

THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE*Wednesday 11 September 2024 at 6.00pm**Room 332/333, Croydon Campus*

PART ONE MINUTES

PRESENT: Ian Valvona (Chair)
Louise Cretton (Vice Chair)
Caireen Mitchell (Principal & CEO)
Andrew Gilchrist
Andy Wilson
Frederick Law
Niral Patel
Jonathan Brookes
Maria Glasscock
Michael Cutbill
Armaghan Ul Haq
Terrance James (Staff Governor, Croydon Campus)

IN ATTENDANCE: Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance & Resources)
Martin Silverwood (Coulston Principal)
Natalie Garner (VP Principal Adults and HE)
Rob Bates (VP Young People and High Needs)
Sam Hanmer, Executive Director, Employer Engagement, Apprenticeships and Skills
Jane Holloway, Director of Teaching and Quality Improvement

OBSERVERS: Edwin Dhauke, Senior Manager, DfE, Sussex, Kent and South
London Team

CLERK: Clare Mitchell (Director of Governance)

QUORUM: The meeting was quorate

	ITEM
1.	PRELIMINARY BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Welcome and introductions<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair welcomed the new Governors to the Board and introductions took place.• The Chair welcomed the very positive results from the summer examinations, which put the College in a good place ahead of its upcoming Ofsted inspection.• The Chair expected the Governing Body's work would become more strategic following the Ofsted inspection with a greater focus on the development of the people strategy, stakeholder engagement and communications and the College as an anchor institution in Croydon.

	<p>ii. Apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Lowe and Martin Bentham. <p>iii. Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Gilchrist declared that he is currently a Governor at Brooklands College. • The DoG reminded members to complete the annual update of their declarations of interest and eligibility.
2.	<p>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>i. Minutes of the Part One meeting on 3 July 2024</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the minutes of this meeting subject to a number of amendments from Andrew Gilchrist.</p> <p>Action: DoG to amend the minutes of the Part One meeting on 27 March 2024</p> <p>ii. Matters arising from the minutes not covered on the agenda (see action list)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # 2 – The VPF&R reported that an update on security issues would be available on the staff intranet rather than creating “you said, we did” posters. <p>#3 – the completion date for finding an opportunity for the Board to discuss the risk register would be extended to the next Governor Day on 6 November 2024.</p> <p>#11 &13 – Niral Patel would be meeting with Sam Hanmer to discuss the College’s position statement on skills and the establishment of a Croydon College Advisory Board for employers.</p> <p>#20 – changes to the funding guidance, which would reduce the College’s funding if students did not continue to study English and Maths. Up to now the guidance had allowed colleges to keep the funding for student’s programmes up to a tolerance of 5%. This will be reduced to 2.5% from 2025/26 and 0% from 2026/27. The Colleges concerns about this proposed change would be raised with the DfE/FEC at the September case conference.</p> <p># 21- The VPF&R reported that she had been in contact with the ESFA about an anomaly in the CFFR model. The College had self-assessed its financial health as good, but the College’s negative EBITDA in 2023/24 resulted in the CFFR model automatically scoring the College’s financial health as requires improvement. There would now be a moderation process and the outcome was expected mid/end October.</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the updated action list.</p> <p>iii. Update on Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VPF&R reported that the Council had offered a five year lease on land behind the College. There would be a significant cost to the College to meet fire safety and security requirements. In addition, the Council had received funding to redevelop this space and work might need to begin as early as May 2026. This was currently being clarified. A decision on whether the College should invest in developing this space would be made once this information was available.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been information on security at the fresher's fair and classroom screening was about to start. • The P&CEO reported that central Croydon had been identified as a crime hotspot and the police had received some additional funding to tackle this issue. The number of drug dealers outside the College had decreased but security issues remained. • The Vice-Chair emphasised the need for Ofsted to be aware of these issues. The P&CEO reported that the DfE had helpfully identified a group within central government that might be able to bring existing organisations together to support the College with this issue. • The Staff Governor from the Croydon Campus challenged the Executive to develop greater engagement with community groups to effect change in the local area. • The Chair asked that the Board return to the security issue at each meeting. <p>Action: DoG/Chair – Board to discuss security issues at each meeting</p> <p>The Corporation DISCUSSED the security update</p>
3.	<p>QUALITY/CURRICULUM STANDARDS</p> <p>i Qualification Achievement Rates 2023/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CP gave an update on the positive results from the summer examinations within the context of the student cohort at each campus. • Achievement figures were not yet finalised but overall achievement across both campuses was expected to reach 82%+, 2% higher than in 2022/23. For young people achievement was currently at 82%, 5.2% higher than in 2022/23. Adult achievement was expected to be reach 82%+. • Achievement rates had improved very significantly at the Coulsdon Campus with overall achievement 13% higher than in 2022/23 and A level achievement now above the national average at 84%. 12% higher than in 2022/23. • Attendance at the Coulsdon Campus had been below target and would continue as a focus this year. This was mainly a result of poor attendance at tutorials and L2 maths and English. However, attendance at exams was 92% and below target attendance did not appear to have impacted on the 2023/24 examination results. • Actual achievement rates were very close to predicted achievement, which showed that evidence had been in place to back up students' predicted grades. • The CP was challenged to set out the evidence that would be provided to Ofsted as assurance that these results were sustainable. The CP responded that this was evidenced through the strength of teaching and learning, the work of the quality team and the accuracy of the predicted grades. • The Chair of RemCo noted that staff had had a difficult year in 2023/24. Did staff consider that these levels of achievement could be sustained? The P&CEO reported that morale had been boosted by the examination results. The quality team would also be talking to academic staff about how systems could be made more efficient to reduce workload • The Board congratulated the Executive Team and all staff on the examination results, which would put the College in a good position going into its Ofsted inspection.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the qualification achievement rates for 2023/24

