Colchester Institute Corporation

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
held on 24 April 2024
at the Colchester campus**

Present

Caroline Williams, in the Chair	Kevin Prince
Alison Andreas	Brenda Rich
Peter Cook	Dawn Swainson
Thomas Empson	
Marco Iciek	
Sally Messenger	

In Attendance

Ali Davies	Deputy Principal
Maeve Borges	Vice Principal: Student and Information Services
Alison Bennett	Head of Governance

1. **Apologies for Absence**
    Apologies for absence were received from Angela O'Donoghue.
    Tim Triffit and Benjamin Smith were not present.

2. **Declaration of any conflicts of interest**
    No declarations of conflict of interest were made against any item on the agenda.

3. **Agreement to Starred Agenda Items**
    Members were invited to indicate any items which they wished to star for discussion or question. It was agreed that items that were not starred be noted and/or approved by the Committee without discussion.

4. **Minutes**
    The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2024 (CIC/CQ/24/2/1) were received and approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
    CIC/CQ/24/2/2 – The Curriculum and Quality Committee action sheet, was received and noted by the meeting. A Governor queried the action around safeguarding report categories. The Vice Principal: Student and information Services explained that the document has been updated post circulation.

6. **Curriculum and Quality Update Report**
    CIC/CQ/24/2/3, Curriculum and Quality Update Report, was received and discussed. The paper provided an in-year update on the College's progress against key quality performance indicators. The Deputy Principal highlighted the following areas:
    -   Overall attendance in FE is good compared to anecdotal evidence from other providers and at 86% is showing a 1 percentage point decrease on this point last year.
    -   GCSE English & Maths attendance is sitting at just above 75% in both subjects. It is recognised that this is still not where it should be and needs to be addressed.
    -   16-18s attendance is up by 1 percentage point this year.

- Attendance and outcomes need greater analysis to establish why learners who are attending are predicted to not achieve. The DP stated that this will happen in the upcoming round of Area Monitoring Meetings.
- Predicted achievement for vulnerable learners ranged from on, above or significantly above the college predicted achievement rate.
- The number of learners achieving a near pass is are in line with 2022/23

It was highlighted that the National Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) data have now been published and Colchester Institute is:
- Equal to the national rate for retention for 16-19 study programme
- Below the national rate for Adults with an achievement rate of 82.1% which is 2.1 percentage points below the national rate for General FE Colleges
- Above the national rate for apprenticeships all ages by 1.6 percentage points. For 16-19 year old apprentices they are 4.2% points above the national rate, and for adult apprentices they are 0.2 points below
- The College performed well against other regional colleges in most measures.

The Chair commented that it was a very comprehensive report with the front sheet providing clear highs and lows.

Governors raised the BTEC results, and the very different outcomes between the best and worst performing areas. It was questioned what the Business department is doing to achieve such high results and how this could be shared with areas seeing less good results. Governors were told that the stability of the teaching team in the Business Department is very positive. However, within Early Years there are first year learners with a lower grade profile on entry than in previous years due to the introduction of the T level in Early Years. Early Years T Levels mock examinations have resulted in grades in the high 90s. Governors were assured that Early Years predicted achievement rates would be scrutinised at the forthcoming Area Monitoring Meeting.

Governors asked whether there are any differences in the outcomes between the two campuses. The Principal provided the data as follows.

Attendance:	Retention:
86.6% overall	93% Colchester
86.3 Colchester	95.7 Braintree
90.3 Braintree	

The Principal explained that it is almost exclusively 16-18 learners at the Braintree campus. Discussion took place around the differences that can be faced at the two sites and Governors were assured that whilst Braintree has never been of concern, location is looked at annually as part of the analysis of end of year outcomes.

The chair **ASKED** whether apprenticeship retention figures are in-year retention. It was confirmed that they were and agreed that all data needs be clear as to what period the data is referring to i.e. overall or in year.

Governors expressed concern over the growing predicated achievement gap between learners who have declared a learning difficulties or disability compared to the College average predicted achievement rate. It was noted that this was also raised as a concern at the last meeting. The Principal explained that this is now a focus in Tuesday morning meetings and steps have been put in place to close the gap. It was agreed that this would remain a focus of the meeting and Governors requested further information be provided at the June meeting.

ACTION: Information to be provided to the June CQC meeting on the predicted achievement gap between learners who had declared a learning difficulty or disability and the college average predicted achievement.

Governors **COMMENTED** that overall learner retention is a direct comparison for 22/23 which was good to see. The governors also thanked the college staff for the scrutiny provided on apprenticeship achievement rates. It was noted that the predicted best case achievement rate is much higher than the national rate and demonstrates a significant increase. Governors requested that End Point Assessments results be spilt by timely as well as overall and by age.

