

THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE

Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 3.30pm

Room 405B, Croydon Campus

PART ONE MINUTES

- PRESENT:** Ian Valvona (Chair) - from Item 1.v
 Louise Cretton (Vice Chair)
 Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)
 Andrew Lowe
 Nasim Jivani Hemani – from Item 1.v
 Catherine Boyd- Maunsell
 Frederick Law
 Andrew Gilchrist
 Andy Wilson
 Niral Patel
 Jonathan Brookes
 Terrance James (Staff Governor, Croydon Campus)
 Yvonne White (Staff Governor, Coulsdon Campus)
 Nezia De Roche (Student Governor, Croydon Campus)
 Belen (Maria) Villacis Fernandez (Student Governor, Coulsdon Campus) – from Item 1.v
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance & Resources)
 Martin Silverwood (Coulsdon Principal)
 Natalie Garner (VP Principal Adults, Vocational and Skills)
 Rob Bates (VP Young People and High Needs)
- OBSERVERS:** Chris Dearnley, Head of Sussex, Kent and South London Team, DfE
- CLERK:** Clare Mitchell (Director of Governance)
- QUORUM:** The meeting was quorate

	ITEM
1.	<p>PRELIMINARY BUSINESS</p> <p>i. Appointment of a new External Governor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vice-Chair took items 1.i to 1.iv in the absence of an appointed Chair. The Further Education Commissioner (FEC) had asked the Board to appoint Ian Valvona as an External Governor and as Chair of the Governing Body following the resignation of the previous Chair. The Vice-Chair noted that Governors had had the opportunity to speak with Ian Valvona prior to this meeting and had heard from him during the Governor Day. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the appointment of Ian Valvona as an External Governor for a term of one year with the flexibility to extend.</p>

	<p>ii. Appointment of a new Chair</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the appointment of Ian Valvona as the Chair of the Governing Body for a term of one year with the flexibility to extend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Director of Governance (DoG) reported that the FEC had asked that the new Chair be paid £350 per day (the rate charged by National Leaders of Governance) for one day a week for the duration of his term of office. The DoG had applied to the Charity Commission for approval to pay a trustee. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the payment above to Ian Valvona as the Chair of the Governing Body subject to Charity Commission approval.</p> <p>iii. Reappointment of Nasim Jivani Hemani</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted that the Search and Governance Committee was recommending this reappointment. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the reappointment of Nasim Jivani Hemani as an External Governor for a second term of four years from 25 February 2024.</p> <p>iv. Appointment of a new Student Governor – Coulsdon Campus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the resignation of the Student Governor for the Coulsdon Campus, interviews for a replacement had taken place and Belen (Maria) Villacis Fernandez was recommended for appointment by the Search and Governance Committee. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the appointment of Belen (Maria) Villacis Fernandez as the Student Governor for the Coulsdon Campus for a term of one year.</p> <p>v. Welcome and Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair welcomed Jonathan Brookes, Nezia De Roche and Belen Villacis Fernandez to their first Board meeting. <p>vi. Apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies for absence were received from Martin Bentham. <p>vii Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair stated that he had completed a declaration of interests form. He had been employed by the DfE until May 2023. He was currently undertaking consultancy work for Pearson and would be working as a consultant for Rockborn in 2024. He was currently Vice Chair of the AoC London Regional Committee and Vice Chair of Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge College. Andrew Gilchrist declared that he was currently a Governor at Brooklands College.
2.	<p>EVALUATION OF STANDARDS</p> <p>i. Principal’s Report including KPIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The P&CEO reported that Martin Silverwood had been appointed as the substantive Principal of the Coulsdon Campus.

- The P&CEO set out the draft findings from the Ofsted monitoring visit on 8th and 9th November 2023. Ofsted's feedback was that the College had made reasonable progress on three of the four themes that had been reviewed by Ofsted. However, the theme relating to successful completion of full study programmes for young people had received a judgement of insufficient progress as A Level results at the Coulsdon Campus had not improved sufficiently in 2022/23. Once finalised, Ofsted's report would be published on its website
- The College had offered its condolences to the family of a College student who had recently been murdered in Sutton. His family had commented on the positive experience that the student had had at the College. No arrests had yet been made. The safeguarding and wellbeing team were supporting students who had been impacted and support was also available to staff. A condolence book would be set up and shared with the family.
- The street furniture had been removed from College Square and a CCTV camera had been installed. The P&CEO thanked the Council for its support in implementing these changes. Discussions were taking place about providing a secure area for students at the rear of the College. The number of drug dealers in the square had significantly reduced but they had moved to another location very close to the College. The police were continuing to support the College and would be undertaking workshops with students.
- The VPF&R reported that recruitment had been strong for the current academic year. The College was exceeding its AEB grant and would prioritise the delivery of further ESOL courses to meet demand.
- Attendance needed more work to ensure that the attendance target for the year was met. Attendance in three of the four pathways at the Coulsdon Campus and in ESOL and Building, Engineering and Technical Professions at the Croydon Campus had fallen below target. A number of remedial actions were being taken to address this with both staff and students. Issues with the completion of Markbook, which provided information on student progress in year, were being resolved. Moderation would be introduced into progress reviews to ensure achievement predictions were accurate.
- The preliminary results from the November 2023 QDP survey were showing a marked improvement. Teaching and learning at the Coulsdon Campus had improved to Quartile B. There had also been considerable improvement in the L2 English results at the Coulsdon Campus with 40% of students achieving high grades. However, there were still concerns about teaching, learning and assessment in some areas. Actions to address this, including a management restructure, were underway.
- The Chair of the Audit Committee asked why the staff utilisation figure at the Coulsdon Campus was below target. The VPF&R explained that this was because some staff who had left were still being included in the figures, teaching hours for some staff were not yet correct and some activity had yet to be planned. Once these issues had been addressed the staff utilisation target should be met.
- The Vice-Chair asked for assurance on the quality and standardisation of lesson observations, particularly at the Coulsdon Campus. The CP responded that most observations at the Coulsdon Campus were conducted by line managers. Joint observations also took place with a member of the quality team. If there were any concerns further joint observations would be undertaken. Currently teachers were judged as either meeting or not meeting expectations. At the start of the year 40% of teachers at the Coulsdon Campus were meeting expectations, this figure had now improved to 70%. In addition to two senior interims, there was now a permanent quality manager at the Coulsdon Campus.

- The Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus asked when Building, Engineering and Technical Professions was likely to meet its targets. The P&CEO provided assurance that the quality team was reviewing this area in detail. Significant support was being put in place for managers where needed.

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

ii Single Improvement Plan (SIP) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

- The P&CEO noted that the RAG ratings had been updated since the previous version presented to the Board. In other respects there had not been a great deal of change.
- New additional conditions of funding were expected following the Ofsted Monitoring Visit in early November and these could impact on the SIP. Improvements in teaching and learning were taking place but the full impact would not be known until the results of the summer exams were available.
- There had been a decline in attendance as reported above. An attendance manager had been appointed at the Coulsdon Campus to support senior managers.
- A corporate dashboard had been developed but there were issues with the collection of some data. Remedial work should be completed by Christmas.
- The FEC would be meeting with the CP to discuss the detail of the QIP.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the update on the SIP and QIP.

3. QUALITY/CURRICULUM STANDARDS

i Croydon College LQC Chair's Report

- The Committee Chair noted that the majority of the items covered in the report were on the agenda for this meeting. Two new members had joined the Committee and were a welcome addition.
- The Committee was recommending that the Board approve the Croydon College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2022/23, the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy for 2023/24 and the Safeguarding Annual Report for 2022/23.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the Croydon College LQC Chair's Report.

ii Coulsdon Campus LQC Chair's Report

- The Committee Chair noted that the most recent meeting of this Committee had taken place in October and that events had moved on since.
- The Committee had spent considerable time discussing the reasons why the predicted grades for 2022/23 had been over optimistic. The CP had identified the reasons for this, which were now being addressed. The focus was now on increasing the pace of change and ensuring that the Committee received accurate data. Members were very aware of the need for improvement at the Coulsdon Campus. The Chair emphasised his absolute expectation that the data presented to the Board was accurate.
- The Committee had reviewed the SAR for the Coulsdon Campus, which was now incorporated in to the whole College SAR. All areas at the Coulsdon Campus had been graded as inadequate in the SAR.

- Work Experience (WEX) was now timetabled across the whole of the Coulsdon Campus. The Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus asked about student feedback on work experience and the quality and number of placements available. The VPF&R reported that Level 3 students were prioritised for external work placements. Students needed to have reached a certain level of competence before they would benefit from an external placement. Some curriculum areas preferred to take alternative approaches such as inviting an employer to set students a work related project. The Chair noted that difficulties sourcing external work placements was a national issue.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the Coulsdon Campus LQC Chair's Report.

iii Croydon College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2022/23

- The P&CEO stated that the feedback from the SAR discussion during the Governor Day would be incorporated into the final version.

ACTION: P&CEO to incorporate feedback on the SAR from the Governor Day into the final version

- The proposed grading for the elements of the SAR were as follows:

Apprenticeships and Adults - Good
 High Needs - RI
 Quality of Education - RI
 Personal Development - RI
 Behaviour and Attitudes - RI
 Personal Development – RI

- The proposed overall grade was RI.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the 2022/23 SAR and the proposed gradings, subject to the incorporation of the feedback from the Governor Day.

iv Student Governors' Reports

- The Student Governor for the Croydon Campus reported that she had attended a meeting of student representatives from health and social care. Students did feel safe in College but were concerned about the safety of the external environment.
- Students, particularly those with caring responsibilities, would like to see enrichment activities included within the timetable. This group of students often found it difficult to take part in activities outside timetabled hours or at lunchtime.
- Queues in the refectory were too long during the lunch break and it would be helpful for students to have access to a microwave.
- The Student Governor for the Coulsdon Campus reported that she had spoken to the President of the Student Executive who was planning a number of events to develop a greater sense of community on the Campus. She had not been able to meet with the Student Executive as a whole but had done her own research with students. She updated the Board on students' views.
- Students were aware that both attendance and punctuality were being closely monitored. Students received a detention if they were late and could not access the common room during timetabled hours.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client care staff were present in the building and friendly. Facilities in the Learning Resource Centre and common room were good and used by students. However, concerns had been raised about hygiene in the toilets. • There had been a mixed reaction to the extension of the College day. Level 3 students were keen to have more access to WEX. WEX should not clash with timetabled classes. • The Vice-Chair commented that there were a significant number of staff on performance improvement plans and agency staff at the Coulsdon Campus and emphasised the need for a period of stability. The P&CEO reported that there were still difficulties recruiting to some roles. However, where agency staff performed well, there was the possibility of converting them to permanent roles. • In terms of offering competitive salaries, the P&CEO reported that a decision had been taken to implement the pay increase at the Croydon Campus, despite that fact that it had not been accepted by UCU. The offer had already been implemented at the Coulsdon Campus with the agreement of the NEU. This had resulted in a 6.5% pay increase for staff earning £45K or less and 5% for those earning above £45K. In addition, teaching staff now had access to the full range of pay increments. In some areas where recruitment was particularly difficult a teacher development programme was needed to train staff internally. • The Chair thanked the Student Governors for their detailed reports and assured them that the Executive would look into the issues raised. The Student Governors were particularly encouraged to bring any concerns about harassment or bullying to the Board's attention. <p>The Corporation NOTED the Student Governors' Reports.</p>
4.	<p>FINANCES AND RESOURCES</p> <p>4.i Finance and Resources Chair's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair reported that the College was in a positive financial position. The outturn position for 2022/23 was a surplus of over £800K. The College had also benefited from overage payments. However the budget for this year was for a small deficit. It was agreed that future reports would include an update on the most recent management accounts. <p>ACTION: Future Committee reports from the Finance and Resources Chair to include an update on the most recent management accounts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VPF&R reported that the College would exceed its allocation for 16-18 students for 2023/24 but in year funding would not be available. As costs would increase in order to accommodate the additional students, it was possible that the deficit might increase. Recruitment of additional 16-18 students was planned for January 2024 to meet local need. This would improve the College's funding position in 2024/25. The College was also planning to bid for additional AEB funding from the GLA. • The Committee had reviewed the Financial Statements for 2022/23 and the HE fees for 2024/25 and was recommending them to the Board for approval. • The Chair noted that the College was in a strong financial position. <p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the Finance and Resources Committee Chair's Report.</p>

5. AUDIT/RISK

i Audit Committee Chair's Report

- The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that Buzzacott, the College's external auditors, were in the fifth and final year of their contract. The tender process for the College's external audit service would begin in the New Year and would include members of the Audit Committee. Buzzacott would be eligible to tender. It was important that there was competition but only a certain number of audit firms provided external audit services to FE Colleges.
- The Committee had reviewed the action plan for implementing the recommendations from the external governance review and was recommending the Financial Statements for 2022/23 and the associated documents to the Board for approval.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the fifth and final year of the current contract for external audit services with Buzzacott and **NOTED** that the College would be tendering for its external audit services in early 2024.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the Audit Committee Chair's Report.

ii Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23

- The Chair of the Audit Committee drew the Board's attention to the Audit Committee's opinion that the College had adequate and effective audit and risk management and control arrangements and the framework of governance was effective. There remained opportunities to further improve and actions had been identified, which would be monitored by the Committee.
- The VPF&R noted the assurance provided by internal audits undertaken during the year, particularly those relating to learner number recognition and follow up on previous recommendations.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2022/23.

iii Croydon College Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2022/23

- The VPF&R presented the self-assessment. The questions were set by the DfE. The College's responses had been reviewed by the external auditors who had issued an unqualified regularity opinion.
- The College's subcontracted provision had been audited against the new subcontracting standard by Scrutton Bland. The ESFA had yet to issue its decision as to whether the standard had been met. However, this would not prevent the external auditors from signing off the accounts as the value of the subcontracted provision was not material to the College's financial position.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the completed Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire for 2022/23 for signature by the Chair and P&CEO.

iv Audit Completion Report 2022/23 and Letter of Representation to the External Auditors

- The VPF&R presented Buzzacott's audit completion report, noting that all Governors had had the opportunity to attend the November 2023 Audit Committee meeting when the report had been presented by the Audit Partner.

- Buzzacott had issued an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements. Two points had been raised; one relating to the accrual of holiday pay and the other to out of date policies on the website. One related party transaction had been included in the financial statements. This had been disclosed in previous years.
- The VPF&R confirmed that there were no subsequent events that need to be included in the financial statements. She had confirmed with Buzzacott that the change of Chair did not need to be reported as a subsequent event as it did not impact on the College's financial position.

The Corporation **NOTED** the report and **APPROVED** the letter of representation for signature by the Chair..

v. Croydon College Financial Statements 2022/23

- The VPF&R presented the financial statements. There had not been any significant change to the disclosure requirements. The College had had significantly better 16-18 student recruitment than expected in September 2023, particularly at the Coulsdon Campus. This had allayed concerns about returning to a balanced budget in 2024/25.
- The underlying operational surplus for 2022/23 was £838K, £18k more than in the previous year. The College assessed its financial health as good. The statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control had now been finalised. Due to the increase in long term bond rates, the actuarial gain on the LGPS pension had significantly increased, reducing the total liability to £67K.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the financial statements for 2022/23 for signature.

vi Risk Register

- The VPF&R set out the changes to the risk register for the 2023/24 academic year. The risk register now included 12 risks; five of which were resources related and reviewed by the Finance and Resources Committee and seven of which were curriculum related and reviewed by the LQCs.
- The wording in red identified changes that had been made following scrutiny by the Committees. Re Strategic Risk 1 relating to an improved rating at the next full Ofsted inspection, it had been decided that the risk should still refer to an improvement to RI. This did not prevent the College from aiming for a good Ofsted grading at its next full inspection. Strategic Risk 2 now included a measurable target for improving outcomes for students at the Coulsdon Campus.
- The Audit Committee Chair queried whether the risk relating to cyber attack or data theft should be rated as green. The VPF&R reported that the College had recently renewed its cyber security insurance. In addition, significant work had been undertaken on cyber security following an internal audit of this area and multi factor authorisation had been introduced for students.
- The Board asked for gross risks to be included in the summary page.

ACTION: VPF&R – Gross risks to be included on the summary page of the risk register

- The Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus asked whether declining enrolments for HE provision should be included on the risk register. The P&CEO responded that income from HE was declining but there was a plan to address this. A fall in HE numbers was an issue nationally for FE Colleges.

<p>6.</p>	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>i. Search and Governance Committee Chair’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee gave an overview of the work of the Committee. There was a vacancy for an external governor but the skills required would need discussion with the new Chair. A new Student Governor appointment and a Governor reappointment were recommended and had been approved earlier in the meeting. • The Committee was proposing that Louise Cretton should be appointed as a member of both this Committee and the Remuneration Committee. It was normal practice for the Vice-Chair to be a member of these Committees. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the appointment of the Vice-Chair to the Search and Governance and Remuneration Committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee was also recommending the action plan from the external governance review and the board development programme for 2023/24 to the Board for approval. • The Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus, who was also the link governor for EDI, noted that none of the external governors were from an Afro Caribbean background and asked that this be addressed. The Chair of the Committee agreed and noted that one of the recommendations from the external governance review was that EDI targets should be established for the Board. <p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the Search and Governance Committee Chair’s Report.</p> <p>ii External Governance Review Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoG explained that the action plan presented to the Board only covered the implementation of the five recommendations prioritised by the Board. • The action plan for the remaining 17 recommendations would need to be reviewed by the new Chair. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the action plan for the prioritised recommendations from the External Governance Review.</p> <p>iii Board Development Plan 2023/24</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the Board Development Plan for 2023/24</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>CURRICLUM LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS</p> <p>i. ESOL/English and Maths</p> <p>The Link Governor (Nasim Jivani Hemani) had met with the Head of English and Maths who had provided assurance that there were robust systems in place for managing students’ progression. A decision had been made to move to a different exam board. The new method of assessment should be beneficial to College students. She would be visiting the ESOL area in the near future.</p> <p>ii. Adult Vocational and Skills</p> <p>The Link Governor (Andy Wilson) had not yet been able to undertake a formal link visit. This would take place in the New Year. However, he had visited the area at the start of the Governor Day and had been impressed by what he saw.</p>

	<p>iii. Apprenticeships The Link Governor (Andrew Lowe) reported that WEX had been discussed earlier in the meeting. The World of Work was functioning well and was on track to meet its recruitment target. The College had received the award for construction apprenticeship provider of the year</p> <p>iv. Coulsdon Campus The Link Governor (Louise Cretton) had spent two days at the Coulsdon Campus meeting with the Assistant Principals and Heads of Pathway. She had visited a number of classes and had seen a range of standards of teaching. On the whole students had been polite and well behaved. There had been a great deal of work on the tutorial programme but some teachers needed further support with the delivery. The Coulsdon Campus needed a stable and capable management team and support for teachers. She would be speaking to focus groups at her next visit.</p> <p>ACTION: DoG/Chair to consider when non-curriculum Link Governors should present their annual report to the Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoG reported that following the resignation of the previous Chair there was a vacancy for the Link Governor for HE. <p>ACTION: DoG/Chair to discuss the appointment of a new Link Governor for HE</p>
8.	<p>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>i. Minutes of the Part One meeting on 18 October 2023</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the minutes of this meeting subject to amendments from the Chair of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: DoG to amend the minutes of the 18 October 2023 Part One 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>
9.	<p>CONSENT AGENDA</p> <p>i. Safeguarding and Prevent Policy Annual Update for 2023/24</p> <p>ii. Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/23</p> <p>iii. HE Fees 2024/25</p> <p>The above items had been revised by the relevant Committee and were recommended for approval, subject to an addition to the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy on adult safeguarding.</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the above items.</p>
10.	<p>FOR INFORMATION PAPERS</p> <p>i. Annual Risk Report 2022/23</p> <p>ii. Annual Health and Safety Report 2022/23</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Sustainability Strategy Report 2022/23 iv. HR Annual Report and Gender/Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports 2022/23 v. Annual Remuneration Report 2022/23 vi. Search Committee Annual Report 2022/23 vii. Management Accounts October 2023 <p>The Corporation NOTED the papers provided for information. No questions had been submitted prior to the meeting.</p>
11.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no formal items of other business. However, two members of the Board asked for more time to be given to questions and discussion. The Chair noted that the final Board meeting of the calendar year was a long meeting because of the requirement to approve the financial statements and the SAR but he would consider if more time was needed for future Board meetings. The Board also needed to place reliance on the scrutiny undertaken by the Committees in advance of Board meetings.
12.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday 27 March 2024 as part of the Governor Day at the Coulsdon Campus. The Chair indicated that an earlier Board meeting was likely to be required.</p> <p>ACTION: Chair/DoG to consider whether a Board meeting was required before 27 March 2024</p>