

THE CORPORATION OF CROYDON COLLEGE

Wednesday 2 July 2025 at 6pm
Room 405B Croydon Campus

PART ONE MINUTES

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Ann-Christine Harland (VP Finance & Resources)
Martin Silverwood (Deputy Principal, Curriculum)
Helen Langford (Executive Director of HR)
Sam Hanmer (Executive Director of Stakeholder Engagement and Skills)
Jane Holloway (Executive Director of Teaching and Quality Improvement)
Kirstie Woodcock (Executive Director of Student Services)

CLERK: Jacqueline Mutibwa (Director of Governance)

QUORUM: The meeting was quorate

	ITEM
1.	<p>PRELIMINARY BUSINESS</p> <p>(i) Appointment of Jacqueline Mutibwa as Clerk to the Governing Body</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the appointment of Jacqueline Mutibwa as Clerk to the Governing Body following the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee.</p> <p>(ii) Welcome and introductions</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Kirstie Woodcock the new Executive Director of Student Services and Jacqueline Mutibwa the newly appointed Clerk to the Board.</p> <p>(iii) Apologies for absence</p>

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Bentham, Oleksandr Bristow and Nezia De Roche who had recently had a baby. The Board congratulated Nezia and wished her well.

(iv) Declarations of Interest

Niral Patel, Armaghan UI Haq and Jacqueline Mutibwa had an interest in agenda item 1 on the reappointment of governors and the appointment of the Clerk and were not present for the discussion. Terrance James declared a new interest as he had been appointed as a governor at the University of Westminster in May 2025.

(v) Reappointment of Niral Patel

The Corporation **APPROVED** the reappointment of Niral Patel as a member of the Governing Body for a second term of four years from 20 October 2025 to 19 October 2029 following the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee. The Board thanked Niral for his service during his first term.

(vi) Reappointment of Armaghan UI Haq

The Corporation **APPROVED** the reappointment of Armaghan UI Haq as a member of the Governing Body for a further three years from 3 July 2025 to 2 July 2028 (by which time he will have served a full four-year term of office), following the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee. The Board thanked Armaghan for his service during his first year.

(vii) Appointment of Martin Bentham as a co-opted LQC member

The Corporation **NOTED** that this was Martin Bentham's last board meeting as he was stepping down as an external governor at the end of the academic year. The Corporation **APPROVED** Martin Bentham's appointment as a co-opted Member of the Learning & Quality Committee (LQC) following the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee.

(viii) Appointment of the Chair of the Governing Body

The Search and Governance Committee gave a report on the recruitment and selection process that had been undertaken to find a new Chair and recommended that Valerie Shawcross was appointed as the new Chair of the Governing Body. The Board thanked the Committee for the work undertaken to find a new Chair.

The Corporation **APPROVED** the appointment of Valerie Shawcross as the new Chair of the Board for a four-year term of office with a review after one year and subject to the relevant checks being undertaken. Valerie's appointment will take effect from 3 July 2025.

(ix) Appointment of External Governor

The Corporation **APPROVED** the appointment of Portia Kumalo as an external governor for a four-year term of office following the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee and subject to the relevant checks being undertake. Portia's appointment will take effect from 3 July 2025.

	<p>Action: DoG to send out appointment/reappointment letters to the appointed governors.</p>
2.	<p>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>(i) Minutes of the meeting on 26 March 2025</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025 subject to the amendments received from Andrew Gilchrist being incorporated.</p> <p>Action: DoG to amend the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025</p> <p>(ii) Matters arising from the minutes</p> <p>The Board noted the update on matters arising from the previous meeting and that most actions had been completed. The actions being progressed and still ongoing relate to the student governor processes and would be combined under a single action and dealt with by December 2025. Going forward, actions that were being progressed and still ongoing would include a target completion date.</p> <p>Action: DoG/ EDSS to revise the action to incorporate the two related matters.</p> <p>(iii) Update on Security</p> <p>The Executive Director of Student Services (EDSS) had taken over the lead and responsibility for security. She thanked the Vice Principal Finance & Resources for all her hard work in this area to date. The EDSS noted that the 2025/26 security action plan had been agreed and included some new areas to increase awareness such as: Cyber Safety & Digital Conduct, Emergency Preparedness, Student Safety Ambassadors and Incident Data Analysis. The Security Committee would be merged into the Safeguarding Committee.</p> <p>The Corporation NOTED the security update.</p>
3.	<p>PRINCIPAL & CEO REPORT</p> <p>The Board discussed the College's performance and developments across all areas of the organisation at the end of 2024/25 academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall performance against the 2024/25 KPIs targets agreed by the Board was positive as there was an improvement compared to 2023/24 academic year. Predicted achievement and retention both showed an improvement from last year. Attendance performance had dropped compared to the previous year and below the target, intervention strategies to improve performance were noted. Evaluation on Teaching and Learning was positive and the new Academy of Teaching Excellence, an initiative to improve teaching quality, would be launched in 2025/26. • 2024/25 apprenticeships achievement was expected to be lower than the previous year and below target: this was mainly due to the historical withdrawals of apprentices due to complete in the academic year. The management structure of the provision was being reviewed to improve the operational performance, and growth was the key focus for 2025/26. On Work Experience it has been a positive year due to an increased employer engagement and stronger partnerships that have led to more

	<p>meaningful work experience opportunities. On Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, the progress made against the agreed targets and the positive developments were noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024/25 Student Survey Summer interim report showed that the overall satisfaction at Coulsdon campus though slightly below target, showed significant improvements compared to last year. • 2024/25 HE provision there were issues concerning students' eligibility on entry for 2025/26 programmes. The College had decided to suspend enrolment to its two remaining degree programmes for the 2025/26 academic year. It was also considering whether to continue these courses in the future and a recommendation would be present to the LQC in the Autumn Term. • The 5-Year People Strategic Plan and progress made on the deliverables. The College was on track to deliver the actions for 2024/25. 2024/25 staff pay awards of 2% and an additional one off non-consolidated 1% had been implemented. • On the College's safeguarding provision, the Board received assurance that appropriate resources, systems and processes were in place to promote and support safeguarding and wider welfare at the College. • 2024/25 financial performance, the College was expecting to achieve the 2024/25 approved budget with a further surplus in 2025/26. Key financial performance indicators showed that efficiency measures needed to be undertaken in order to improve performance. • 2025/26 application figures were positive, in particular 16-18 year olds (6% increase) compared to last year. The branding work to develop an overarching unifying name for the Croydon group of education providers was progressing well. A governors' working group had been consulted and the proposal would be recommended to the full Board for approval. <p>DFE 2025/26 Accountability Statement</p> <p>The draft Accountability Statement had been reviewed in detail by the LQC at its meeting on 18 June 2025. On 17 June 2025, the draft document was circulated to governors for their comments (with a deadline of 22.06.25) and if there were none, Board's approval would be sought by 27 June 2025. No comments were received from the Board and the 2025/26 Accountability Statement would be submitted to DfE by the end of the week.</p> <p>The Board received an update on Croydon Council's financial situation and that the government was considering appointing commissioners to run the administration and stabilise the finances. The uncertainty regarding the implications this would have for the College were noted.</p> <p>2024/25 academic year had been successful, and the College was in a strong position for continued improvement. The focus for 2025/26 would be on growing the College's business and exploring how to further meet the needs of the local community. These priorities were discussed at the Executive team Awayday held on 30 June 2025.</p>
4.	<p>STRATEGIC MATTERS</p> <p>(i)Strategic Plan 2024 – 2029: 2024/25 Performance Review and 2025/26 Objectives</p>

	<p>The Board reviewed the progress made against the 2024/25 objectives and targets. Good progress had been made in most areas and the targets achieved. Areas that had not achieved the desired outcomes included attendance which would be a key area of focus for 2025/26. The Corporation NOTED the progress made against the 2024/25 objectives and targets.</p> <p>The Board discussed the proposed draft objectives and targets for the 2025/26 academic year. The Board gave their feedback on the draft document and the final version would be presented to the Board for approval at its next meeting in October 2025.</p> <p>Action: The Principal & CEO to present the final version of 2025/26 proposed objectives and targets for approval at the next board meeting in October 2025.</p> <p>(ii) Board Away Day with new Chair of the Board</p> <p>The Board discussed the proposal to have an Awayday with the new Chair in October 2025. The arrangements would be discussed with the new Chair and governors will be updated and their availability sought for the Awayday.</p> <p>Action: DoG to make arrangements for the Board Awayday in October 2025 and update the governors as soon as possible.</p>
5.	<p>FINANCE/RESOURCES</p> <p>(i) Finance and Resources Committee Chair's Report</p> <p>The Chair reported on the key matters discussed at the last Committee meeting (11.06.25). On the current financial position, period 10 budget performance was positive. The £57K budgeted surplus for 2024/25 was achievable and the proposed forecast budgets showed further improvements. The estates strategy and its alignment with the curriculum offer and the learners needs, revenue growth in apprenticeship provision and on the People Strategy the College was on track to deliver the agreed actions for 2024/25 academic year.</p> <p>The Board thanked the Committee for the work undertaken during the academic year to improve the College's finances and address staff-related matters.</p> <p>(ii) Management Accounts – May 2025</p> <p>The Board discussed 2024/25 financial performance as at 31 May 2025 (period 10). The year to date position showed an operating surplus of £471K against a budget deficit of £190K, a positive variance of £662K. This was mainly due to savings in non-pay expenditure and offsetting overspends in curriculum support pay and restructuring. The significant variances set out in the report were noted. The full year forecast showed that the budgeted year-end operating surplus position of £57K would be achieved and the budget risks set out in the risk analysis were noted.</p> <p>Although performance on financial contribution overall from curriculum areas was below target (46%), it was moving in the right direction.</p> <p>Cashflow position was positive. The financial health scores showed the College status as Good to date and forecasting Good financial health for 2024/25 financial year.</p>

The Corporation **DISCUSSED** the College's current financial position as at 31 May 2025

(iii) 2025/26 Budget

The Board was presented with the proposed 2025/26 budget for approval. The proposed budget had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2025.

The Board discussed the 2025/26 budget proposal which was modelled on delivering an improved surplus of £174K from an income of £37.6m compared to £57K in 2024/25. The recent DfE additional funding for 2025/26 (announced 20 June 2025) had not been included in the proposed budget and would result in an additional £877K. The priorities for this additional budget was being considered though it was unlikely to affect the 2025/26 budget surplus of £174K.

The Board noted the key risks to delivering the 2025/26 proposed budget which were set out in the risk analysis. The risks mainly relate to income from the funding streams i.e. apprenticeship and adult education and the increase in pay and non-pay expenditure. There was discussion about the reduction in the Adult Skills Fund for 2025/26 and the College not being able to meet the education needs of its adults, especially as the majority were disadvantaged learners. There was also concern about growth and finances. The actions being undertaken by the College to address the situation were noted.

The Corporation:

AGREED the key assumptions of the proposed budget; and

APPROVED the 2025/26 Surplus Budget plan.

(iv) Financial Forecast 2024/27

The Board discussed the College's proposed 3-year financial forecast as part of the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR), which would be submitted to the DfE by 31 July 2025. The proposed financial forecast had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2025.

2026/27 proposed budget forecast showed further improvements of a £200K surplus from an income of £38.2m. The key assumptions for the 2026/27 budget forecast were noted.

The Board discussed the contents of the Commentary to accompany the CFFR for the 3 - year period. The financial forecast did not include the £877K additional funding for 2025/26 recently allocated by the DfE which would be included in the updated CFFR dashboard.

The 3-year financial forecasts were modelled in the context of the College's underlying assumptions but also expected to be aligned with the FEC's financial benchmarks and key financial performance indicators. There was discussion about the College's future financial performance which was felt should be modelled in the context of student needs and priorities. The Board asked for a Strategic Discussion on the College's 3-year strategic priorities for the meeting in October 2025. DfE had recently revised the financial benchmarks, and the letter (11 June 2025) would be shared with governors as soon as possible.

Action: DoG to include a discussion item on the 3-year strategic priorities on the agenda of the board meeting in October 2025. To also circulate the DfE letter (11 June 2025) on the revised financial benchmarks as soon as possible.

	<p>The Corporation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGREED the key assumptions in the Commentary; • APPROVED the 2026/27 surplus of £200K; and • AGREED that the Chair of Finance and Resources approves the final adjusted CFFR Dashboard, once the additional funds and spend had been included, for submission to the DfE by 31 July 2025 (along with the 2025/26 budget and 2026/27 forecast). <p><i>{Secretary's note: On 22 July 2025, the Chair of Finance and Resources approved the Final Post-16 DfE income adjustment, which had been incorporated into the 2025/26 Budget and 2026/27 Forecast as part of the CFFR submission to the DfE.}</i></p> <p>(v) 2025/26 Updated Fees Policy</p> <p>The updated fees policy had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2025.</p> <p>The Board discussed the key changes to the policy which related to the changes to the Adults Level 3 funding and the College's capacity to deliver the courses which needed to be reflected in the policy. There were also changes to the HE provision i.e. the pause on recruitment to some courses which did not need to be included in the policy. The 2026/27 proposed increase in HE fees was subject to OfS approval on the Access Agreement which was awaited.</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the proposed annual update to the Tuition Fees Policy for 2025/26, subject to potential change in HE fees.</p> <p>(vi) 2025/26 Updated Reserves Policy</p> <p>The updated reserves policy had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2025.</p> <p>Michael Cutbill had shared his comments about the reserves policy in light of the FEC financial benchmark requirements and the Charity Commission Guidance (CC19) on the definition and rationale with the Vice Principal Finance & Resources ahead of the meeting. Further discussions would take place outside the meeting between the Vice Principal Finance & Resources and Michael Cutbill on the matter.</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the updated Reserves Policy.</p>
6.	<p>QUALITY/CURRICULUM STANDARDS</p> <p>(i) Learning and Quality Committee Chair's Report</p> <p>The Chair reported on the key matters discussed at the last Committee meeting (18.06.25). Overall performance was positive, the 2024/25 Quality KPIs had improved compared to last year apart from attendance which had slightly dropped. There were improvements in teaching and learning and the safeguarding provision was progressing well. There were challenges facing the HE provision and a pause to the recruitment for 2025/26 academic year.</p>

	<p>The Board thanked the Committee for the work undertaken during the academic year to improve the quality of education and student experience.</p> <p>(ii) Student Governors' Report</p> <p>The Board asked that the student governors' report should be circulated to the governors.</p> <p>Action: DoG to circulate the student governors' report before the end of the academic year.</p>
7.	<p>CURRICULUM AND ANNUAL LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS</p> <p>(i) ESOL/ English and Maths</p> <p>The Link Governor (Jonathan Brookes) had held meetings with staff and noted that good progress had been made on improving the 2024/25 outcomes. The predicted achievement was positive (5% improvement) compared to last year. The key risk to the provision was the reduction in adult funding and the impact on student enrolment and retention. Alternative funding streams to maintain the provision were being considered.</p> <p>(ii) Apprenticeships</p> <p>The Link Governor (Andrew Lowe) reported on the discussions held with the team on the 2025/26 planned budgeted income and the risk that it may not be achieved. Initiatives were being considered such as additional offers and seeking funding for other programmes to address the income risk.</p> <p>(iii) Coulsdon Campus</p> <p>The Link Governor (Louise Cretton) had attended the 2024/25 end of year reviews and had also engaged with staff and students at Coulsdon Campus. Over the term students had shown an improvement in behaviour and attitude. Good progress had been made in teaching and learning and achievement. The areas that were at risk included attendance and were being addressed. Overall, it was a more positive culture at the college which was noticeable in the wider community.</p> <p>(iv) Higher Education</p> <p>The Link Governor (Michael Cutbill) had visited the university centre and had held meetings with staff. There were concerns about the students not meeting the course requirements which led to the proposed changes to the programmes and the pause to the recruitment for 2025/26. The partnership/ indirect delivery was progressing well; the key challenge was the shape of the direct delivery which would need to be considered.</p> <p>Action: The following link governor reports were not available for discussion and would be presented at the next board meeting in October 2025: Safeguarding and SEND, Sustainability and Health & Safety.</p> <p>2024/25 Self-Assessment Report (SAR) Panel Meetings</p> <p>The Chair of LQC reminded the Board about the SAR Panel meetings that review the College's quality of education provision. He invited the governors to take part in the self-assessment review meetings that would be held in September 2025.</p>

8. AUDIT/RISK

(i) Audit Committee Chair's Report

The Chair reported on the key matters discussed at the last Committee meeting (12.06.25). On the internal audit report on Estates Maintenance, the auditors gave a 'reasonable' level of assurance over the design and the operational effectiveness of the controls in place to manage the risk. On the audit follow up actions, the College had demonstrated reasonable progress in implementing agreed management actions.

On 2025/26 proposed internal audit plan, the proposed audit areas and the approach taken were discussed. 2024/25 proposed external audit strategy and the engagement letter; matters on fraud, bribery and corruption and the strategic risk register were discussed.

The Board thanked the Committee for the work undertaken during the academic year on the oversight of the College's risk management, internal control, and audit arrangements.

(ii) Internal Audit Plan and Fee 2025/26

The Internal Audit Plan and Fee 2025/26 had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2025.

The Corporation **APPROVED**:

- 2025/26 Internal Audit Plan (as split out in section 1.1 of the report); and
- the proposed fee of £35,720 + VAT for 47 days, a 2.9% increase, compared to £34,700 + VAT for 48 days last year.

(iii) External Audit Strategy and Fee 2024/25

The 2024/25 External Audit Plan for the financial statements audit and proposed fee had been discussed in detail and recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2025.

The Corporation **APPROVED**:

- the fee of £34,770 + VAT, as per the 2024 tender; and
- the Letter of Engagement for the audit and that the Principal & CEO signed it on behalf of the Board.

(iv) 2024/25 Strategic Risk Register summer term update

The updated risk register had been reviewed by all the Committees during the Summer term. The overall view was that there was not significant change required to the risk register since last term in terms of new risks identified and changes to the risk scoring. Fire risk assessments would be included as a mitigation measure under the fire risk, and the cyber risk mitigation actions would be redacted from the register that would be published.

The Corporation **REVIEWED** the updated risk register and **AGREED** the proposed summer term 2024/25 risks, controls, actions, responsibilities and action dates.

(v) Risk Management Policy 2025/26

The updated risk management policy had been reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2025. The Board reviewed

	<p>the updated risk management policy which included the risk appetite. The proposed change (4.2) on the role and responsibilities of the corporation was noted.</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the updated risk management policy for 2025/26.</p>
9.	<p>GOVERNANCE</p> <p>(i) Search and Governance Committee Chair's Report</p> <p>The Chair noted that discussions at the last meeting (25.06.25) focused on governor appointments and reappointments, particularly the appointment of the Chair of the Board. The Selection Panel was thanked for its work in finding a new Chair and the Committee for overseeing the College's governance arrangements over the academic year.</p> <p>(ii) Board and Committee Meeting dates for 2025/26</p> <p>The Corporation APPROVED the 2025/26 meeting dates.</p>
11.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>The Chair noted that this was his last board meeting as he would be stepping down from the Board on 31 July 2025. He thanked the Board for their work, support, and commitment over a positive academic year, which set the College on an improvement trajectory. The Chair also thanked the Executive Team for their hard work in driving forward the improvements and the positive impact they have made. He noted his gratitude to the Vice Chair for her support and wise counsel since taking on the role in 2024 and wished everyone a very good summer.</p> <p>On behalf of the Executive Team, the Principal & CEO thanked the Chair for his leadership during the College's challenging times.</p>
12.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next board meeting would be held on Wednesday 15 October 2025 from 6pm to 8pm at the Croydon Campus.</p>