ACTION: College Executive to consider how these data can be presented to ensure governors have the information they require.

Governors **COMMENTED** that there was no mention of staffing, which affects the ability to deliver a high quality curriculum. The Principal replied that staffing is relatively stable in most areas although there are still some pockets where they are struggling to recruit. If the numbers expected come through next year, along with the increased expectation for maths and English there will be a need to recruit teaching staff. A number of vacancies, including Engineering, Electrical Installations, English and maths are currently live.

Governors **COMMENTED** that they can see that the improvements being made are being sustained.

Discussion took place around the use of positive results in college marketing materials to both prospective learners and employees.

7.   **Safeguarding Report**

7.1 CIC/CQ/24/2/4, Safeguarding Report, was received and presented by the Vice Principal: Student and Information Services. It was reported that:
- There have been two recent staff appointments which will further strengthen the leadership of College safeguarding, these are a new HR Director and a new Safeguarding Governor, both of whom have had significant experience in this area through previous roles.
- Following increased monitoring and liaison with managers the College is currently exceeding all targets for mandatory safeguarding training.   Training to all new starters is provided face to face as part of the staff induction day.
- Staffing in the welfare and safeguarding team is now at full strength
- The College has been awarded an additional year of funding from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for a two day a week student counselling post.
- The data continues to show an increase in overall cases dealt with by the welfare and safeguarding team. The top three themes across this period are: mental health, bullying and harassment and current or historic sexual abuse.

The safeguarding link Governor **ASKED** what the CAMHS response time is currently. The Vice Principal replied that it is 18-24 months, meaning the 16-18 cohort could leave college before a referral is seen. As a result a lot of ongoing support and work is being done by the College until referrals are responded to.

The safeguarding link Governor **ASKED** whether there has been an increase in the number of school files requested as there had been concern previously that these were not being processed in a timely period. It was explained that there has been an increase in the number of files due to having built more positive relationships with schools via the career leads, and therefore files are coming through. However due to the sheer volume of files they are not always reviewed in a timely way due to college staffing capacity. Schools that send forms electronically via MyConcern also generates additional work. Some schools phone the College team to raise awareness of specific learners. There has been an improved relationships with the St Aubyns Centre.

Governors **ASKED** about the numbers of people who have not completed mandatory training. The Vice Principal explained that the impact of staff not having completed their mandatory training would vary depending on the area in which they work. Discussion took place around the level of risk that comes along with that, for example those working with 14–16-year-olds compared with those working with 16–18-year-olds and those in Higher Education. Governors **NOTED** that 14-16 and 16-18 year-olds continue to be the priority and all staff working with these learners must have completed mandatory training prior to working with them.

The Vice Principal highlighted section 6 of the report, Student Safeguarding, where the data continues to show an increase in overall cases dealt with by the welfare and safeguarding team. It was explained that this can appear to be skewed by the significant number of external requests for information and safeguarding files received from schools, each of which still need to have action taken by a member of staff and these numbers continue to rise year on year. This is likely to be due to an increase of cases dealt with in schools post COVID as well as improved links and engagement with the wide school catchment area.
Governors were made aware that, even after removing these cases from the data, the number of in-person cases that the college safeguarding team has dealt with has significantly increased over the same period last year.

Governors requested a one-off report at the June meeting to show the contrast in safeguarding data pre & post covid.

ACTION: Information to be provided to the next meeting where a Safeguarding report is presented, showing a comparison between safeguarding data pre & post Covid.

 Governors also requested that going forward the numbers of files and live cases be separated.

ACTION: Safeguarding reports to separate files and live cases going forward.

Governors **QUERIED** whether it is possible for the college to test for THC in vapes. The Vice Principal replied that it isn't as far as they are aware and the high number of vapes on site would mean that if there was it would be prohibitive.

Governors **NOTED** that the number of incidents of bullying is up on the same period last year and **ASKED** whether this is in person or cyber bullying incidents. The Vice Principal replied that the figures relate to in person bullying incidents however it can be hard to separate the two.

Governors referred to page 8, segmenting by age, gender and campus and **ASKED** whether there are any other trends that could be used to further understand the variations within the college. The Vice Principal said that she would look at what could be provided by the reporting system.

Governors **ASKED** how many stop and searches there had been at both campuses. It was confirmed that there had been 9 in Colchester and 0 in Braintree. Governors were made aware that fewer than 10% of learners study at the Braintree campus which accounts for the difference in the numbers.

Governors **ASKED** whether there is a correlation between the increase in the numbers of incidents and the increase in the number of enrolments. The vice Principal said that this could be looked at but didn't think that there was a correlation.

Governors requested a breakdown of safeguarding issues amongst vulnerable learners.

