

THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE

Wednesday 12 July 2023 at 6.00pm

Room 405B, Croydon Campus

PART ONE MINUTES

- PRESENT:** Tony Stevenson (Chair)
Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)
Jean Cook
Frederick Law
Andy Wilson
Niral Patel
Yvonne White (Staff Governor, Coulsdon Campus)
Terrance James (Staff Governor, Croydon Campus)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance & Resources)
Martin Silverwood (VP Quality and Student Experience)
Natalie Garner (VP Principal Adults & HE)
Stuart Barlow (Coulsdon Principal)
Rob Bates (VP Young People and High Needs)
- OBSERVERS:** Fiona Chalk (as part of the External Governance Review)
Alan Krikorian, Deputy Director, London and South East Territorial Team, DfE
- CLERK:** Clare Mitchell (Director of Governance)
- QUORUM:** The meeting was quorate

	ITEM
1.	<p>PRELIMINARY BUSINESS</p> <p>The Chair welcomed</p> <p>i. Apologies for Absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologies for absence were received from Mike Fisher, Andrew Gilchrist, Andrew Lowe, Louise Cretton, Nasim Jivani Hemani, Catherine Boyd Maunsell, Soumick Dey, Mario Cuba (Student Governor, Coulsdon Campus) and Sally Andrews (Student Governor, Croydon Campus). The Chair confirmed that the meeting was quorate but there were insufficient Governors present to approve the changes to the Instrument and Articles at Item 5.ii.• The Chair welcomed Terrance James to his first Board meeting following his election to the role of Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus and Rob Bates who had now been appointed to the role of Vice Principal Young People and High Needs on a substantive basis.• The Chair also welcomed the two observers to the meeting. Fiona Chalk was observing the Board meeting as part of the external governance review and Alan Kirkorian was attending on behalf of the DfE as part of the College's additional conditions of funding.

	<p>Alan informed the Board that he would also be attending the October Board meeting. Thereafter a member of this team, Chris Dearnley, might attend as the observer.</p> <p>ii. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Caireen Mitchell is a Governor of Wandle Learning Trust.</p> <p>iii Election of Vice-Chair</p> <p>The Chair reported that Louise Cretton was the only Governor to have expressed an interest in this role and therefore she was elected unopposed with effect from 1 September 2023.</p> <p>The Corporation ELECTED Louise Cretton as Vice-Chair from 1 September 2023 for a period of four years.</p> <p>iv. Re-appointment of Andrew Lowe</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the appointment of Andrew Lowe for a second term of office for a four year period from 1 August 2023.</p> <p>v. Election of a new Staff Governor at the Croydon Campus</p> <p>See item 1.i above.</p> <p>vi. Decisions taken between meetings</p> <p>The Corporation RATIFIED the appointment of Mulalley as the main contractor for the FECTF works.</p>
2.	<p>EVALUATION OF STANDARDS</p> <p>i. Principal’s Report including College KPIs for 2022/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The P&CEO explained that she had reduced the length of the P&CEO’s report. This was now supported by the data in the Governors’ Dashboard, which was presented to the Board on screen. The Governors’ Dashboard could be accessed from the Portal and in future would contain live links and targets for the indicators. • The Governors’ dashboard included data on staff utilisation, achievement of funding targets, student retention, and attendance. The aim was to separate out attendance data for 16-18 students as this was a specific areas of focus and provide data for each area of the College on a weekly basis. Predicted achievement data would be updated following each student progress review. Future versions of the dashboard would include data on apprenticeships, safeguarding, work experience for 16-18s and the number of lesson observations. • The LQCs were keen to see the dashboard include comparative data including the previous year’s data, targets, and QAR comparisons. • The P&CEO reported that 16-19 achievement was expected to be around national benchmarks, with adult achievement slightly above. Predicted achievement data had been moderated. • Applications from 16-18 year olds were lower but offers were higher than the previous year. For adults both applications and offers were higher. • Teaching and learning had improved but there was still too much variation. In 2023/24 the focus would be on identifying underperforming teachers and supporting them to improve.

- Work was going on to refocus the high needs curriculum and develop work experience in this area. A new policy had been developed for work experience across the College, and responsibility had been moved to the World of Work. A full enrichment programme had been developed for 2023/24.
- The high level of support needed by students was borne out by the significant number of staff in the safeguarding and wellbeing team. Other services in the Borough of Croydon were overwhelmed, which meant there was more demand on the College's safeguarding and wellbeing team. However, the amount of resources focused on safeguarding meant that the College had less to spend in other areas such as enrichment.
- The Board asked whether there was a link between safeguarding referrals and achievement. The P&CEO reported that this did not appear to be the case at the Croydon Campus. At the Coulsdon Campus there were small areas where there appeared to be a link between referrals and achievement but this was not the case for the campus overall. The P&CEO advised that safeguarding support continued to be available to students over the Summer break.

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

ii. Coulsdon Principal's (CP) Report

- The CP reported that this report had been considered at the most recent meeting of the Coulsdon Campus LQC. It had also been part of the information sent to the FE Commissioners prior to the intervention visit.
- Attendance at examinations had improved significantly and a significant improvement in achievement was expected. Significant work had been undertaken to ensure a smooth start to 2023/24. Any changes to timetables would be made during the induction week so that student attendance could be tracked from the first day of teaching. 150 prospective students had attended the open day.
- A significant piece of work would be taking place with staff and students in 2023/24 to make learning more enjoyable to improve both student engagement and attendance. There would be an increased focus on A level students and more sharing of good practice across both campuses. Further work would be taking place to improve student behaviour.
- Governors asked what support was in place for students who withdrew from their studies. The CP explained that careers and wellbeing support was in place to help these students decide their next steps, including transfer to more appropriate courses at either campus.
- The CP reported that the staffing position had significantly improved across the pastoral team and academic staff, which would make a huge difference in 2023/24.
- The CP clarified that the KPIs in this report were a subset of the College KPIs included with the P&CEO's report. In future the CP's report would have a narrower focus and would be supported by the dashboard.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the Coulsdon Principal's report.

iii. Post Inspection Intervention

- The P&CEO noted that the provisional FEC recommendations had been circulated to Governors. The full College QIP was included within the information pack for this meeting. A summary would be presented to the LQCs, which would be based on progress updates

on the top ten improvement priorities. The P&CEO agreed to circulate the LQC reports to all Governors. All of the improvement priorities had equal weighting

ACTION: DoG to circulate the summaries of progress against the QIP from the LQCs to all Governors

- The Single Improvement Plan (SIP) would be presented to the Board. This would include some of the QIP priorities from the Ofsted inspection plus the FEC recommendations and the additional conditions of funding.
- The SIP would be developed over the Summer and needed Board approval early in the Autumn Term. The P&CEO proposed that the SIP would be circulated to all Governors for feedback and the final version approved by the Chair and the Chair of the Croydon College LQC. The approved version of the SIP would be brought to the October 2023 Board meeting. All of the FEC recommendations were equally weighted.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the delegation of authority to the Chair and the Chair of the Croydon College LQC to approve the SIP following circulation and feedback from all Governors.

- The draft FEC report was due shortly. Depending on the recommendations in the report there might be further amendments to the additional conditions of funding. There would be a further FEC visit in January 2024 to assess progress. Shelagh Legrave would be visiting both campuses on 8 November 2023.
- Governors noted that one of the provisional recommendations related to the development of a single culture across both campuses and asked how this would be implemented. The P&CEO reported that cross campus events were now taking place including a management conference. A cross campus teaching and learning conference had taken place during staff learning week. The Board commented that achievement of this recommendation would be difficult to measure.
- The Chair of the Croydon College LQC stressed the need for Governors to be involved in target setting. There was also a need to ensure consistency between the risk register and the QIP with a green rating only used when a target had been met.

iv. ESFA AEB Subcontracting Rationale 2023/24

- The VPF&R reported that only £70K of the College's ESFA AEB funding for non-Londoners would be subcontracted in 2023/24. This was a carryover from the 2022/23 contract.

The Board **APPROVED** the subcontracting rationale for 2023/24.

v. Student Governors' Report

- Neither of the Student Governors were in attendance to give this report.

3. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

- The Chair reported that the AoC Chair's Council had been relaunched, with Chair attendance at the on line launch low. The AoC had also developed a manifesto to influence political parties ahead of the next General Election. This had been launched as "Opportunity England" and had been circulated to Governors.
- There was still no additional funding for FE from the government, this might come to a head with the pay negotiations in the Autumn term.
- The Chair had attended the AoC Governance Summit, again this had been poorly attended by Chairs and Governors. This was possibly due to the cost. The Chair had also attended

the Access Graduation Ceremony. This had been a very celebratory event, which had also been attended by the Head of Nursing at the University of Roehampton.

The Corporation **NOTED** the Chair's update on strategic developments.

