

THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE

Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 3.00pm

Virtual Meeting

PART ONE MINUTES

PRESENT: Tony Stevenson (Chair)
 Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)
 Jean Cook
 Andrew Lowe
 Nasim Jivani Hemani
 Andrew Gilchrist
 Catherine Boyd-Maunsell
 Frederick Law
 Soumick Dey (from Item 2.i)
 Andy Wilson
 Mike Fisher
 Niral Patel
 Lucia Guetcherian – Staff Governor, Croydon Campus
 Fiona Brennan – Staff Governor, Coulsdon Campus
 Alex Fox - Student Governor, Croydon Campus
 Nataly Vivanco-Piechota - Student Governor, Coulsdon Campus (from Item 2.ii)

IN ATTENDANCE: Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance & Resources)
 Odette Carew (Principal, Coulsdon College - CP)
 Robert Cloke, Buzzacott (Item 6 only)

CLERK: Clare Mitchell (Director of Governance)

QUORUM: The meeting was quorate

	Item
1.	<p>PRELIMINARY BUSINESS</p> <p>i. Apologies for Absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies for absence were received from Claudine Reid, Martin Silverwood (VP Education & Quality) and Fadia Clarke (VP Training, Skills & HE). The Student Governor from the Coulsdon Campus would join the meeting at 4pm when her classes finished. <p>ii. Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Gilchrist is a Governor at Brooklands College. <p>iii. Decisions taken between meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporation RATIFIED a decision taken by Chair's action, supported by the Finance and Resources Committee, to accept a payment of £100K, payable immediately following the sale of land previously owned by the College at Duppas Hill (Plot B) by its current

	<p>owners Waddon Green Ltd. to Conegate Developments Ltd. This would be a full and final settlement in relation to the College's sales overage rights on this land.</p> <p>iv. Election of the Vice-Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair stated that discussions were still taking place and there was nothing further to report at this stage.
<p>2.</p>	<p>EVALUATION OF STANDARDS</p> <p>i. Principal's Report including OQIP for 2020/21, draft OQIP for 2021/22 and College KPIs for 2021/22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The P&CEO presented an overview of progress against the OQIP for 2020/21. Significant progress had been made. There had also been a number of other notable achievements; such as the improvements in online learning and the work that had gone into providing robust Teacher Assessed Grades. The number of High Needs Learners at the College continued to increase and the quality of HE provision had improved significantly. Key actions had been identified for 2021/22, and the draft OQIP was appended. Attendance was a significant issue; particularly at the Coulsdon Campus. Planning for T Levels would continue, as would plans to grow HE provision and to reverse the shortfall in enrolments for 16-19 year olds seen at the start of 2021/22. An Employment Strategy would be developed as would a master plan for the estate at the Croydon Campus. The outcomes of the SAR validation panels held at the start of the Autumn term had been moderated. All of the schools at the Croydon Campus and the Coulsdon Campus had been given an overall effectiveness grading of Good. In a number of areas, teaching and learning was close to outstanding. The P&CEO was asked how the increase in Covid cases was impacting on the College. The P&CEO indicated that cases were increasing, particularly at the Coulsdon Campus. There were a number of staff absences, including two of the Executive Team. It was difficult to engage students in self-testing, probably because of the length of the isolation period. PCR test results were taking longer to come through. The Board queried whether the College should adapt its ways of working to Covid on a more permanent basis. The P&CEO agreed that technology needed to be used more effectively to engage with parents and other external stakeholders. It was unclear what the situation would be in terms of Covid cases in January 2022, but the P&CEO stressed the importance of teaching 16-19 year olds and some ESOL students face to face if at all possible. The P&CEO was asked whether there had been an analysis of the reasons for low attendance levels and whether the move from online to onsite learning in March 2021 had impacted on attendance. The P&CEO stated that attendance had been an issue prior to the pandemic and that a number of strategies were in place to improve attendance. However, Croydon College was unusual in that attendance was lower for younger age groups than adults. This could be linked to the economic consequences of the pandemic, which had meant that some 16-19 year old students had had to take on part-time jobs, which impacted on their attendance. The P&CEO drew the Board's attention to the College KPIs for 2021/22 which were appended to the report and would be brought to each Board meeting. <p>The Corporation NOTED the P&CEO's report.</p> <p>ii. Croydon College SAR 2020/21</p>

- The P&CEO explained that the College SAR presented to the Board was the culmination of a full review of the College's activities, which included scrutiny by the Learning and Quality Committees. It was important to take into account the context in which the College was operating. Its students had significantly lower levels of attainment at the end of Year 11 than the national average. 46% of students at the Coulsdon Campus were studying English and/or Maths at L2, alongside their L3 courses, which was a higher percentage of students than the Sixth Form College average. The College as a whole was in the bottom 2 or 3% of Colleges nationally for prior attainment in English and maths. However, good progress had been made in all but two of the key improvement strategies identified for 2020/21.
- The SAR identified a number of key strengths across the College. The School of Business, Community and Access was leading the way at the Croydon Campus and was moving towards outstanding. Attendance was high in this school and in the School of Creative Arts and Higher Education provision. Student satisfaction was good at the Croydon Campus. The College had performed well during the pandemic and was one of the few London College to spend all of its GLA AEB budget in 2020/21.
- The areas for improvement that had been identified for 2021/22 included attendance and punctuality across the College, teaching, learning and student satisfaction at the Coulsdon Campus and pace and challenge at the Croydon Campus. Achievement rates were also identified for improvement, particularly in English and maths, timely apprenticeships and Access to HE at the Croydon Campus, A-level results at the Coulsdon Campus and 16-18 Level 2 vocational achievement rates at both campuses. There had been a small decline in achievement in 2020/21, particularly in English and maths, functional skills and access to HE. There had been issues with engaging these groups of students in online learning during lockdown.
- The Chair of the Croydon LQC reported that the College SAR had been reviewed thoroughly by the Committee. One issue that had been raised was the lack of differentiation in the grading; with all areas being assessed as Grade 2 (Good). The P&CEO had been able to identify areas which were stronger or weaker within this grade for the Committee, but this was harder to identify from the language in the SAR.
- The Board congratulated the P&CEO on significant improvements from 2019/20, particularly in teaching and learning at the Coulsdon Campus which had moved from a Grade 3 to a Grade 2.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the SAR for 2020/21 and the proposed grading for submission to Ofsted

iii. Office for Students Enhanced Monitoring Update

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Croydon University Centre (CUC) and OfS B3B Action Plan and the KPI indicators for 2021/22. The Corporation **NOTED** the CUC's OQIP for 2021/22, which would be monitored by the Executive Team and inform progress against the KPIs and the B3B Action Plan.

iv. Annual Safeguarding Report 2020/21 (Whole College)

- The P&CEO presented the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2020/21 and the associated QIP for 2021/22. The Board asked what due diligence checks were undertaken on external organisations hiring space from the College to ensure that they were not a proscribed organisation in terms of the Prevent duty. The P&CEO stated that the College was not currently letting out any of its space but full due diligence checks would take place prior to any lettings to external organisations being agreed at either site.

	<p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the Annual Safeguarding Report for 2020/21.</p> <p>v. Student Governors' Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student Governor from the Croydon Campus reported that, to date, Covid was not having too much impact on teaching and learning at the Croydon Campus. The Student Governor from the Coulsdon Campus reported that communication with Student Representatives at the Coulsdon Campus was good and changes were starting to be felt by students. A number of events had been organised by the Student Exec for the end of term. Students felt there was a lack of clarity about the Extended Project Qualification requirements and the Duke of Edinburgh's award and this had been raised with the CP. The Student Governor for the Coulsdon Campus asked if the College was in contact with its local MPs in terms of raising the profile of FE and funding for post 16 education. The P&CEO stated that Chris Philp, the MP for Croydon South, was due to visit the Coulsdon Campus and had asked to meet with students as part of the visit. Both Student Governors reported that they had benefited from attending the national training event for Student Governors held in Birmingham in November 2021. <p>The Corporation NOTED the Student Governors' Report.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>i. Annual Board Effectiveness Review 2020/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DoG set out the outcomes of the Annual Board Effectiveness Review, which had been undertaken internally in 2020/21. The annual statement on Board effectiveness, for inclusion in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control in the College's annual report, was recommended to the Board for approval by the Search and Governance Committee. The Staff Governor for the Coulsdon Campus reported that she had recently attended a Staff Governor Conference run by the ETF and felt that the Board was in need of further training on the impact of the Skills Bill and White Paper. <p>ACTION: DoG to arrange further training for the Board on the impact of the Skills Bill and White Paper</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the annual statement on Board effectiveness for 2020/21.</p> <p>ii. Annual Governor Review Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DoG set out the proposals for individual Governor Review meetings, which would take place on an annual basis from Spring 2022. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the process and timeline for annual Governor review meetings</p> <p>iii. Board Development Plan for 2021/22</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the Board Development Plan for 2021/22.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>POLICIES</p> <p>i. Safeguarding and Prevent Policy Annual Update</p>

	<p>The Corporation APPROVED the annual updates to the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy for 2021/22.</p> <p>ii. Annual Review of the Financial Regulations</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the amendments to Financial Regulations.</p> <p>iii. HE Fees 2022/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed HE tuition fees for 2022/23 were presented to the Board as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree course tuition fees to be maintained at £6,000 HNC/D course tuition fees to be maintained at £5,450 International fees to increase from £6,995 to £7,500 In the absence of the VPTSHE, the VPF&R explained that fees for international students had not increased for a number of years and that the need for this group of students to have a visa increased the administrative burden on the College. The maximum number of international HE students that could be placed at the College was 12. The VPF&R was asked to confirm that the fees charged to international students covered the College's costs. <p>Action: VPF&R to confirm that the fees charged to international students covered the College's costs</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the HE tuition fees for 2022/23 as stated above.</p>
5.	<p>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>i. Croydon College Corporation Minutes of the Meeting on 20 October 2021</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the minutes of the meeting.</p> <p>ii. Matters Arising (Action list)</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the updated action list.</p>
6.	<p>BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT</p> <p>i Audit Committee Annual Report 2020/21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the Audit Committee Annual Report. There was one proposed change to the report to amend the wording relating to funds received by the College to read as follows: <p><i>Funds from the Educations and Skills Funding Agency, the Greater London Authority, Office of Students and DWP have been properly applied in accordance with the 2020/21 Conditions of Funding and Capital Grants received.</i></p> The Board noted the assurance ratings and recommendations resulting from the internal audit work undertaken during 2020/21 and asked whether the Board should have any concerns. The VPF&R stated that no high priority recommendations had been made by the internal auditors and the number of medium priority recommendations was low. Progress against the recommendations was monitored both by the College and by the internal auditors and reported to the Audit Committee. Any changes to implementation dates required approval from the Audit Committee. The