ACTION: CE to provide a breakdown can be provided, in future reports, of safeguarding issues/ incidents amongst vulnerable learners.

7.2 Prevent Strategy.

The Prevent Duty was updated on 6 March 2024. These updates have been reflected in the strategy document and how they affect the college in local context. This is supported by an action plan which has been discussed by SLT. A Run, Hide & Tell dummy run has not yet been scheduled. Filtering and monitoring software is being reviewed by ILT. Governors **ASKED** whether ILT risk assess the reports that come through. It was confirmed that they do. Governors **QUESTIONED** whether the areas for improvement should be in the action plan rather that the strategy. Following discussion, it was agreed that the areas for improvement would be moved, and this would be done prior to the strategy being put to the Board and published. A link to British Values was also asked for. Governors **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** The Prevent Duty Strategy to the BOARD on 24 April 2024

ACTION: The following changes to be made to the prevent strategy prior to being published:
- Areas for improvement to be removed from the Strategy as they are in the action plan
- consider adding a link to British values

Governors **ASKED** whether they should have sight of the action plan. It was confirmed that the document is owned by SLT.

8.   **Update on personal development for learners and apprentices**

A Personal Development (PD) co-ordinator has been appointed and started in role, as well as there having been an increase in resources in the area. The PD Co-ordinator will ensure that all learners benefit from personal development and all learners in all provision types have their voice heard. There will also be a development of the enrichment offer. The College has purchased elements of the Suffolk New College online PD platform to support this work.

Next steps:
-        PD platform development
-        conclude research, agree recommendations and build into the overall plan
-        EDI student form groups – LGBTQ+ & SEN
-        on how learners can be more involved with the strategic plan, working with LGBTQ+ and SEN groups.
-        AMM questions

It was explained to the meeting that PD is considered the wider curriculum and must cover all provision types. It does not have to be the same offer in all provision types but does have to be in place and Governors will need to be confident that it is being delivered well in all provision types.

9.   **Teaching and Learning Survey 2023/24**

The Teaching and Learning Survey 2023/24 was carried out on 22 January and 21 February. With the exception of behaviour, which has dropped 9 percentage points, no significant concerns were highlighted. It is recognised that the decline in behaviour is a national issue. A focus day on behaviour took place directly before the survey period so there is no indication therefore whether there has been an impact as a result of the training. A separate survey was carried out for apprentices.

Overall satisfaction for learners is high at 91%.

Most notable increase in learner satisfaction was in Health & Social Care and Science which has been attributed to the stability in teaching staff.

The survey gave all learners the opportunity to comment on what they felt could be improved and this has provided some quick wins which will be implemented as 'you said we did'. Governors **EXPRESSED CONCERN** around the individual questions and their readability.

Governors **ASKED** for a review of staff receiving AI support and any impact to date.

ACTION: Review to be provided to the June meeting of staff receiving AI support and any impact to date.

Governors **COMMENTED** that satisfaction for sport has declined levels of learner satisfaction were lower than in previous academic year. The Principal replied that sport faces competition from other local providers which has resulted in a different profile of learners on the course.

Foundation Supported Learning (FSL) profile has changed and there are now a higher number of learners who are disengaged from education rather than having disabilities. It was agreed that this should be made clear in the report.

Overall apprentices' satisfaction rate is 88%, 3 percentage points lower than for FE and Adult learners, but an increase of 6 percentage points on last year's satisfaction rate.

Appendix two – Apprentice satisfaction by apprenticeship provision - Governors **COMMENTED** that the data is inconsistent which is a worry. It was explained that Fire Fighter apprentice teaching is within the workplace and they are the providers.

DP reported that learner focus groups were being scheduled to explore the finding further. Governors welcomed this follow up action.

10. **Update on Progress against quality Improvement Plan**
This is a triangulation opportunity as much of the data has been provided elsewhere. In most cases against current year targets.

Governors scrutinised two areas of the quality improvement plan:
-Goal 4 – To embed into vocational courses and apprenticeship programme of language and literacy development
- Goal 2 - predicted achievement rate between learners who declare difficulties and or disabilities and the learner population

Governors **ASKED** if there is any trend data on withdrawals of learners in the summer term. The Principal replied that most learners who are going to leave would have done so by this point in the year.

11. **Review of Meeting**
Agreed items/ papers to be reported to the next Board meeting:
- Prevent Strategy to be recommended for approval following agreed amendments.
- Safeguarding report to be provided to the Board for information
Any matters that should be discussed should be treated confidentially:
- Governors were informed that a part B confidential paper will be presented to the April Board meeting in relation to the Level 3 defunding & the impact this will have on college funding.

12. **Date of Next Meeting**
Thursday 27 June 2024, 4.30 at the Colchester campus.

13. **Any Other Urgent Business**
There were no items.