

**THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE**  
*Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 6.00pm*  
*Virtual Meeting*

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**PART ONE MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Gordon Smith (Chair)  
 Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)  
 Tom Hesmondhalgh (Vice Chair)  
 Tony Stevenson (Chair Elect)  
 Jean Cook  
 Andy Booth  
 Nigel Dias  
 Penny Wycherley  
 Nasim Jivani Hemani  
 Andrew Gilchrist  
 Catherine Boyd-Maunsell  
 Claudine Reid  
 Lucia Guetcherian (Staff Governor, Croydon Campus)  
 Fiona Brennan (Staff Governor, Coulsdon Campus)  
 Shyam Pillai (Student Governor, Croydon Campus)  
 Abbigail Azirou (Student Governor, Coulsdon Campus)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance & Resources)  
 Angela Edwards (VP Education and Quality)  
 Fadia Clarke (VP Training, Skills & HE)  
 Odette Carew (Principal, Coulsdon College)  
 Helen Langford (Head of HR) – Item 3.i

**CLERK:** Clare Mitchell (Director of Governance)

**QUORUM:** The meeting was quorate

	Item
1.	<p><b>PRELIMINARY BUSINESS</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Claudine Reid to her first Board meeting as a Governor.</p> <p><b>i. Apologies for Absence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Lowe and Rahel Haque.</li> </ul> <p><b>ii. Declarations of Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Gilchrist is a Governor at Brooklands College.</li> </ul> <p><b>iii. Croydon College Corporation Minutes of 21 October 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minutes of the meeting were <b>APPROVED</b> by the Corporation subject to two minor amendments.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>iv Matters Arising (Action list)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members noted that an updated action list including progress on the matters arising from the meeting on 21 October 2020 had been circulated immediately prior to the meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>v Appointment of the Chair of the Coulsdon Learning and Quality Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the appointment of Tom Hesmondhalgh as the new Chair of the Coulsdon Learning and Quality Committee.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>EVALUATION OF STANDARDS</b></p> <p><b>i. Principal’s Report including KPIs and Operational and Quality Improvement Plan (OQIP) for 2020/21</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The P&amp;CEO introduced her report, setting out the arrangements that had been made to continue to provide the majority of teaching for 16-18 year olds face to face during the second lockdown, in line with Government guidance. Only a limited amount of adult provision had moved online because data collected at enrolment had shown that up to 30% of adult learners did not have access to a computer or internet at home and experience from the first lockdown showed that adult learners studying at lower levels were less able to engage with online learning. The P&amp;CEO outlined the actions that the College was taking to protect students and staff from Covid 19 and the next steps.</li> <li>The OQIP for 2020/21 was appended to the report. This set out the measures that were being taken to support the achievement of the College’s strategic objectives and to ensure that the improvement priorities identified in the self-assessment review were being addressed. The P&amp;CEO would be reviewing the OQIP to strengthen the actions in relation to the College becoming an anchor organisation in the borough. The section of the OQIP relating to the Coulsdon Campus would also be strengthened now that Odette Carew was in post.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION: P&amp;CEO to review the OQIP for 2020/21 to strengthen the actions in relation to the College becoming an anchor organisation in the borough</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress on key quality improvement strategies was outlined and had been presented to the LQCs. The results of the first QDP student survey run in 2020/21 were now available. The overall completion rate had been 52%. There had been an increase in student satisfaction at the Croydon Campus. The results for the Coulsdon Campus were lower but there were signs of improvement to build on.</li> <li>A second cohort of the Aspirational Managers programme had started, with participants across both campuses, as had a second cohort of the Embedding a Coaching Culture programme. Core processes were being streamlined to reduce staff workload where possible.</li> <li>Staff were would receive the additional pay awards noted at the October Board meeting in their December pay, recognising the exceptional work of staff during the pandemic. Staff engagement was a priority for the HR team and a new Black and Ethnic Network had been launched.</li> <li>The P&amp;CEO had met with Croydon Council to explore ways in which the College might be able to support the Council in the retention of current community services, such as Croydon Works. In terms of Croydon Works, it seemed unlikely that this would be possible as all contracts were due to end by 31 March 2021. The College had also asked about use of the space on College Green now that the Fairfield Homes plans were delayed. No response had been received as yet. A number of risks to the College had been identified as a result</li> </ul>

of the Council's decision to issue at Section 114 Notice and the subsequent plans to address its financial position.

- The P&CEO noted that this would be Gordon Smith's final meeting as Chair of the Board of Governors and that he would be stepping down from the Board following this meeting. She thanked him for his support to her personally since her appointment and his commitment to the College over the last 17 years.
- The Croydon College KPIs appended to the report would be brought to each meeting of the Board. The Board asked for the commentary against these KPIs to be strengthened to include any indicators of progress, e.g. internal data, as well as the RAG rating. The P&CEO and VPE&Q would discuss what KPIs could be included for performance in English and maths at Level 2.

**ACTION: P&CEO to strengthen commentary against the KPIs, including any indicators of progress such as internal data**

**ACTION: P&CEO/VPE&Q to discuss what KPIs could be included for performance in English and maths at Level 2**

- A meeting had taken place within the College to review its tech/digital capability and the strategies that could be used to develop the curriculum in these areas. The group had not yet reviewed employer vacancies and local demand. A paper would be brought to a future LQC meeting.

The Corporation **NOTED** the P&CEO's report.

#### **ii. Croydon College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2019/20**

- The VPE&Q set out the processes that underpinned the SAR, which had begun in May 2020. Governors had been invited to take part through attendance at the Progress Review meetings in the Summer term and the SAR validation panels in October. Two Governors had also participated in student focus groups. All aspects of the College's work, however funded, were self-assessed but the SAR focused on the work that was inspected by Ofsted.
- The VPE&Q outlined the evidence evaluated by teams as part of this process. The introduction of the current Education and Inspection Framework had reduced the focus on achievement rates and this was more pronounced in 2019/20 with the introduction of the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework and the use of Centre Assessed Grades to award qualifications in Summer 2020. The DfE would not be publishing performance tables for this year. However, other comparative information such as MIDES reports indicated that the achievements of students at Croydon College were in line with those of the sector and that there was good performance in English and maths at Level 2. ESOL learners and those on functional skills courses had performed less well.
- The VPE&Q provided a summary of the SAR, performance against KPIs for 2019/20 and key strengths and areas for improvements. Progress against the improvement strategies and KPIs for 2020/21 would be reported to the LQCs.
- The proposed grades for Croydon College were Good in all categories with the exception of apprenticeships and high needs learners which were graded as Requires Improvement.
- The Chair of the Croydon LQC endorsed the robustness of the SAR process and stated that she had confidence in the judgements reached.

- The Staff Governor from the Coulsdon Campus also endorsed the rigour of the process but expressed disappointment with the grades proposed for the Coulsdon Campus, which had been lower than for Croydon College overall. The Heads of Faculties were working with the new Principal of Coulsdon College to improve teaching and learning in key areas.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the SAR for 2019/20 and the proposed grading for submission to Ofsted

### **iii. Higher Education Self Assessment Report 2019/20, HE OQIP for 2020/21 and B3B Action Plan**

- The VPTSHE reported that these documents had already been scrutinised internally and at the HE Group and the Croydon LQC. The VPTSHE outlined the key strengths and achievements within the HE provision in 2019/20. The targets for 2019/20 relating to attendance, improved NSS outcome, increased L3 to HE progression and improved overall provision outcomes had been met.
- The OQIP for 2020/21 included the B3B action plan and was centered on the OfS' key performance measures. Two actions from the 2019/20 OQIP which it had not been possible to complete because of the pandemic, would be carried over into 2020/21. Updates would be reviewed at future HE group meetings and presented to the Croydon LQC.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the HE Self Assessment Report, the HE OQIP for 2020/21 and the OfS' B3B action plan

### **iv. Student Governors' Report**

- The Student Governor from the Coulsdon Campus outlined her activities as Student President and commended the College for providing opportunities for students to be involved in leadership roles. On a personal level she enjoyed being treated as an adult at College and had received good support from her tutors. The only issue on which she had been approached by fellow students related to the lack of availability of text books in law and psychology. The need for social distancing etc. because of Coronavirus had meant fewer meetings of societies and clubs and less interaction between students. She would be taking forward events for charities that students felt connected to, to promote a sense of community. She commended the new Principal at Coulsdon College for welcoming her and listening to students' views. On the whole, students had adapted well to the Covid restrictions.
- The Student Governor from the Croydon Campus reported from his perspective as a final year BA Business and Management student. Initially the format of online teaching had not offered students an opportunity to connect with each other or the lecturer. However, this had improved significantly once Zoom lessons had been introduced. Students were very positive about teaching on Zoom. During the second lockdown his cohort of students had attended classes in College two days a week and had had one day of teaching online. Many of the students were mature and Covid had encouraged them to engaged with technology and learn new skills, which had been a positive benefit. Students also appreciated the measures put in place to protect them within the College. His cohort of students had also attended a virtual employability day, which had been very beneficial. He thanked all the staff who were doing a good job supporting students during a difficult time.
- The Coulsdon Principal confirmed that the issue relating to the availability of text books had now been resolved.
- The Staff Governor at the Coulsdon Campus noted that it was very reassuring to hear that students appreciated the face to face teaching being delivered and she would pass that message back to staff.

### 3. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

#### i. HR Strategy

- The Head of HR set out the proposed HR Strategy, which had previously been reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee. A summary of the feedback from the stakeholder engagement had been appended to the HR Strategy at the Committee's request. The strategy included five key strands of work and encompassed the previous Equality Strategy. The HR Strategy linked to Objective 4 of the Corporate Strategy, which related to staffing, and the OQIP. The next step was to produce a delivery plan which would be presented to the Finance and Resources Committee.
- The Board queried why CPD sessions were not referenced within the HR Strategy. The Head of HR explained that CPD was reviewed as part of the appraisal process for each member of staff. The VPE&Q informed that Board that a CPD programme was already in place for staff through the Staff Learning Days. CPD would be referenced within the delivery plan.
- Following discussion it was agreed that recruitment would be pulled out as a separate strand within the HR Strategy.

**ACTION: Head of HR to pull out recruitment as a separate strand within the HR Strategy**

The Corporation **APPROVED** the HR Strategy

#### ii Sustainability Strategy

- The VPF&R presented the Sustainability Strategy, which had also been reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee. A cross campus Sustainability Group had been set up which included three students and the Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors. Of the three pillars on which the strategy was based, embedding sustainability into teaching, learning and assessment would be the most challenging, but progress was now being made in this area.
- One of the key objectives for estates management was to improve energy and water efficiency. This would require replacement of the boilers at both campuses. Grants were currently available from the Government to assist organisations to reach the decarbonisation targets set for 2035. The VPF&R was planning to put together a scheme to start heat decarbonisation at the College by replacing the boiler in the Sports Hall at the Coulsdon Campus with a solar energy system and would be applying for a Government grant to do this in January 2021. The Board supported this proposal.
- The strategy was welcomed by the Staff Governor at the Coulsdon Campus who emphasised the need to be clear with students about how they could contribute and proposed reducing the use of plastics in the canteen. The VPF&R indicated that this would take place in the second year so that existing stock could be used up.
- The Board queried whether the strategy was being ambitious enough in its plan to reduce the number of printers across the College by 20% by 31 March 2021 given that the enforced move to remote working during 2020 would have reduced reliance on printing. The VPF&R agreed that this target would be reviewed when progress against the strategy was next considered. However, one of the challenges was the continuing requirements of awarding bodies for hard copies.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Sustainability Strategy and **AGREED** to commit to heat decarbonisation at the College

4.

## **BUSINESS PLANNING & MANAGEMENT**

### **i. Audit Committee Annual Report 2019/20**

- The Chair of the Audit Committee introduced the Committee's annual report to the Board on its activities during 2019/20. As well as the programme of internal audits, the Committee had overseen the retendering of external audit services and had considered the external auditors report on the financial statements and the regularity audit. Once approved, the Audit Committee's report would be submitted to the ESFA with the financial statements for 2019/20.
- The Audit Completion Report from Buzzacott appended to the Committee's report included one outstanding issue. This had now been resolved as the GLA had now confirmed in writing that the £200K from the Innovation Fund had been consolidated with the GLA AEB funding and that none of this funding would be reclaimed.
- The College's internal audit services had been provided by RSM for the last five years. There were no concerns about the level of the service provided but it was good practice to retender after a period of five years, therefore the Committee was recommending that internal audit services should be retendered in Spring 2021. The current internal audit provider would be invited to participate in the tender exercise.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Audit Committee Annual Report for signature and **APPROVED** the retendering of internal audit services

### **ii. Croydon College Regularity Self Assessment Questionnaire (RSAQ)**

- The Corporation noted that the questions in the RSAQ were set by the ESFA. In 2019/20 a new Annex A had been included relating to the College's response to Covid and its dealings with suppliers and staff. The VPF&R reported that the College had honoured all of its contracts during lockdown. The RSAQ had been reviewed by the Audit Committee and the responses audited by the external auditors.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the completed Regularity Self Assessment Questionnaire for signature

### **iii. Letter of Representation to the External Auditors**

- The letter of representation had previously been reviewed at the Audit Committee.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the letter of representation for 2019/20 for signature.