4. **BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

i. Budget 2023/24

- The VPF&R explained that a deficit budget of £475K was being proposed. This was due to the need to invest in staff and ensure stable staffing in order to implement the recommendations from the Ofsted inspection. Setting a deficit budget was a very unusual step to take.
- Enrolment in September 2023 would be key. The College's 16-18 grant had reduced in 2023/24 by £1m, partly because the number of 16-18 students in 2022/23 had been below the grant allocation. Additional students had been enrolled in January 2023 but these students couldn't be timetabled for the full 540 study hours so were only eligible for a lower rate of funding. However, the biggest factor in the grant reduction was the lower retention rates in 2021/22.
- Funding rates would increase by 2.2% in 2023/24. The pay budget had been set at 3.5%, but this was significantly lower than union demands. The level of the pay increase might vary depending on the grade of staff as it had in 2022/23. The VPF&R confirmed that the College paid the London Living Wage.
- The College had been able to grow its apprenticeship and adult provision, which had been graded as Good by Ofsted.
- The budget contained an assumption that interest rates would be 4.5% but this could change. The Finance and Resources Committee was keeping the College's bank loans under review. If interest rates continued to rise, there might come a point where consideration should be given to paying off one or more of the College's bank loans.
- The VPF&R reported that the draft budget had been considered in detail at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 14 June 2023.
- The Chair of the Croydon LQC noted that the recruitment of 16-18 students mid year met a need within the local community and asked if mid year enrolments would continue if the College met its enrolment target in September. The VPF&R replied that this would continue as there was a continuing demand for ESOL provision and these students often progressed within the College.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the deficit budget for 2023/24 on the basis that this deficit was for one year only and that a surplus would be generated in 2024/25

ii. Forecast 2022/25

- The VPF&R noted that the forecast for 2024/2025 was more positive because of improved retention in 2022/23. However, the 16-18 tuition fund grant ended in 2024/25.
- Apprenticeships and adult provision was expected to continue to grow. A 2% pay increase had been included in the forecast for 2024/25 and it was assumed that interest rates would be 4.5%
- The VPF&R drew the Board's attention to the commentary, which would be submitted to the ESFA and the Transaction Unit, and the Governor dashboard from the CFFR. Performance against the benchmarks was expected to improve in 2024/25.

the Corporation **APPROVED** the forecast for 2022/25 and the associated commentary

iii. Internal Audit Plan 2023/24

- The VPF&R presented the internal audit plan for 2023/24, which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the internal audit plan for 2023/24

iv. External Audit Strategy 2022/23

- The External Audit Strategy for 2022/23 had also been reviewed by the Audit Committee. A number of specific risk areas had been identified for review including accounting for the flood damage and associated insurance claim and capital projects.
- The fees for both sets of auditors had increased significantly in 2023/24. The reasons for this increased were given as the need to recruit and retain staff and the high levels of inflation.
- The proposed change to the date of FE Colleges' year end from 31 July to 31 March from 2025 would result in a further increase in external audit fees. There was also a concern about capacity to undertake external audits within the FE sector.

the Corporation **APPROVED** the external audit strategy for 2022/23

5. GOVERNANCE

i. Governance Arrangements for the Appointment of Student Governors

- The DoG set out the rationale for moving to appointed rather than elected Student Governors and the proposed process. Both Student Executives had been asked for their views on this change. No feedback had been received. There appeared to be a trend among Colleges to move to appointed Student Governors.
- The Board asked what the situation would be if the Student Executive President also wished to apply for the Student Governor role. The DoG indicated that they would need to demonstrate that they had the time and commitment to fulfil both roles.
- There was some discussion about how long Student Governors should hold office, but no decision was made to change the term of office from one academic year.
- The Board noted that the Student Governor was not a representative of the student body, but if they were not a member of the Student Executive they would need a mechanism for obtaining feedback from students.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the move to appointing Student Governors subject to a review in 18 months

ACTION: DoG – review of the move to appointing Student Governors in 18 months

The Corporation **APPROVED** the associated amendments to the Standing Orders, Procedure for the Appointment of Governors and Student Constitution.

ACTION: DoG to update the Standing Orders, Procedure for the Appointment of Governors and Student Constitution

	<p>ii. Amendments to the Instrument and Articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoG set out the proposed amendments, one of which was required to move to the appointment of Student Governors. • It was not possible to approve the amendments to the Instrument and Articles at this meeting as 75% of the full Governing Body (13 Governors) were not present. Agreement would be sought by written resolution. <p>ACTION: DoG to seek approval of the amendments to the Instrument and Articles by written resolution</p> <p>iii. Amendments to the Scheme of Delegation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoG reported that the Scheme of Delegation needed to be updated to reflect the new requirement for Corporations to comply with HM Treasury’s Managing Public Money following the reclassification of FE Colleges as public sector. • Three other additions had also been made to reflect the additional Board responsibilities as a result of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill and changes to the funding agreement with the ESFA. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>ACTION: DoG to update the Scheme of Delegation</p>
6.	<p>RISK MANAGEMENT</p> <p>i Risk Register Summer 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VPF&R reported that there had been very few changes in scoring since the Spring update to the risk register. • A different approach had been taken this term and only the red sub risks, of which there were 18, had been included in the risk register. The VPF&R reported that the red risks reflected the most significant risks facing the College • The VPF&R would be working with the Vice Principals and the Chairs of the Committees on the future format of the risk register and how to ensure that there was a read across between the risk register and the OQIP. • There had been an internal audit of risk management two years ago and the approach of linking risks to the achievement of the strategic plan objectives was a common approach across FE Colleges. However, following a recommendation from the FE Commissioners on the length and accessibility of the current risk register, there would be changes in 2023/24. <p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the updated Risk Register.</p>
7.	<p>ANNUAL POLICY UPDATES</p> <p>i. Supply Chain Charges and Fees Policy</p> <p>The VPF&R reported that this policy set out the College’s subcontracting arrangements. The amendments proposed were minor.</p> <p>ii. Fees Policy</p>

This policy had been updated following a recent internal audit to ensure the College's policy on paying by instalments reflect practice.

iii. Risk Management Policy

The VPF&R noted that this policy was reviewed annually so that the Board could review the section on risk appetite. The Audit Committee had considered this policy, including the section on risk appetite, at its recent meeting and was not recommending any changes.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the updates to the supply chain charge and fees policy, the fees policy and **AGREED** that there should be no changes to the current risk management policy.

8. UPDATES FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRS

i. Coulsdon Campus Learning and Quality Committee

Andy Wilson, Chair of the Croydon College LQC, gave the update on behalf the Chair of the Coulsdon Campus LQC. A good deal of the discussion had related to the Coulsdon Principal's report which had already been discussed above. The Committee had also discussed the targets needed to measure success and the need for clear information on what was not going to plan. One of the other key issues discussed related to safeguarding, which was a very significant issue for students.

The Corporation **NOTED** the update from the Coulsdon Campus LQC

ii. Croydon College Learning and Quality Committee

Andy Wilson, Chair of the Croydon College LQC, commented that many of the key issues discussed by the Committee had been covered above under the P&CEO's report. The Committee had been very pleased to see the data dashboard. However, further refinement was needed and the data needed to be integrated into the P&CEO's report. The Committee had received an update on changes to qualifications that would be taking place over the next few years with the defunding of some BTECs in favour of T Levels. The area most likely to be affected at the College was health and social care from 2025.

The Committee had also received an update on the Croydon University Centre's compliance with the OfS B3 Condition. The CUC had not yet achieved a number of the required thresholds reflecting courses that had been discontinued but whose impact continued for three years given that OFS took a three year time slice of data, and this was being reviewed by the OfS. The College had met with the OfS earlier in the year to discuss this data, but no outcome had been received as yet.

The VP Young People and High Needs had reported that actions in the High Needs area would now be incorporated into the College SAR. There would be a particular focus on work experience for high needs students.

The Corporation **NOTED** the update from the Chair of the Croydon College LQC

iii. Finance and Resources Committee

The Chair of the Governing Body gave an update on behalf of the Finance and Resources Committee. The Committee had scrutinised the proposed budget for 2023/24 and had been pleased to note that appraisal completion rates were much improved.

The Corporation **NOTED** the update from the Finance and Resources Committee

iv. Audit Committee

	<p>Frederick Law, member of the Audit Committee, provided the report in absence of the Chair. The Audit Committee had discussed a follow up audit on cyber security and had asked for an explanation of the reasons for a significant increase in the external audit fee for 2022/23. For this year the fee would need to be paid, but the College had the option of retendering in 2023/24.</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the update from the Audit Committee</p> <p>v. Search and Governance Committee</p> <p>The Chair of the Governing Body gave an update on behalf of the Search and Governance Committee. The recruitment of a SEND Governor through Peridot was underway and an appointment recommendation would be presented to the October Board meeting. Plans were also underway to recruit a replacement for Soumick Dey who had resigned with effect from 31 July 2023 because of pressure of work.</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the update from the Search and Governance Committee</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>i. Minutes of the Part One meeting on 29 March 2023</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the minutes of this meeting.</p> <p>ii. Minutes of the Part One meeting on 24 May 2023</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the minutes of this meeting.</p> <p>ii. Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda (see action list)</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the updated action list. Updates had been provided on those actions that had not yet been completed.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>FOR INFORMATION PAPERS</p> <p>i. Management Accounts for May 2023</p> <p>ii. Detailed Quality Improvement Plan (Appendix A to Item 2.iii)</p> <p>iii. Risk Management Register – Summer Term 2023 (Appendix C to Item 6.i)</p> <p>iv. Unconfirmed minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 14 June 2023</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the papers provided for information. No questions had been submitted prior to the meeting.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>The Chair noted that this was Jean Cook’s final meeting as a Governor after eight years The Chair thanked her for all the work she had done for the College, attending many meetings and events, being the Lead Governor for Safeguarding and sitting on the Sustainability Group. There would be a presentation to Jean after the meeting.</p> <p>The Corporation also said goodbye and thank you to Soumick Dey and the two Student Governors for 2022/23, Mario Cuba and Sally Andrews.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p>

	Wednesday 18 October 2023 6pm – 8pm at the Croydon Campus
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