



## THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE

Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 6.00pm

Room 405B, Croydon Campus

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### PART ONE MINUTES

**PRESENT:** Tony Stevenson (Chair)  
Louise Cretton (Vice Chair)  
Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)  
Nasim Jivani Hemani  
Catherine Boyd- Maunsell  
Frederick Law  
Andrew Gilchrist  
Andy Wilson  
Niral Patel  
Terrance James (Staff Governor, Croydon Campus)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance & Resources)  
Martin Silverwood (Interim Coulsdon Principal)  
Natalie Garner (VP Principal Adults, Vocational and Skills)  
Rob Bates (VP Young People and High Needs)

**PRESENT:** Fiona Chalk (for the External Governance Review item only)

**OBSERVERS:** Alan Krikorian, Deputy Director, London and South East Territorial Team, DfE (AK)  
Edwin Dhauke, Senior Manager, Sussex, Kent and South London Team DfE

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

**QUORUM:** The meeting was quorate

	ITEM
	<p><b>EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW</b></p> <p>All Governors and members of the Executive Team had received a copy of the report from the External Governance Review prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Fiona Chalk (FC) gave an overview of the findings. The three key areas that had emerged from the review were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment on strategy</li> </ul> <p>Governors wanted to be involved at the early stages of the development of the new strategic plan. There need to be clear alignment across the Executive Team and the Governors on key terms within the new strategy and how the strategy would be implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting effectiveness</li> </ul> <p>The Executive was mainly reporting to the Board and then being questioned, which could result in the Executive appearing defensive. Agendas were too long, with too little time for Governors to spend on strategic items.</p>

A different, more collaborative, method of engaging Governors would be helpful e.g. by including questions for Governors within papers to leverage their knowledge. This would enable a more focused discussion and shift meetings from reporting mode to collaborative oversight. The Executive should use the Board and Committees to test assumptions and identify any potential issues. Meetings needed to be a conversation between the Executive and Governors rather than a performance by the Executive. This would enable Governors to feel that they had made an effective contribution to discussions.

- Governor’s ambassadorial role

Governors needed to use all opportunities to enable the work of the College and bring intelligence back to the College. FC suggested that declarations of interest could be shared among Governors and the Executive Team so everyone knew where individual Governors might be able to contribute.

FC emphasised that as external governance reviews took place every three year, the recommendations did not need to be implemented at once, but over the three year period.

Governors and the Executive Team were given a copy of the 22 recommendations from the report and asked to work in small groups to prioritise their top three recommendations. Not all groups came up with the same top three recommendations, but the main recommendations that were prioritised are as follows:

1.	Executive reports to have a more strategic and impact focus and to contain information rather than just data. The governor’s role is more about testing assumptions than it is about analysing data.
2.	The provision of data, particularly as it relates to student performance and educational quality, is not yet sufficient to give governors the necessary assurances on the strengths and weaknesses of the College. Governors should set out clearly their ask on data provision and consider for what strategic reason the ask is being made, being mindful of the burden on staff in providing such information.
4.	An annual conversation between the Board and Executive on what each wants from the governance function and how that could be delivered, would help drive a strategic agenda and greater engagement between the Board and the senior team
5.	Governors should seek greater oversight of the culture of the college (where it is at and where it should be), particularly in regard to the wellbeing of staff and student behaviour. Making and taking up opportunities for greater engagement with staff and students should be encouraged.
8.	Ensuring the student voice is embedded in all activity needs to continue as a key focus, and further opportunities to engage with the students should be considered.

It was also suggested that at least one of the Governor Days each year should be a full day with the Board meeting in the evening to allow more time for strategic discussions.

FC noted that she would be returning in twelve months’ time to review progress against the recommendations.

**1. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS**

**i. Apologies for Absence**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologies for absence were received from Mike Fisher, Andrew Lowe and Yvonne White (Staff Governor – Coulsdon). The Chair reported that Mike Fisher had resigned earlier in the day.</li> <li>• The Chair also welcomed the two observers to the meeting. Alan Kirkorian and Edwin Dhauke were attending the meeting on behalf of the DfE as part of the College’s additional conditions of funding.</li> </ul> <p><b>ii. Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Andrew Gilchrist is a Governor at Brooklands College.</p> <p><b>iii Appointment of new External Governors</b></p> <p>The Chair reported that the members of the Search and Governance Committee had interviewed candidates for two external Governor vacancies and the Committee was recommending their appointment. Their CVs had been circulated to Governors prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the appointment of Martin Bentham and Jonathan Brookes as External Governors for a four year term of office.</p> <p><b>iv. Appointment of new Student Governors</b></p> <p>The Chair reported that interviews had taken place for Student Governors at both campuses.</p> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the appointment of Nezia De Roche (Student Governor, Croydon Campus) and Rajhana McPherson–Amah (Student Governor, Coulsdon Campus) for the 2023/24 academic year.</p> <p><b>v. Appointment of co-opted members of the Croydon College LQC</b></p> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the appointment of Matthew Sims, Chair of the Croydon BID as the employer co-opted member of the Croydon College LQC and Kevin Oakhill, who had specific expertise in autism, as a co-opted member of both LQCs.</p>
2.	<p><b>EVALUATION OF STANDARDS</b></p> <p><b>i. Single Improvement Plan (SIP)</b></p> <p>The P&amp;CEO explained that there were two key documents. The first was the SIP, which focused on the recommendations in the FEC Intervention Report and the additional conditions of funding imposed by the ESFA. This plan required approval from the FEC, ESFA and the Board and progress was monitored monthly through case conferences with the ESFA and FEC. In future, the SIP would be updated monthly ahead of the case conferences and updates would be posted on the Governors’ Portal. Progress against the SIP would be scrutinised at each Board meeting.</p> <p>The second key document was the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). This was an internal plan, which addressed the issues raised by Ofsted and other quality improvements identified by the College. There was some overlap between the documents, e.g. the attendance target, but they served different purposes. The QIP would also be updated monthly and the latest update would be available to all Governors through the Portal. Progress against the QIP would be monitored by the relevant Committees and would be summarised in the Principal’s report to the Board.</p>

The Board asked how staff engagement would be monitored. The P&CEO reported that a staff survey was scheduled for April 2024. Staff would also be engaged in the development of the new strategic plan and the development of a shared culture across both campuses.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Single Improvement Plan

AK asked if the College found the SIP helpful. The Chair responded that it was, but he had some observations about the role of the College in the development process that he would discuss with AK separately.

**ACTION: Chair of Governing Body to speak to AK about his observations about the process of developing the SIP**

**ii Principal's Report including College KPIs for 2022/23**

- The P&CEO drew the Board's attention to the escalation of violence in the vicinity of both campuses, recent incidents and the actions that were being taken to address them. Known drug dealers were congregating outside the Croydon Campus. This was a particular safeguarding risk for younger and/or vulnerable students. Discussions were taking place with the police to remove these individuals. Discussions were also underway with the Council about creating a secure area for students at the rear of the Croydon Campus. It was very difficult to educate students in this environment and external assistance was essential to address the increase in violence.
- The Board asked whether students were concerned by the increase in incidents outside the College. The P&CEO reported that some groups of students had been particularly and these students were being supported by the safeguarding and wellbeing team. Most students had remained calm and communication with students was good. Workshops would be taking place with students on safety, knife crime and county lines and funding might be available for knife arches at both campuses.

**Action: P&CEO to pursue the possibility of funding for knife arches at both campuses**

- The P&CEO also raised the impact on staff, particularly those who had dealt with students who had been excluded from the College.
- The P&CEO reported that overall achievement for 16-18s was just 4% below national benchmark and had significantly improved from 2021/22 16-18 achievement had been particularly strong at the Croydon Campus. The reasons for lower than predicted achievement at the Coulsdon Campus had been investigated and were being addressed. A/S levels and some BTECS where there had been particularly low achievement were in the process of being withdrawn. Mock assessments in 2023/24 would cover the whole curriculum and results would be standardised. There was an increased focus on teaching and learning and staff performance.
- Adult achievement was 84%. This was marginally lower than in 2021/22 due to a decline in level 2 Functional Skills achievement, with a significantly higher number of enrolments, and a marginal decline in ESOL achievement, where there had been significant growth.
- In 2023/34 31% of students needed to resit either or both English and maths at GCSE. Achievement at GCSEs in English and maths was above the national average, but the low levels of prior achievement meant that the College was unlikely to achieve very high achievement rates across all qualifications. Across the College attendance was currently 82% against a target of 83%.
- The VPYP&HN gave an update on high needs provision across both campuses. Attendance was at 86%, with retention at 98.8% against an average nationally of 89% and achievement was significantly higher than the national average. Discussions were taking

	<p>place with the Council about the refurbishment of the high needs space within the Croydon Campus. This work should have taken place during the summer break.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of high needs students had grown from approx. 50 to over 230 in the last few years. The College was keen to increase this provision to meet community needs. Similarly the College needed to meet the needs of students who had to resit English and maths, which reflected on the quality of English and maths provision up to the age of 16 in Croydon. The College also had approx. 400 ESOL students who would need to sit GCSE English and maths at a future point. The Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus raised the issue of support for staff with high needs students in their classes. The VPYP&amp;HN agreed that this was an issue but noted that a large number of LSPs had recently been recruited and would be starting shortly. There was also a drop in session each day for teachers to get advice on teaching and managing behaviour strategies for high needs students.</li> <li>• The Board asked why HE enrolments were lower than expected. The VPAVS reported that recruitment had been strong in areas such as children’s nursing but the new HNCs had been marketed late and would be remarketed for January 2024 starts. Numbers were up on 2022/23 but still disappointing. The College had lost some nursing students to LSBU but the College’s aim was not to compete with other HE providers but to find other ways of delivering HE such as higher level apprenticeships and modular learning. Discussions were taking place with the University of Roehampton about providing a mental health nursing degree.</li> <li>• The Chair noted that there was an error in the report and the Coulsdon Campus had been at Quartile D in the summer QDP report.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>DISCUSSED</b> the P&amp;CEO’s report.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The P&amp;CEO provided an update on the development of the new strategic plan, which would be supported by an external consultant who had a background in organisational development and cultural change as well as strategic plan development. The current strategic plan was created at the point of merger and was due for renewal at the end of this academic year. One of the recommendations from the Further Education Commissions’ Report was the development of the new strategic plan:</li> <li>• In terms of process, meetings were being set up with the Chairs of Committees. There would be a strategy session at the December Governor Day. There would also be engagement with staff. The meeting between Governors and employers on 5 October 2023 had emphasised the importance of students acquiring soft skills so that they were ready for employment.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>DISCUSSED</b> the process for the development of the new strategic plan.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p><b>i. Application for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 3c – Sports Hall, Coulsdon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The VPF&amp;R reported that in order to progress the College’s Sustainability Strategy objective of becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, the College had undertaken an Invitation to Tender to select a supplier to help the College prepare a road map for each of the buildings at both campuses. In particular the College wished to select a supplier who could assist with developing grant bids for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), run by Salix. Round 3c of the grant scheme opened at 14.00 on 10<sup>th</sup> October for expenditure in the fiscal years 2024/25 and 2025/26.</li> </ul>

- If the College was unsuccessful in its bid from grant funding, a decision would need to be made as to whether the College would self fund the works necessary to become carbon neutral.

Following approval by the Chair and Chair of F&R under Annex A of the Financial Regulations, the Corporation **RATIFIED** the application for project costs of £607,592 with a grant of £243,849 and College contribution of £363,743 over the 2024/25 and 2025/26 fiscal years to decarbonise the Sports Hall at Coulsdon.

**ii. Estates Strategy Update**

- The VPF&R reported on the recent works, particularly the recent works in the reception area and the work funded by the FEETF.
- The College’s decision to retain high levels of reserves meant that the College could apply for grants that required matched funding.

The Corporation **NOTED** the estates activities undertaken over the summer and the plans for 2024 to date

**iii. Student Numbers for 2023/24 and Impact on 2023/24 budget**

- The VPF&R noted that the number of 16-18 enrolments had decreased by 39 since the paper had been written. Overall enrolments had been strong and the College was currently 101 above grant allocation. The College hoped to enrol additional 16-18 students onto ESOL programmes in January 2024. If the College remained over 100 above allocation it would be eligible for in year funding.
- Adult AEB courses had recruited above target but Access and HE courses were below target.
- Additional funding had been provided by the DfE and had been primarily used to offer a substantial increase in staff pay, which was currently under consultation with the unions.
- The impact on 2023/24 income, if in year growth funding for both 16-18 and Adult GLA grant was obtained, showed a potential net increase forecast of £1,175k, most of which has been applied to pay costs and non pay costs that had exceed the 2023/24 budget approved in July 2023. The impact of the agreed pay increase and current energy and insurance costs compared to budget would be presented in more detail to the F&R committee in November.

The Corporation **NOTED** the current predicted growth in income.

**5. GOVERNANCE**

**i. Committee Membership 2023/24**

- The Board noted that an amendment was required as Louse Cretton was now the Vice-Chair of the Board.

**ACTION: DoG to amend the Committee membership to show that Louise Cretton was now the Vice-Chair of the Board.**

- Following Mike Fisher’s resignation, a new External Governor would need to be recruited. Depending on their skill set, this might result in further changes to Committee membership

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Committee membership for 2023/24 subject to any further amendments required following the appointment of an External Governor to replace Mike Fisher.

**ii. Amendments to Committee Terms of Reference 2023**

- The DoG set out the proposed amendments to the terms of reference of the Learning and Quality Committees and the Audit Committee.
- The Remuneration Committee was also recommending a change to its terms of reference. PRP objectives for senior postholders for the current academic year would be recommended to the Board in the Autumn of that year, once the outturn from the previous academic year was known.

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

**iii. Link Governors**

- The DoG reported that the link governor scheme had been extended beyond the roles approved by the Board in March 2023, to include a link governor for EDI and link governors for the main curriculum areas. The introduction of the link governors for curriculum areas was in response to the recommendation from the FEC that the Chair, Governance Professional and CEO needed to develop and implement a strategy for ensuring Governors understood what was like to be a student at Croydon College. This should include developing a link governor system and strengthening student representation at Board level.
- Link Governor appointments were proposed as follows:

Safeguarding (review in January 2024)	Martin Bentham
SEND	Martin Bentham
Health and Safety	Nasim Jivani Hemani
Careers, Employability and Skills	Niral Patel
Sustainability	Jonathan Brookes (TBC)
EDI	Terrance James
ESOL, English and Maths	Nasim Jivani Hemani
Adult, Vocational and Skills	Andy Wilson
Apprenticeships	Andrew Lowe
Higher Education	Tony Stevenson
Coulsdon Campus	Louise Cretton

- The new link governor roles would be implemented with immediate effect. Where new link governor roles had been established there would be a review of how well these were working at the end of the Spring term 2024, with the exception of safeguarding, which will be reviewed in January 2024 as Martin Bentham was a new Governor and taking on two link governor roles.

**ACTION: DoG and Executive Team to implement new link governor roles with immediate effect**

The Corporation **APPROVED** the establishment of the new link governor roles in EDI and the curriculum areas; the role descriptions for the link governors for EDI and the curriculum areas; the protocol for link governors and the appointment of individual governors to the link governor roles.

**iv Revision to the amendments to the Instrument and Articles (I&A)**

- The amendments to the I&A proposed at the July 2023 Board meeting had been circulated for approval by written resolution as there were insufficient members present at the July Board meeting to approve changes to the I&A.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the amendments were approved, but the Chair of the Audit Committee raised a concern about the proposal to withdraw the existing protection for Governors under the age of 18 (this provision would only apply to student governors) who under the current I&amp;A:   “shall not vote at a meeting of the Corporation, or any of its committees, on any question concerning any proposal—  (a) for the expenditure of money by the Corporation; or  (b) under which the Corporation, or any members of the Corporation, would enter into any contract, or would incur any debt or liability, whether immediate, contingent or otherwise.”</li> <li>The Chair of the Audit Committee expressed concern that removing this provision from the I&amp;A would spread the risk to the parents of student governors under the age of 18. For this reason the DoG was recommending that this amendment to the I&amp;A should be withdrawn.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>RESOLVED</b> to withdraw the change to the Instrument and Articles to remove paragraph 13(1)(7) of the instrument set out above</p>
6.	<p><b>ANNUAL POLICY UPDATES</b></p> <p><b>i. Annual Review of the Financial Regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VPF&amp;R presented the amendments to the Financial Regulations for 2023/24. The main changes were to bring the regulations in line with the bite size guidance issued by the ESFA following the reclassification of FE Colleges as public sector in November 2022.</li> <li>The Board was also asked to add VAT to the limits of all levels of authorisation (Annex A), to reflect the College’s increased turnover and the impact of recent inflationary increases.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the amendments to the Financial Regulations</p> <p><b>ii. Annual Review of the Health and Safety Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VPF&amp;R reported that the proposed amendments had been reviewed by the Health and Safety Group on 10 October 2023 and were recommended to the Board for approval.</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the amendments to the Health and Safety Policy</p> <p><b>ACTION: DoG to add the revised versions of these policies to the Governors’ Portal</b></p>
7.	<p><b>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p><b>i. Minutes of the Part One meeting on 12 July 2023</b></p> <p>The Corporation <b>APPROVED</b> the minutes of this meeting subject to an amendment to the order of the approvals for the forecast and approval of the internal audit plan.</p> <p><b>ACTION: DoG to amend the minutes of the 12 July 2023 Part One meeting.</b></p> <p><b>ii. Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda (see action list)</b></p>



	The Corporation <b>NOTED</b> the updated action list. Updates had been provided on those actions that had not yet been completed.
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>FOR INFORMATION PAPERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Use of the Seal 2022/23</li> <li>ii. Governor Attendance Report 2022/23</li> <li>ii. A summary of changes introduced by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023</li> <li>iii. Confirmed minutes of the Coulsdon Campus LQC on 26 April 2023</li> <li>iv. Unconfirmed minutes of the Coulsdon Campus LQC on 21 June 2023</li> <li>v. Unconfirmed minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee on 14 June 2023</li> <li>vi. Unconfirmed minutes of the Croydon College LQC on 28 June 2023</li> <li>vii. Unconfirmed minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 4 July 2023</li> <li>viii. Confirmed minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 5 July 2023</li> </ul> <p>The Corporation <b>NOTED</b> the papers provided for information. No questions had been submitted prior to the meeting.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There were no items of other business</p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Wednesday 13 December 2023 as part of the Governor Day at the Croydon Campus – Times tbc</p>