### **iv. Croydon College Financial Statements 2019/20**

- The VPF&R set out the key points for the Board to note in the financial statements, which had been reviewed by both the Finance and Resources and the Audit Committee. The operating deficit reported was £1,322K, compared to the management accounts outturn deficit of £262K. This was the result of FRS102 Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) adjustments provided by the London Borough of Croydon actuary in late September 2020. The impact of Covid had been identified throughout the narrative in the Members' Report and had been included as an additional risk to the College. Covid 19 had also resulted in a drop in the value of the assets of the College's share of the LGPS of nearly £3m and increased the College's pension liability by £4m.
- The external auditors had queried whether the valuation of the College's investment property at the Brit School had been impacted by the decrease in commercial property

values. This issue had been considered by the Finance and Resources Committee, who had approved the Executive's view that the current valuation could stand as it was based on rental income and the recent triennial rent review had increased the rental payments due.

- The financial statements included additional narrative on how senior staff pay was determined and a restatement of the pay multiple for the P&CEO for 2018/19 to show the full year effect of the merger with Coulsdon College.
- Two related party transactions, relating to matters arising from the merger with Coulsdon College, had been disclosed.
- The final headcount figure had increased from 473 in July 2019 to 516 in July 2020.
- The Board agreed that there were no subsequent events between the end of the 2019/20 financial year and this meeting that needed to be reported and that the College remained a going concern.
- The Chair thanked the VPF&R and her team and the members of the Finance and Resources and Audit Committees for their work preparing and reviewing the financial statements.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Croydon College Financial Statements 2019/20 for signature by the P&CEO and Chair of the Board.

**v. Staff Pay Award 2020/21**

- The P&CEO set out the rationale for making a pay award of 1.5% to all staff in 2020/21 backdated to the start of the academic year. She had hoped that a pay award of 2% might be possible but there were likely to be reductions in income in some areas e.g. apprenticeships. A further award would be considered later in the year if the financial position made this possible.

The Corporation **NOTED** the staff pay award for 2020/21, which had been included with the budget for 2020/21 approved by the Corporation at its meeting in July 2020.

**5. GOVERNANCE**

**i Annual Board Effectiveness Review and Development Plan**

- The Director of Governance set out the elements of the 2019/20 Board effectiveness review and the associated Board development plan for 2020/21.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the outcome of the Board effectiveness review for 2019/20 and the Board development plan for 2020/21.

**ii Review of Procedure for Appointment of a Governor and Role Description and Person Specification**

The Corporation **APPROVED** the revised Procedure for the Appointment of a Governor and Role Description and Person Specification.

**iii Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference**

The Corporation **APPROVED** the amendments to the terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee

<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>POLICIES</b></p> <p><b>i Safeguarding Policy Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VPE&amp;Q reported that there had been a small number of updates to the policy to reflect the new structure for Student Support Services and the September 2020 updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education. The policy also included the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism which the Department of Education had asked institutions providing HE courses to adopt.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the amendments to the Safeguarding Policy</p> <p><b>ii Financial Regulations Annual Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VPF&amp;R reported that there had been a small number of updates to the regulations. The most significant change proposed related to approvals for tendered capital project contracts in excess of £500K, which had been discussed at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 11 November 2020. An amendment was proposed to Annex A, which would enable contracts for capital projects over £500K to be signed with the approval of the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board. It was agreed that this was appropriate provided the approval of the contract was subsequently ratified by the Board.</li> <li>The VPF&amp;R reported that the tender process for the lead contractor for the estates refurbishment work at the Croydon Campus and the development of the Clinical Simulation Suite had just been completed and, with VAT, the contract was over £500K. The tight timescales for completion of the work meant that approval would need to be requested from the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and either the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board as per the amendment to the Financial Regulations above.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the amendments to the Financial Regulations</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>FOR INFORMATION PAPERS</b></p> <p><b>i</b> Croydon College Safeguarding Annual Report 2019/20</p> <p><b>ii</b> Annual Risk Report 2019/20</p> <p><b>iii</b> HR Annual Report 2019/20 (including EDI data)</p> <p><b>iv</b> Annual Remuneration Committee Report 2019/20</p> <p><b>v</b> Annual Search Committee Report 2019/20</p> <p><b>vi</b> Whistleblowing Annual Report 2019/20</p> <p><b>vii</b> Management Accounts for October 2020</p> <p><b>viii</b> Confirmed minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 7 October 2020</p> <p><b>ix</b> Draft minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 4 November 2020</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Draft minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 11 November 2020</li> <li>xi Draft minutes of the Coulsdon Learning and Quality Committee meeting on 18 November 2020</li> <li>xii Draft minutes of the Croydon Learning and Quality Committee meeting on 25 November 2020</li> <li>xiii Draft minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 26 November 2020</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>NOTED</b> the papers provided for information. No questions had been submitted prior to the meeting.</p>
8.	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i The Board noted that this was Gordon Smith and Nigel Dias' last meetings and thanked them for their contribution to the work of the Board.</li> </ul>
9.	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 6.00pm</p>

**Signed:**

**Date:**