



Croydon
College



MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Wednesday 2 March 2022 at 6.00pm
Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

- Present:** Andrew Lowe (Chair)
Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)
Tony Stevenson
Nasim Jivani Hemani
Niral Patel – from 6.12pm
- In attendance:** Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance and Resources)
Fadia Clarke (VP Training, Skills and Higher Education)
Helen Langford (Head of HR) – Item 5
- Clerk:** Clare Mitchell, Director of Governance

1.	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from Catherine Boyd Maunsell.
2.	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Key Issues – Finance, Estates and KPIs The VPF&R presented the report. The College continued to be on track to achieve the budget set for 2021/22. With the support of local stakeholders, the College had bid for an additional £1m of AEB funding from the GLA for 2022/23 and had been granted an additional £0.5m, which would be consolidated. The GLA had also agreed that £209K of the Good Works for All funding granted for 2022/23 could be brought forward to 2021/22 to fund expected over delivery. In December 2021, the ESFA had announced an increase in 16-18 funding rates for 2022/23. However, this was accompanied by a requirement for all student programmes to increase by 40 hours, paid for at a marginal rate of 70%. Once the additional teaching hours had been factored in, the change to 16-18 funding only amounted to a 1% increase. The DfE was keen for colleges to use these additional hours to focus on maths and English support for those students who required it and the College would be increasing functional skills tuition in maths and English. However, this would require the recruitment of additional teachers and there was a shortage of maths teachers across the sector. By early February 2022, the College had enrolled a further 73 16-18 students to ESOL, Construction and Health and Social Care courses, leaving the College only 4 students short of the 2021/22 grant allocation. The College would be making a special case to the ESFA in April to have these additional students funded for 2022/23. The College was in an unusual position, as a significant number of unaccompanied minors who had recently arrived in the UK had joined the College on ESOL provision in January 2022. The DfE was aware of this and it was hoped that these students would progress within the College in 2022/23.

	<p>The budget for 2022/23 was being prepared, based on the same number of students (2535) across the College as whole as budgeted for in 2021/22. Croydon Council had asked the Croydon Campus to take additional high needs learners and the two new T Level programmes attracted a higher rate of funding. The outcome of the latest revaluation of the Local Government Pension Scheme was due in December 2022 and any changes to contributions would come into effect from April 2023.</p> <p>Work was being undertaken internally on the “classroom of the future”. Laptops that were not on loan to students were being made available for use in classrooms. Students Services had data on students who did not have access to a laptop at home and those students were aware that there was the option to borrow a laptop. Work was being undertaken by the Head of Learning and Quality to ascertain whether it was more helpful to students for them to bring laptops from home into College for classes or whether laptops should be provided in College for lessons.</p> <p>The VPF&R confirmed that £644K of the £5.9m grant received from the Transaction Unit on merger had been repaid. This had been unavoidable because student numbers had increased and the College had out turned higher surpluses for 2019/20 and 2020/21 than had been modelled at the time of merger.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the key issues paper.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Apprenticeship Strategy</p> <p>The VPTSHE introduced the 5 year Apprenticeship Strategy. The apprenticeship curriculum for 2021/22 had been reviewed based on the profile of employers engaging with the College, Local Labour Market Information and the skills gaps in the borough.</p> <p>There had been a shift in the types of employers engaging with the College’s apprenticeship department, with an increase in the number of larger employers who had brought repeat business to the College and a decrease in the number of SMEs, who had been particularly badly affected by the pandemic.</p> <p>There were significant skills gaps at higher levels in the local area. The Apprenticeship Strategy focused on increasing engagement with SMEs, particularly in the professional areas, and aligning apprenticeships with the courses offered by Croydon University Centre so that there were opportunities for progression.</p> <p>The College had low numbers of apprentices for its size. Growing apprenticeship numbers and improving the department’s financial contribution was a significant focus. The department had already reached its income target for 2021/22. This was due in part to some students carrying over from the 2020/21. The target for new apprentices for 2021/22 was 120, increasing to 132 in 2022/23.</p> <p>The VPTSHE explained that, in the past, the College had outsourced apprenticeship provision. Apprenticeship provision was now delivered in house and the College planned to continue with an in house delivery model.</p> <p>The Committee emphasised the need to build on the strong existing relationships with larger employers as well as building up relationships with SMEs. The work that had been undertaken to identify skills gaps in the borough would be helpful with the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).</p> <p>The Committee discussed the Apprenticeship Strategy.</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>Human Resources Update</p> <p>The HoHR presented key points from the update. The College was moving into BAU post Covid. The Staff Survey action plan had been agreed by the Executive and would be communicated to staff shortly. Staff wellbeing was a focus and a communication had been sent out about support for staff impacted by the invasion of Ukraine and guidance on supporting students affected by the conflict.</p> <p>A workshop involving staff and students had taken place with the National Centre for Diversity (NCFD) to review the outcome of the surveys. The results would be shared at in person staff briefings. The next step would be an action plan. Focus groups would also be held on some of the more challenging outcomes from the survey relating to respondents witnessing discriminatory behaviour and bullying and harassment.</p> <p>In terms of HR risks, there were significant recruitment issues within the FE sector. The recruitment position in January 2022 had been concerning. A number of actions had been taken to recruit staff in key areas, which had improved the position.</p> <p>The staff turnover analysis requested by the Committee was appended to the report. Overall staff turnover was 18% against a target of 15%. The key areas with high turnover were the Coulsdon Campus and Student Services. 40% of the total leavers over the last 12 months had been from Student Services.</p> <p>Actions had been taken to improve recruitment and retention of Learning Support Practitioners (LSPs) within Student Services; including improving pay and in house rather than agency recruitment to these roles. Difficulties recruiting LSPs was an issue across the FE sector in London. There had also been a significant number of teaching staff leaving the Coulsdon Campus. The level of turnover in both areas had the potential to impact the College's ability to deliver effective teaching and learning.</p> <p>Leavers in areas of high turnover were being proactively encouraged to take part in the exit interview process. Staff wellbeing was also an area of risk and the HoHR was hoping to train more staff in mental health first aid so that the College would have mental health and wellbeing advisers specifically for staff to refer to for signposting and advice. The HoHR was also trying to arrange some mental health and wellbeing workshops on site.</p> <p>The Committee proposed that there should be a process whereby staff could raise concerns about their roles anonymously. The HoHR would consider how this might operate, bearing in mind that concerns raised anonymously could be difficult to address. The HoHR reported that one of the actions from the NCFD survey would be more informal drop in sessions for staff with the Executive Team and with HR.</p> <p>Action: HoHR to consider a process for staff to raise concerns about their roles, bearing in mind that concerns raised anonymously could be difficult to address</p> <p>The HoHR was hopeful that turnover would reduce now that staff were returning to work face to face post Covid, which would allow teams to develop stronger working relationships.</p>

	<p>The revised Grievance Policy was appended to the paper. There would now be one policy for both sites, with a focus on resolving grievance and clarification of the grounds for appeal. The Grievance Policy for Senior Post Holders was included as a separate annex.</p> <p>The Committee <u>discussed</u> the report and <u>approved</u> the Grievance Policy.</p>
6.	<p>Operational and Quality Improvement Plan (OQIP) Update 2021/22</p> <p>The Committee <u>noted</u> the progress update on Strategic Objectives 4 and 5 of the OQIP.</p>
7.	<p>Health and Safety Termly Performance report 2021/22 – February 2022</p> <p>The Committee <u>noted</u> the termly health and safety report. The VPF&R reported that following the half term break, a student had injured themselves while drilling a hole in a section of metal trunking using a battery powered drill. The drill slipped and penetrated the student’s thumb. A full investigation had taken place, risk assessments had been reviewed and refresher training had taken place for all students. The student has recovered sufficiently to return to College. This was being treated as a major incident and would be reported through RIDDOR. The incident would be discussed at the next meeting of the Health and Safety Group. The College’s insurers had been informed.</p>
8.	<p>Sustainability Strategy Progress Update – Spring Term 2021/22</p> <p>The Committee <u>noted</u> the sustainability strategy progress update. The VPF&R informed the Committee that she had received confirmation from the College’s gas suppliers that none of their gas supply came from Russia.</p>
9.	<p>Risk Register Strategic Objectives 4&5 - Update Spring 2022</p> <p>The VPF&R reported that the key change from last term was that the number of Covid cases reported by staff and students were now starting to reduce and so, in accordance with Government Guidelines, measures put into place to reduce Covid risk were being reduced. The COVID risks within SO4.1 and 5.1 and 5.3 were therefore now RAG rated as Green. However, they would remain on the Register in case the situation changed in the next few months.</p> <p>There had been an increase in the scoring for Risk 4.1 <i>“achieving a confident, happy, diverse and energetic workforce.”</i> and Risk 4.2 <i>“consistently good or better lessons in a vast majority of classes”</i>. The net risk for both SR 4.1 and SR 4.2 was now assessed as medium. The HoHR had explained the reasons for this and the mitigations in place (see Item 5) and the Committee <u>agreed</u> that it was comfortable with how these risks were being managed.</p> <p>The VPF&R indicated that staff pay for 2022/23 would be added to the risk register. The rise in the rate of inflation meant that the cost of living was increasing for staff and a pay rise that was not considered sufficient by staff and unions raised the risk of further industrial action and increased staff turnover.</p> <p>Action: VPF&R to add staff pay for 2022/23 to the risk register</p> <p>The Committee <u>approved</u> the updated Risk Management Plan for Strategic Risks 4 and 5 for consideration by the Audit Committee</p>

	<p>i <u>Deep dive on apprenticeship financial risks</u></p> <p>The VPTSHE introduced the financial risks associated with apprenticeships as set out in the risk analysis in the Apprenticeship Strategy paper. The risk that the apprenticeship department did not meet its income target was being addressed by the new curriculum, increased engagement with SMEs and making sure that the sales team had appropriate targets by employer type and subject area.</p> <p>The second main financial risk related to increasing the contribution that the department made to the College's overall costs. A costing model had been implemented that enabled the calculation of a minimum of 25% contribution. The major impact on the department's current contribution was poor timely achievement rates, which were bringing the cost of End Point Assessments (EPAs) which should have already taken place, into 2021/22 as an unplanned cost. The cost of an EPA was 10-15% of the income for each apprenticeship. The department was working with the MIS team to address this. Assessors' contracts had also been reviewed to incorporate a requirement for timely achievement rates.</p> <p>An additional member of staff had been brought into the MIS team to manage apprenticeship data. This was an additional cost, but internal audits of apprenticeship data were already showing improvements and better management of apprenticeship data would reduce the risk of funding claw backs.</p> <p>ii <u>Future deep dives and coverage of the risk register</u></p> <p>The DoG explained that the Audit Committee had asked for a process to be put in place for selecting future areas for Committee deep dives and for ensuring coverage of the risk register. The proposal to be presented to the Audit Committee on 17 March 2022 was that areas for risk dives should be selected by Committees taking account of increased risk scores. On this basis the Committee agreed that staff recruitment (SR4.2) should be the focus of the deep dive for the June 2022 meeting.</p>
10.	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 November 2021</p> <p>The minutes of this meeting were approved as a correct record.</p>
11.	<p>Matters Arising not on the Agenda</p> <p>The Committee noted the action list.</p>
12.	<p>Post Meeting Reflection</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the introduction of a key risks paper for finance, estates and KPIs but asked that the management accounts be included as a separate agenda item for future meetings.</p> <p>Action: DoG to include the management accounts as a separate agenda item</p> <p>It was also agreed by the members present at the meeting, that future meetings should start at 5.00pm.</p>

	Action: DoG to amend the start time of Committee meetings to 5pm
13.	Any other business There were no items of other business.
14.	Dates of future meetings Wednesday 15 June 2022 from 5pm – 7pm

Approved as an accurate record by the Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 15 June 2022

*Clare Mitchell
Director of Governance*