ii. Draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24 and Draft Improvement Plan (IP) for 2024/25

- The DT&QI presented the SAR. The SAR had been drafted earlier than usual this year for the anticipated Ofsted inspection. As a result the context section had not yet been written and not all of the data had been finalised.
- The DT&QI presented the strengths and areas of improvement. All of the main Ofsted judgements and provision types had been assessed as a Good (2). The sub-judgement on meeting skills needs had been assessed as reasonable.
- The Board welcomed the early development of the SAR but questioned the lack of variation in the grading. The DT&QI's rationale was that while there were variations within each area, both positive and negative, the overall position was good.
- The draft IP was currently at a high level and needed to be embedded into local improvement plans. Progress would be monitored through the quality review cycle.
- The Board asked for assurance that when the SAR was submitted to Ofsted it would be clear which areas needed improvement, why, and what action was being taken by the College. This assurance was given.
- The Board asked for an update on completed appraisals. The P&CEO reported that appraisals were complete for almost all of the academic staff. There were more gaps in support areas, where staff had been very busy at the end of the academic year. These were being chased and would be completed as soon as possible.
- The Board emphasised the need for more robust measures for assessing progress on meeting skills needs.
- The Staff Governor for the Croydon Campus queried whether the section on leadership and management had been endorsed by staff. This was not clear from the current wording.
- The Board strongly endorsed the content of the draft SAR and IP and congratulated the DT&QI for developing this so quickly.

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the draft SAR and IP.

iii. Office for Students Improvement Notice

- The Chair stated that he had been very disappointed to see the negative press coverage following the publication of the improvement notice in the summer.
- The VPA&HE reported that an HE academic board had been set up and Michael Cutbill would sit on this as the HE link governor. The new structure would review student progress and the structure of the HE offer to ensure that it met the needs of students and employers. The academic board would report to the LQC and through the LQC to the Board.
- The Chair of the LQC questioned the status of the academic board and asked for clarity on its status, reporting and decision making powers. Following discussion at the first academic board meeting, its terms of reference should come to the LQC. The Board emphasised the need for the Board to have a strategic discussion on HE in the context of the new strategic plan.

