2 Annual Wellbeing survey, Governors asked whether the staff survey will cover mental health to further explore the themes from this survey. The Deputy Principal reported that the questions for this work have been developed, and further consideration would be given to how this could be addressed. It was asked if it would be a new report or included with the next results of the staff survey. The Deputy Principal confirmed the staff survey has just been shared, and the concerns will be included in the same results and brought back to FRC.

The Committee noted and approved both the Full Version and Redacted Version of the minutes from the meeting of the 2 March 2026 as a true and accurate record.

2) To **DISCUSS** any matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda. There were no matters to discuss.

4.	Action Tracker	Discussion Item	Chair of Committee

To **REVIEW** the progress of actions arising from previous meetings.

The Committee received and noted the Action Tracker.

The Chair asked for the Director of People and Culture to take away the action regarding core staff FTE to report back the percentages at the next meeting.

5.	Update to Committee on the 2 March 2026 Chair's report to the Board	Information Item	Speaker: Chair of Committee

To **RECEIVE** for information an update from the 2 March 2026 Chair's report.

Following recommendation by the Committee, the Corporation Board approved:

- Financial Regulations and Delegated Authority
- Appointment of Marie-Ann Capps as the Sustainability Governor

The Committee received and noted the Chair's update.

6.	Monthly Management Report (MMR) for Period 7 (February 2026) and Period 8 (March 2026)	Information Item	Speaker: Director of Finance

To **RECEIVE,** for information, the Monthly Management Report (MMR) for Periods 7 and 8.

The Chair informed the Committee that the agenda will be altered so that the Monthly Management Report (MMR), previously Item 8, and the Department of Education Governing Body Financial Dashboard, previously Item 9, be brought forward to provide a context for the other items on the agenda.

The Committee were advised Year to Date (YTD) surplus of £3.1m compared to YTD budget surplus of £1.3m. The full year forecast surplus stands at £2.6m compared to the full year budget surplus of £0.9m. Financial health rating of Good will be maintained and improved on last year. The current cash position was £7.4m and was likely to exceed budget by the close of the year.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted this is the first time of sharing the Income and Expenditure Account in this format, splitting out pay and non-pay elements, and financing costs to align with the regular reporting requirements of the Department of Education, and ahead of the new mid-year return that will from March 2027 allow the Department of Education to consolidate college accounts into Public Sector records.

The Deputy Chief Executive also commented that since the report, the in-year growth projection will be reflected in the next management report, as a calculation toolkit projects an additional £540k in-year funding for over-delivery of 16-18 year olds against funded allocation.

A member highlighted the 28 FTE staffing vacancies, with a majority in business support areas, and asked what the implications are, of having that number of vacancies, on staff wellbeing.

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that 9 of the vacancies were associated with some Bootcamp Programmes which did not start due to a reduced allocation, other areas have not recruited to the posts due to there no long being a need or covered elsewhere and some haven't yet been advertised. It was confirmed that this will be taken into account for budgeting next year.

The Committee were happy to accept the Period 8 Monthly Management Report.

7.	Department of Education Governing Body Financial Dashboard	Information Item	Speaker: Deputy Chief Executive

To **RECEIVE** the contents of the DfE Governing Body Financial Dashboard and ask any questions of college management.

The Committee received and noted the Department for Education Governing Body Financial Dashboard, presented by the Deputy Chief Executive.

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined that the dashboard was generated to provide an overview of the Finance Record and the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFRs), including projections, submitted in respect of the last financial year (July 2025).

The College's performance continues on an improving trajectory with Financial Health 'Good' predicted across all years from 2024-25 onwards. The current year performance (March 2026) predicts the 2025-26 outturn will be equal to or better than the 2024-25 result, maintaining and improving confirmed financial health and other key ratios.

College Management recognise there is still some way to go to achieve benchmark cash >40 days target but most colleges do not achieve this, the previous target was a more realistic 25 cash days.

Further to a question posed by a member about acronyms in the report, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed the College comes under GFE (General FE) rather than SFC (Sixth Form College). The 65% benchmark has remained in place for many years and is difficult to achieve in GFE colleges due to higher payroll on-costs and there are a number of variables as different colleges outsource different activities. The Executive will continue to prioritise staff pay and will continue to support pay rises as much as possible to remain competitive and in line with the increased cost of living.

A Governor asked for reassurance to the text on the overview page (page 1), it is generic text or something that is expected. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed it is a template, and this is standard wording for all Colleges.

8.	Annual Course Contribution Report	Decision Item	Director of Finance

To **RECEIVE** and **DISCUSS** the updated Annual Course Contribution report.

The Committee received and noted the updated Annual Course Contribution Report, presented by the Director of Finance.

The Committee were advised that the overall gross contribution has reduced from 47% to 42%, this is largely attributed to increased pay costs (the approved pay increase of 5%, and an increase in numbers employed as a result of successful recruitment to long-term vacancies) but the net contribution has remained at 5%.

The Committee were assured that the course contributions remain an important source of information in curriculum planning, the reasons for departments having lower contribution levels are clearly understood and actions are taken to improve the areas with the lowest contributions, or there is acceptance that the provision has other merits which justify low or no contributions.

A Governor asked with the operating surplus from last year, intuitively wasn't expecting course contributions to be decreasing, is this due to the vacancies or is it in line with what management expects. The Director of Finance confirmed the actual costs are in January 2026 so there is an element of forecasting and it hasn't included exceptional items or the in-year growth.

Governors asked whether the changes the Executive are looking for is reflected in the performance area for Area Heads. The Principal confirmed course contributions is one of a number of objectives for Area Heads, but it is not a blunt instrument as some areas are able to exceed average contributions whereas others have significantly higher material costs. Therefore this is used along with, for example, student outcomes and employer engagement to measure performance.

A governor asked about the actions underway to move those areas that are not green, into the green and asked if in future reports, updates could be given on progress on the actions planned to improve contributions.

The Director of Finance confirmed there is already some work in progress in Hospitality and Salon Studies to reduce the cost of delivery and Foundation and Supporting Learning.

There was a brief discussion about the fact that financial contribution is just one dimension and some courses or subjects with lower financial contributions have other merits, and may even be seen as loss leaders. Governors would like to see more information about this in future reports

Action_8: Future reports to include an update on the impact of planned actions taken to improve contributions in the previous year.

Action_9: College Executive to include information about other dimensions such as student outcomes, meeting local needs, and delivery of the wider college mission, to future reports to provide a broader than financial view of courses and subjects offered and a context for the provision of courses with lower contributions.

9.	**Property Update**		
9.1	**College Estates and Accommodation Strategy**	**Information Item**	**Speaker: Deputy Chief Executive**

To **RECEIVE** an update on the College Estates and Accommodation Strategy.

The Committee received and noted the College Estates and Accommodation Strategy, presented by Deputy Chief Executive to recommend to the Corporation Board for Approval.

The Chair of the Corporation Board informed the Committee on the Eastern Region AoC Chair's call, they highlighted the need for more funding for capital bids for new builds.

A question was raised as to whether the strategy adequately conveyed the poor condition of the buildings in question. This isn't to take away from the work being done to make the buildings operational, but for the purpose of informing the Department of Education (DfE) and request funding need to bold with the use of language and also ensure using the same language that the DfE use.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Committee, that the DfE sponsored survey was just received back and only a handful of building elements were rated as Category D. The Corporation stands by college management on their assessment that four buildings on the Colchester site previously written off by the LSC in 2006 need to be replaced.

The Committee asked who carries out the assessments of our buildings, it was confirmed these are self-assessment taking on board comments and reports from professional advisors and contractors who work in the buildings. The Committee agreed it would be worthwhile seeking quotations for third party professionals to complete a survey of the buildings to challenge the findings from DfE and reinforce a business case.

Action_10: Deputy Chief Executive to seek quotes from external surveyors on the condition of the buildings, details to be shared by email for awareness but Executive have authority to proceed with the work as long as within delegation of authority.

Action_11: Deputy Chief Executive to update the Estates Strategy to ensure it is consistent with the DfE language when describing the condition of the buildings and present the updated strategy to the July Board meeting.

The Committee approved the amendment to the Strategy, to ensure it presents a clear and candid assessment of the condition of the buildings and agreed that it be submitted to the Corporation Board in July.

9.2	Other Property Matters	Information Item	Speaker: Deputy Chief Executive

To **RECEIVE** for information a verbal update on property matters.

There were no other property matters to report since this was covered by the previous item.

10.	Environmental and Sustainability Group Update	Information Item	Speaker: Deputy Chief Executive

To **RECEIVE,** for information, an update from the Environmental and Sustainability Group.

The Committee received and noted the update from the Environmental and Sustainability Group, presented by the Deputy Chief Executive.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the dates are now on the website for the Summer Series of the National Emergency Briefings.

Action_12: Interim Head of Governance to share the dates of the Summer Series of National Emergency Briefings with Governors and co-opted members.

The Committee recognised the impressive report of activities and breadth of work in this area that makes the College a trailblazer in this respect.

11.	People and Culture Update	Information Item	Speaker: Director of People and Culture

To **RECEIVE,** for information, an update on People and Culture to include the People & Culture Dashboard.

The Committee received and noted the update on People and Culture, presented by the Director of People and Culture.

The Chair of Committee highlighted that the Health & Safety training is shown as green in the report but it was below the target.

Action_13: The Director of People and Culture to amend the report to show the Health & Safety Training as Amber, where it is below the target.

The Committee requested further details regarding the implementation issues of the new HR System.

It was reported that the majority of the issues are teething issues with the implementation of a new system, but that risks can never be taken where staff pay is concerned. Therefore a decision was taken to extend the contract with the current system to ensure time to do sufficient runs of the data feeding the payroll system.

The Chair of the Committee raised that work related stress seems high as a cause for staff sickness and asked for further explanation around what is being done to understand the issue and respond to it. The Deputy Principal outlined the nature of learners we are working with are more complex so more investment is happening in student support and welfare.

The Principal requested further analysis of staff absence data and the number of days that were linked with staff undergoing performance or similar processes in in the College.

Action_14: Director of People and Culture to provide further analysis of the data in the People and Culture Update and share with College Executive ahead of being presented at the next FRC.

12.	**Policy Review**		
12.1	**Safer Recruitment Policy**	**Decision Item**	**Speaker: Director of People and Culture**

For committee **REVIEW** and **APPROVAL**

The Committee reviewed and approved the Safer Recruitment Policy, presented by the Director of People and Culture, subject to a slight amendment under section 9 to include employed and volunteer workforce.

Action_15: Interim Head of Governance to amend the Safer Recruitment Policy under section 9 to refer to employed and volunteer workforce.

12.2	**Probationary Policy**	**Decision Item**	**Speaker: Director of People and Culture**

For committee **REVIEW** and **APPROVAL**

The Committee reviewed and approved the Probationary Policy, presented by the Director of People and Culture.

12.3	**Vetting Checks and Single Central Register Policy**	**Decision Item**	**Speaker: Director of People and Culture**

For committee **REVIEW** and **APPROVAL**

The Committee reviewed and approved the Vetting and Single Central Register Policy, presented by the Director of People and Culture.

12.4	**UCC Fee Policy**	**Decision Item**	**Speaker: Principal**

For committee **REVIEW** and **APPROVAL.**

The Committee reviewed and approved the UCC Fee Policy, presented by the Principal.

The Principal outlined that this would pave the way for the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) in 2027.

12.5	**FE Fee Policy**	**Decision Item**	**Speaker: Vice Principal**

For Committee **REVIEW** and **APPROVAL**

The Committee reviewed and approved the FE Fee Policy, presented by the Vice Principal subject to any updates being needed once the updated rules are published.

The Vice Principal highlighted the version presented for approval is based on existing rules as the updated adult funding rules have not yet been issued.

12.6	International Fee Policy	Decision Item	Speaker: Vice Principal

For committee **REVIEW** and **APPROVAL**

The Committee reviewed and approved the International Fee Policy, presented by the Vice Principal.

Action_16: The Interim Head of Governance to ensure all approved policies (UCC Fee Policy, FE Fee Policy, International Fee Policy, Probationary Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy and Vetting Checks and Single Central Register Policy) uploaded to the internal Portal and external website, as appropriate.

13.	Review of Meeting	Discussion Item	Speaker: Vice-Chair of Committee

The Committee is asked to:

1) **AGREE** the items/papers to be reported to the next Board meeting.
   The Committee agreed the following items to be taken to the next Board meeting:
   - Estates Strategy, subject to amendment to language to align with DfE terminology.
   - Monthly Management Report
   - Annual Course Contribution, subject to consideration given to departments for assurances before taking further to the Board.

2) **CONSIDER** if any items or elements of discussions should be marked as confidential.
   There were no items to be marked as confidential.

14.	Meeting Dates 2025-26	Information Item	Speaker: Vice-Chair of Committee

To **NOTE** the forthcoming meeting dates:

- Thursday 2 July

All meetings to take place at 4.30pm at the Colchester Campus

The Committee noted the upcoming meeting date. It was reflected that the earlier start time of 4pm worked well.