annual internal audit opinion provided by the internal auditors was one of reasonable assurance, which was the norm for the FE sector. It was proposed that Board members who did not sit on the Audit Committee should be offered the opportunity to observe an Audit Committee meeting so that they could observe how the internal audit process worked in more detail.

ACTION: DoG to offer Board members who did not sit on the Audit Committee the opportunity to observe a meeting of the Committee

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Audit Committee Annual Report subject to the amendment above.

ii Croydon College Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Covid Self-Assessment

- The VPF&R presented the self-assessments, which consisted of responses to questions posed by the ESFA and would be submitted with the Financial Statements for 2020/21. The responses had been subject to external audit and Buzzacott had issued a clean regularity audit opinion.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and the Covid Self-Assessment for signature by the Chair and P&CEO.

iii Audit Completion Report 2020/21

- Robert Cloke, Audit Manager from Buzzacott, presented the Audit Completion Report. The Joint Audit Code of Practice for 2020/21 included a new requirement for external auditors to present their findings to the full Board. The external audit had resulted in clean audit opinions on both the Financial Statements and the regularity self-assessment.
- There were two unadjusted transactions noted within the report. The first, of £46K, related to debit balances in the College's creditors' listing. The second was an understatement of £273k in the valuation of the College's investment property in the Financial Statements, following the increase to the valuation resulting from a review undertaken on 16 November 2021. The balance sheet would be adjusted to reflect the higher valuation in the 2021/22 Financial Statements. These differences were not material from an audit perspective.
- All but one of the four audit matters raised in the report had been resolved. The fixed assets review would be undertaken during 2021/22.
- Final confirmation of the GLA AEB 2020/21 grant certification was still awaited, but this was expected to be a formality. To date, there had been no subsequent events since the end of the reporting period that would impact on the Financial Statements.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the Audit Completion Report for 2020/21

iv Letter of Representation to the External Auditors

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Letter of Representation for signature by the Chair.

v Croydon College Financial Statements 2020/21

- The VPF&R presented the Financial Statements for 2020/21, which had been scrutinised by the Finance and Resources and Audit Committees and were recommended to the Board for approval. The VPF&R drew the Board's attention to the impact of the FRS102 LGPS valuation expense of £1,666k on the surplus reported for the 2020/21 financial year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2020/21 financial statements included an additional disclosure relating to PRP payments made to key management personnel, which were approved and paid in 2020/21 for performance in 2019/20. • The Board noted that the 1.25% increase in employer NI contributions, which would come into effect from 1 April 2022, would result in additional costs of approx. £100K per year. This additional cost would not be covered by grant funding and would have to be found from within the agreed budget for 2021/22. • The VPF&R reported that a new heading entitled “<i>Control weaknesses identified</i>” had been introduced in the 2020/21 accounts direction. This has been missed when the Members’ Report had been drafted. It was proposed that the following text be inserted in the report below this heading. This wording had been reviewed by the Chair of the Audit Committee. <i>“No significant internal control weaknesses or failures arose during 2020/21, however the College continues to action all audit recommendations promptly to ensure that any weaknesses notified are addressed.”</i> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the Financial Statements for 2020/21 for signature by the Chair and P&CEO subject to the inclusion of the additional wording above.</p>
7.	<p>FOR INFORMATION PAPERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i Annual Risk Report 2020/21 ii Annual Health and Safety Report 2020/21 iii HE Performance Review 2020/21 iv HR Annual Report 2020/21 v Annual Remuneration Committee Report 2020/21 vi Search Committee Annual Report 2020/21 vii Management Accounts for October 2021 viii Unconfirmed minutes of the Coulsdon Learning and Quality Committee meeting on 3 November 2021 ix Unconfirmed minutes of the Croydon Learning and Quality Committee meeting on 10 November 2021 x Unconfirmed minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 17 November 2021 xi Unconfirmed minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 24 November 2021 xii Unconfirmed minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 25 November 2021 <p>The Corporation NOTED the papers provided for information. No questions had been submitted prior to the meeting.</p>
8.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no other items of any other business.</p>

9.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING Wednesday 26 January 2022.

Signed:

Date:

