



THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE

Wednesday 27 March 2024 at 3.00pm

Room 157-158, Coulsdon Campus

PART ONE MINUTES

- PRESENT:** Ian Valvona (Chair)
 Louise Cretton (Vice Chair)
 Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)
 Andrew Lowe
 Nasim Jivani Hemani
 Catherine Boyd- Maunsell
 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 3.45pm to 4.45pm
- 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:** Edwin Dhauke, Senior Manager, DfE, Sussex, Kent and South London Team
 Andy Cole, Reviewer
- CLERK:** Clare Mitchell (Director of Governance)
- QUORUM:** The meeting was quorate

	ITEM
1.	<p>PRELIMINARY BUSINESS</p> <p>i. Reappointment of Andrew Gilchrist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted that the Search and Governance Committee was recommending Andrew Gilchrist's reappointment. The Board thanked him for his contribution during his first term of office. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the reappointment of Andrew Gilchrist as an External Governor for a second term of four years from 18 May 2024.</p> <p>Action: DoG to send Andrew Gilchrist a reappointment letter</p>

	<p>ii. Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair noted that the Governor Day had provided evidence of positive progress. The Governor Dashboard was now updated daily and available on the Portal. Papers were of an appropriate length and quality. The reports from the link governors were very good and the Governing Body was now much better connected to the student experience at the College. The Board should continue to focus on security issues and work on quality improvement, particularly attendance and achievement. There also needed to be a focus on the College's financial position in 2023/24 and the budget for 2024/25. <p>iii. Apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies for absence were received from Frederick Law and Martin Bentham. <p>iv Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andrew Gilchrist declared that he was currently a Governor at Brooklands College. <p>v Decisions taken between meetings</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the decision taken by written resolution allowing the College to enter into a lease with Tide Construction for a bridge over the Croydon College access road and for that lease to be signed and sealed.</p>
2.	<p>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>i. Minutes of the Part One meeting on 7 February 2024</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. All actions had been completed apart from one which was not yet due.</p>
3.	<p>STRATEGIC MATTERS</p> <p>i. Governors' Safeguarding Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This paper had been brought to the Board at the request of the Croydon College Learning and Quality Committee (LQC). The VPYP&HN explained that the Governing Body's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding were set out in the DfE's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). This guidance was updated annually. Part 2 of KCSIE covered the management of safeguarding; legislation and the law. These responsibilities were also covered in the College's Safeguarding Policy. The paper set out the Governors responsibilities and how Governors could be assured that they were being met. The Board noted that it would be necessary to have data to support some of the assurances, e.g. pre-appointment checks for staff and renewal of DBS checks for existing staff. Data should be included in the termly safeguarding reports to the LQC. <p>Action: VPYP&HN to include data in the termly safeguarding report to evidence that Governors responsibilities were being met</p>

- The Board noted from 2024/25 Governors would be asked to confirm that they had read the latest update to the KCSIE guidance annually.

Action: From 2024/25 Governors to be asked to confirm they had read the latest update to the KCSIE guidance annually.

- Governors would be asked to refresh their online safeguarding training at reappointment.

Action: Governors to be asked refresh their online safeguarding training at reappointment.

- Governors' responsibilities for reporting safeguarding concerns were the same as for staff. This process had been covered in the annual safeguarding session at the Governor Day in December 2023.

The Corporation **NOTED** the update on Governors' safeguarding responsibilities and the assurance provided.

ii. Security Review

- The Chair thanked the VPF&R and all those involved in this internal review of security across both campuses. The VPF&R gave an update on the work, which had included benchmarking against other Colleges operating in similar environments.
- A survey had been sent out to staff asking for their views on security within and around College buildings. The VPF&R was asked to link with the Head of HR (HoHR) to identify "you said, we did" actions relating to security issues to be communicated to staff.

Action: VPF&R to link with the Head of HR to identify "you said, we did" actions relating to security issues to be communicated to staff

- Discussions were taking place with the Council to lease a piece of land to the rear of the Croydon Campus as a secure space for students to gather.
- The Croydon College Student Governor reported that students felt safe on the Croydon Campus but less so outside it given the level of violence in the local area. The College had asked the police for a more visible presence in the vicinity of the College but their resources were limited. All incidents were logged with the police.
- The P&CEO noted that although the College was not able to have a direct influence on the level of violence in the local area, the College should include maximising its impact within the community as part of the development of the new strategy.
- The Chair asked that this work continue. The Chair asked for an action plan to be developed from the review and circulated to the Board.

Action: VPF&R to develop an action plan from the security review to be circulated to the Board.

- The Staff Governor from the Croydon Campus emphasised the need to consider the EDI perspective. Different views should be included in the review and that review team was insufficiently diverse. The VPF&R was asked to consider including a Student Governor and a member of client care in the security review.

Action: VPF&R to consider involving a Student Governor and a member of the client care team in the security review

- The Chair of the Croydon College LQC noted that there were were two questions that scored in quartile D in the November QDP survey relating to safeguarding and wellbeing

and the LQC had asked for the reasons for the low scores to be investigated.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the security review.

4. **QUALITY/CURRICULUM STANDARDS**

i Principal's Report including College KPIs

- The P&CEO reported that there had been a further serious security incident outside the Croydon Campus recently. The incident had not involved College students but more police support was needed to prevent this type of incident. The SMT had received an update on gang crime and youth violence recently from the gangs team at Croydon Council.
- The College had had a successful ESFA funding audit, with only one outstanding query. The P&CEO congratulated the Associate Principal Management and Quality Information and his team.
- The College had also received notification of additional funding for 16-18 years old in 2024/25. However, the College would be required to provide additional teaching hours for students resitting GCSEs.
- The College was over contract on provision for Adults and was unable to meet demand in 2023/24. This was due to two factors; very high demand for ESOL provision and late changes to the GLA funding regulations, The College had succeeded in making a case for growth to the GLA, and had been awarded £306,911 for in-year growth, but there was a possibility that the College would need to reduce its ESOL provision in 2024/25 if funding did not meet demand.
- The results of the January 2024 BTEC examinations across both campuses showed a year-on-year rise in pass rates compared to January 2023. There had been a 10% increase in L3 pass – distinction results at the Coulsdon Campus, and an 8% increase in pass – distinction results at the Croydon Campus. The pass rate for L2 BTECs across the Croydon campus had increased by 19% and the pass rate at the Coulsdon Campus had increased by 18%. Those students who had achieved a near pass would still be able to achieve their qualification overall providing their cumulative coursework marks enabled them to achieve necessary tariff points.
- The College had recently received the results of the apprenticeship survey. All responses had been in Quartile A which indicated that Croydon College was one of the top apprenticeship providers.
- The Vice-Chair raised concerns about the number of staff vacancies, sickness levels and the high levels of use of agency staff. Concerns were also raised about staff retention and information was requested on the volume of staff attrition over time and the results of the staff survey when they were available.
- The Vice-Chair asked for staffing issues to be included within the P&CEO's report in future and emphasised the need for a comprehensive workforce strategy. The P&CEO stated that the current workforce strategy, which included actions to address recruitment and retention, would be refreshed as part of the new strategic plan. The P&CEO outlined the actions that were currently being undertaken to recruit staff and reduce reliance on agency staff.

Action: P&CEO to include staffing issues in future reports to the Board

Action: P&CEO to work with HoHR to provide information on the volume of staff attrition over time and the results of the staff survey when they were available

- The P&CEO was asked to bring the current workforce strategy to the next Board meeting with information on inclusion, recruitment and retention and agency spend. This should also be an agenda item for the next Finance and Resources Committee meeting.

Action: P&CEO/HoHR to bring the current workforce strategy to the next Board meeting with information on inclusion, recruitment and retention and agency spend. This should also be an agenda item for the next Finance and Resources Committee meeting

- The Board congratulated staff on the BTEC results and the outcome of the ESFA funding audit.

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

ii Single Improvement Plan (SIP) and Improvement Plan

- The P&CEO reported that the three additional recommendations included in the FEC Stocktake Report had now been included in the SIP.
- The RAG rating for SIP target 4 had improved to green on the basis that the College was confident that of achieving at least Requires Improvement at the next full Ofsted inspection.
- The Board asked why SIP targets that were rated as green had not yet been closed. The P&CEO stated that some priorities had not been closed even though the actions had been completed because the FEC wanted to be sure that they had been embedded. The P&CEO would discuss this with the DfE at the next case conference.

Action: P&CEO to discuss closing SIP actions with the DfE at the next case conference

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the updates to the Single Improvement Plan and the Improvement Plan.

iii FEC Stocktake and Ofsted Monitoring Visits

The P&CEO noted that the final FEC Stocktake report had been circulated to Governors. The final report from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit had not yet been received. However, the verbal feedback had drawn out those areas where the College had made progress since the last Monitoring Visit.

- Ofsted had judged that reasonable progress had been made on all four of the themes that had been covered during the monitoring visit. This judgement had been based on progress in the four months since the last monitoring visit and Ofsted were keen to emphasise that the definition of reasonable progress which was that the College was taking actions that were having a beneficial impact on students, that the improvements were sustainable and were based on thorough quality assurance procedures.
- The Vice-Chair raised the new recommendation from the FEC that staff targets should be set by the end of June in each academic year, rather than in the Autumn term of the following academic year and asked whether it was feasible to achieve this in 2023/24. The P&CEO responded that the HoHR was working on revised appraisal guidance and the aim was to change the appraisal timetable for 2023/24. Appraisal targets might need to be adjusted in the Autumn term in the light of student achievement in the Summer examinations.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the feedback from the FEC Stocktake and Ofsted Monitoring Visits.

iv Croydon College LQC Chair's Report

- The Croydon College LQC Chair noted that there would be one LQC report to the Board once a single LQC had been established.
- The majority of the items in the report discussed had already been discussed. However, the Committee had received the results of the 2022/23 destination survey, which had been very positive. The response rate had been 87% and nearly 90% of students had a positive destination.

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

v Coulsdon Campus LQC Chair's Report

- The Coulsdon Campus LQC Chair noted that the last meeting of this Committee had taken place some time ago. Some concern had been expressed about low entry requirements, particularly in English and maths at L2, which might impact on achievement at L3. The CP had provided a paper on the student context at the Coulsdon Campus. This would be the subject of a deep dive at the next meeting.
- The CP responded that entry requirements were being reviewed for 2024/25, but student achievement was projected to improve markedly in 2023/24. Currently students studying A Levels were expected to have achieved a Grade 4 or above in English and/or Maths, depending on the subjects that they were planning to study.
- The CP was congratulated on the progress that was being made at the Coulsdon Campus. Staff and students were also thanked for their role in making these improvements. The progress at the Coulsdon Campus had been recognised by the FEC at the Stocktake Visit.

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

vi Student Governors' Report

- The Chair thanked the Student Governors for their attendance given that this was a very busy time for them.
- The Student Governor for the Coulsdon Campus focused on student feedback on work experience and tutorials. Students welcomed tutorials delivered by external visitors, focusing on useful skills for life. Students would also welcome external input into access to HE/Employment.
- Not all of the tutorial content was delivered in an engaging way and not all of it was at an appropriate level. Much of the content had already been delivered at school at the same level.
- The Student Governor for the Croydon Campus reported that student representatives were in place and a member of the Student Executive Team had responsibility for each area. There were meetings with the Executive Team enabling the student voice to be heard at the most senior level. Students felt that the Executive listened and were responsive. Students were generally satisfied with their courses and the College environment. However, students often felt more comfortable talking to other students rather than teachers about issues with their courses.
- Some students would like to be able to access enrichment activities but were unable to do so because of other commitments outside the College such as employment or caring responsibilities.

- Laptops were not always functioning and available and students would like an accessible and free coffee machine, particularly those in financial difficulty. Where students were required to wear uniforms, this should be mandatory.
- Students would like more recognition for achieving their goals, e.g. an event such as a graduation.
- Consideration should be given to having one Student Executive Team across both campuses and to establishing a Croydon College alumni association.

The Corporation **NOTED** the Student Governors' Reports.

5. FINANCES AND RESOURCES

4.i Finance and Resources Chair's Report

- The Committee had discussed the overspend on agency staff and had been assured that new controls had been put in place to reduce the use of agency staff, including a review of all agency staff before the Easter break. The use of agency staff would be closely monitored by the Committee.
- A deficit budget of £475K had been agreed for 2023/24. Current forecasts projected that the deficit would be in the region of £1m at year end. The College had sufficient funds to cover the increased deficit but it would be essential to move back to a balanced budget for 2024/25.
- The VPF&R reported that under the current scoring system the deficit would not impact on the College's financial health score of good. However, if the new FEC scoring system was introduced the College's financial health would decline to requires improvement.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the Finance and Resources Committee Chair's Report.

ii Contract for the Provision of Services with Vital Energi

- The VPF&R reported that the College had been successful in its bid for a Salix grant to decarbonise the sports hall at the Coulsdon Campus. The grant was for 40% of the total cost of £607K. This project formed part of the College's ambition to achieve net zero by 2030.
- Following a tender process Vital Energi had been selected to work with the College. The next stage was to enter a call off agreement with Vital Energi. This agreement would form part of the GLA Accelerator Scheme and must be entered into before 31st March 2024.
- The Finance and Resources Committee had reviewed the cost implications, which included a small increase in energy costs, and was recommending that the Board should give the necessary approvals.

The **CORPORATION** approved the signing of the Contract for the Provision of Services with Vital Energi under the GLA's Retrofit Accelerator scheme by 31 March 2024.

Subject to acceptance of the IPG and satisfactory cost benchmarking by Woodley Coles, the **CORPORATION** approved the award of a works contract to Vital Energi for the first phase of the decarbonisation of the Coulsdon Sports Hall at a cost of £607K.

<p>6.</p>	<p>AUDIT/RISK</p> <p>i Audit Committee Chair’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the College had received confirmation that it had achieved the subcontracting standard following the Audit Committee meeting. • The Safeguarding internal audit had resulted in a reasonable assurance opinion for the design of its controls but only a partial assurance opinion for compliance with these controls. • One of the recommendations was to ensure that all staff had up to date DBS checks. This was being taken forward by HR. Staff who had been in post for over five years would be prioritised. • The College was broadly in line with sector benchmarking provided by RSM, the College’s internal auditors. • The Committee approved a change to the scope of the Learning Number Records (LNR) internal audit for 2023/24. Given that the ESFA had conducted a full funding audit in 2023/24, it had been agreed that the sample size for the LNR audit could be reduced and would not include adult learner loans. <p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the Audit Committee Chair’s Report.</p> <p>ii 2023/24 Risk Register March 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair noted that a discussion on the risk register had taken place earlier as part of the Governor Day. No further points or questions were raised. • The Chair stated that he would like the Board to have a further opportunity to discuss the risk register <p>Action: Chair/P&CEO/DoG to discuss a further opportunity for the Board to discuss the risk register</p> <p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the updated Risk Register.</p>
<p>7.</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 drew the Board’s attention to the Governing Body membership statement later on the agenda. <p>As the Chair had been appointed in December, the individual Governor reviews with the Chair and the Chair’s review with the Vice-Chair had been delayed until the Summer term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework for succession planning had been discussed. <p>Action: DoG to arrange individual Governor reviews with the Chair and the Chair’s review with the Vice-Chair for the Summer term</p> <p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the Search and Governance Committee Chair’s Report.</p> <p>ii Committee Structure and Membership</p>

- The DoG explained the rationale for moving to a single Learning Quality Committee from the start of the Summer term and how the Committee would work, The draft terms of reference for the single LQC were reviewed.
- The membership of the LQC would be reviewed after twelve months of operation

Action: LQC Chair/DoG Membership of the single LQC to be reviewed after twelve months of operation

The Corporation **APPROVED** the creation of a single LQC from 15 April 2024 and the terms of reference of the Learning and Quality Committee

- The paper also proposed that the HE working group should be disbanded. In future HE matters would be reported direct to the LQC.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the disbanding of the HE group with immediate effect.

The Corporation **NOTED** the revised Committee structure and membership set out at Appendix B to the paper.

iii Governing Body Membership Statement

- The DoG reported that one of the 22 recommendations from the 2023 External Governance Review was “that consideration should be given to setting KPIs/principles for EDI, for example within the Governor Appointment Policy/Process.”
- The Search and Governance Committee had discussed this issue at its February meeting and had agreed that there should be diverse representation on future interview panels for External Governor posts. Candidates for these roles would be asked to share their experiences of diversity and their understanding of EDI issues. This would be tested as part of the interview process.
- Future recruitment of new external governors would take into consideration the current EDI characteristics of the Board and focus on advertising and recruitment channels to specifically address this.
- After some discussion the Committee agreed that a membership statement (see Appendix A to the paper) should be developed rather than setting numeric EDI targets for the Governing Body.
- The Board asked whether the Search and Governance Committee had taken any professional advice before developing this statement. The P&CEO responded that other Colleges had been asked to provide details of their approach to this issue. The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee was an HR professional with experience in this area. The need for an appropriate skills mix on the Board needed to be taken in to account as well as its EDI composition.
- The DoG was asked to obtain legal advice on the proposed membership statement. The DoG would also discuss the statement with the Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus who was the Lead Governor for EDI.

Action: DoG to obtain legal advice on the proposed Governing Body Membership Statement

Action: DoG to discuss the Governing Body Membership Statement with the Lead Governor for EDI, the Chair and the P&CEO.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the Governing Body Membership Statement

	<p>Action: DoG to bring the revised Governing Body Membership Statement back to the Board for approval</p> <p>iv External Governor Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DoG reported that an application had been made to the FEC for support to recruit two External Governors; one with an HR background and the other to sit on the Audit Committee. A decision was expected by the end of April 2024. <p>The Corporation NOTED the update on External Governor Recruitment</p> <p>v Board and Committee meeting dates in 2024/25</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the Board and Committee meeting dates for 2024/25.</p>
8.	<p>CURRICULUM LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS</p> <p>i. ESOL/English and Maths The Link Governor (Nasim Jivani Hemani) reported that she had seen good examples of engaging teaching during her visit to English and maths provision.</p> <p>ii. Adult Vocational and Skills The Link Governor (Andy Wilson) reported on his visit to BETP. There was a significant amount of work taking place with the quality team to improve teaching and learning in this area. This was being met with enthusiasm by students and staff.</p> <p>iii. Apprenticeships The Link Governor (Andrew Lowe) reported that both apprenticeships and work experience were working well and there was significant scope to grow apprenticeship provision.</p> <p>iv. Coulsdon Campus The Link Governor (Louise Cretton) had undertaken three focus groups with students at the Coulsdon Campus. The quotes in the paper provided some context on students at this campus.</p> <p>Many students travelled a significant distance to reach the Coulsdon Campus, this was deliberate and allowed students to experience a different environment and to develop more independence. Students welcome the flexibility on entry requirements and the different combinations of courses that could be taken.</p> <p>There was a general lack of awareness that the Coulsdon Campus was part of Croydon College as a whole. Some students felt that the reputation of the Coulsdon Campus could be improved but the general view was the Croydon Campus had a lower reputation because of the environment in central Croydon.</p>
9.	<p>FOR INFORMATION PAPERS</p> <p>i. Management Accounts February 2024</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the papers provided for information. No questions had been submitted prior to the meeting.</p>
10.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no items of other business
11.	<p>POST MEETING EVALUATION</p>

	This took place at the end of the Part 2 meeting
12.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING May 2024 – exact date TBC ACTION: Chair/DoG to finalise the date for the May 2024 Board meeting.