	<p>Action: VPA&HE – HE academic board terms of reference to come to the LQC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Staff Governor from the Croydon Campus emphasised the need to consider how HE provision could support and develop the local community. • The link governor for HE stressed the importance of developing a robust response to the OfS improvement notice as a priority. <p>The Corporation NOTED the update on the OfS improvement notice.</p>
4.	<p>STRATEGIC ITEMS</p> <p>i. Strategic Plan High Level Objectives 2024/25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The P&CEO stated that the high level objectives might need review following the College's Ofsted inspection. The Strategic Plan was likely to be launched in mid/late October. Post Ofsted, consideration would be given to any changes to the staffing structure that might be needed to take the plan forward. • The P&CEO asked for input from the Board on success measures for the "making a difference" priority. Measures suggested included destination data for leavers, measuring engagement with the College through website traffic and surveys of specific groups of stakeholders. • This priority aimed to build pride in the College and communities and strengthen the College as an anchor institution. A measure of success could be an increase in staff volunteering. • The development of the People Strategy would be a key objective of the "great place to work priority". The Chair of RemCo's challenge to the Executive was to embed the College's values as the foundation of this work. • The College had a large number of stakeholders; these would need to be grouped in term of the types and level of engagement required. The P&CEO reported that there would be focus on developing a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy later in the year. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the strategic plan high level objectives for 2024/25</p>
5.	<p>FINANCES</p> <p>i. Financial Outturn 2023/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VPF&R reported that the College had ended the year with a deficit of £1.6m. The end of year cash balance was £12.9m with Croydon Council being a significant debtor. Pay costs were at 77.4% of income. • One of the reasons for the increase in the deficit was the requirement to deliver education and training to 1,300 unfunded learners in 2023/24. • 2024/25 enrolments were above target. However, there had been a reduction in the number of 16 year olds enrolled. The reasons for this would need to be investigated. • The July 2024 management account would be circulated shortly. Management accounts were also being produced for August 2024. <p>Action: VPF&R/DoG to circulate the July management accounts to Governors</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VP&R emphasised that the Executive team was fully committed to achieving a balanced budget in 2024/25. • The Chair of RemCo asked how good news such as the positive achievement rates was communicated to stakeholders. The P&CEO reported that the wider communications and stakeholder engagement strategy would address this. In the meantime communications would be sent to schools and parents. The timing for the development of the communication and stakeholder engagement strategy would be agreed for the next Board meeting. <p>Action: The timing for the development of the communication and stakeholder engagement strategy would be agreed for the next Board meeting.</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the update on the financial outturn for 2023/24</p>
6.	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>i. Committee Membership and Link Governors 2024/25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoG reported that the remaining vacancies for Committee members and link governors had been filled. Maria Glasscock had agreed to join the Search and Governance Committee and Michael Cutbill would be joining both the Remuneration Committee and the Search and Governance Committee. Michael Cutbill would chair the Search and Governance Committee from its second meeting. Louise Cretton had agreed to continue as interim Chair for the first meeting of the academic year. • The appointments process for the Student Governors for 2024/25 would begin shortly and the Board would be asked to appoint the two new Student Governors at its meeting in on 6 November 2024. <p>The Corporation APPOINTED the Committee members and link governors for 2024/25</p> <p>iii. Amendments to Committee Terms of Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finance and Resources and the Remuneration Committees had proposed changes to their terms of reference as set out in the paper. No changes were requested to the terms of reference of the other Committees. The Search and Governance Committee would review its terms of reference once its new Chair was in place. <p>The Corporation APPROVED the amendments to the terms of reference of the Finance and Resources and Remuneration Committees.</p> <p>Action: DoG – S&G Committee to review its terms of reference once its new Chair was in place</p> <p>Action: DoG to update the terms of reference appended to the Standing Orders</p>
7.	<p>FOR INFORMATION PAPERS</p> <p>i. Use of the Seal 2023/24</p> <p>ii. Governors Attendance Report 2023/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DoG asked members to check their attendance figures as these were reported as part of financial statements

	Action: Members to check their attendance figures for 2023/24 as report to the Board
8.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff governor from the Croydon Campus asked whether there were plans to take advantage of the Skills England plans to open up the apprenticeship levy. The P&CEO agreed that this was an area that would be pursued posted Ofsted along with AI and further work on T Levels. • The Chair reported that Colleges had received a positive letter from the Skills minister and asked for this to be circulated to the Board. Action: DoG to circulate letter from Skills Minister to the Board
9.	POST MEETING EVALUATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair asked members to send any comments on the effectiveness of the meeting to either him or the DoG
10.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING <p>The next Board meeting would take place at the end of the Governor Day on Wednesday 6 November 2024, which would now take place at the Coulsdon Campus.</p>

Signed:

Date: