

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS
30 SEPTEMBER 2015**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Gordon Smith (Chair)
Caroline Allen (Vice Chair)
Jean Cook
Stephan John
Clare Mackie
Trevor Morgan
Anita McGowan (staff)
Craig O'Donnell (by telecon)
Peter Olusakin (FE Student)
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)
Piers White
Jackie Wilding
Kevin Zuchowski-Morrison

ALSO ATTENDING: Keith Oxspring (Chief Operating Officer -COO)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive -DCE)
Jo Bland (Director of Human Resources - DHR)
Kristoff Kerr (Vice President – Student Body),

Glynne Stansfield - Partner, Head of UK Governance and External Relations practice and International Education practice, Eversheds

CLERK: Melissa Drayson

APOLOGIES Matt Sims was not present.

QUORUM The meeting was quorate throughout

TIMING 6.00 – 8.40pm

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| 15.15 | i. Chair's introduction and welcome to new governors | |

The Chair welcomed new governors, Jean Cook, Kevin Zuchowski-Morrison and Peter Olusakin (Student Governor – FE) to the meeting. Kristoff Kerr (Vice-President of the Student Body) was also welcomed. Kristoff would be attending meetings to co-present the Student report.

Glynne Stanfield, Partner from Eversheds was also welcomed to the meeting to co-present and advise the Board on the Governors' Strategic Briefing and Item 15.17: Property.

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Governors' Briefing: Strategic Matters

Confidential session

Supporting paper by the Principal, circulated in advance.

Due to high commercial sensitivity, it was RESOLVED that the notes of this item would be contained within a separate confidential minute.

ii. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from those listed above.

iii. Declaration of interests

Clare Mackie declared an interest in relation to parts of the governor briefing and withdrew from these discussions.

The Chair reported that a query had been raised about a potential conflict of interest in relation between his job as CEO of Riddlesdown Collegiate and the Board's decision to discontinue A- levels (item 15.16: Curriculum Offer). He had, in the past, been supportive of the college in continuing this provision but now believed that the management case for withdrawing it from September 2015 had been strong.

iv. Minutes of the meeting on 8 July 2015

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair

v. Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda

15.10: Strategic Review and College review:

The Chair reported that the governor membership of the Steering Group was now the Principal, Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Chairs, namely Frances Wadsworth, Gordon Smith, Caroline Allen, Piers White and Craig O'Donnell.

15.16 i. Principal's Report

Supporting paper by the Principal and CEO

The paper was taken as read, with updates to the information provided reported orally and key headlines discussed:

Teaching, learning and assessment

- Achievement levels were to be confirmed, and would be reported to the Learning and Quality Committee in November. Currently these appeared to be a mixed picture.
- Apprenticeship outcomes had improved significantly due to considerable effort in this area, with an increase in success rates of approximately 10%.
- Issues with attendance and punctuality in 2014-15 were being addressed in 15/16 with a range of actions including a later start

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time for the college day, and a more stringent approach to tackling lateness.

- There had been a strong focus on ensuring that students were placed on the right level of English and Maths study, with reference to evidence of prior attainment on GCSE certificates.

Curriculum Offer

- The Board had approved the withdrawal of full-time A Levels from the college's curriculum offer by electronic resolution in August. Students who had completed their AS year in June 2015 would continue onto A2 during 2015-16, but no new students were being enrolled to AS.
- Cuts to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) mandated funding had been accommodated, with conversion of many part-time courses to full-cost recovery to mitigate impact on learners.

Ofsted and Quality Improvement

- The Board noted that two members of staff were trained Ofsted inspectors, so bringing current practise into the college.
- Governors sought and gained confirmation that College KPIs for Teaching, Learning and Assessment would be aligned to the new performance measures. Draft KPIs for the year would be brought to the November LQC meeting for approval.
- A new drive to encourage governors to participate in the GOAL (Go Out and Listen) programme would be launched by the Clerk and Assistant Principal shortly

Prevent

- It was noted that a Board briefing on the Prevent Duty would now be provided on 1 December. Governors questioned whether Governor Liability insurance would need to be extended to cover this legislation. The Clerk would follow this up.

Enrolment

- The Board noted that the learner number position would not be clear until after the 42 day deadline, but that enrolments across all provision was stronger than originally anticipated. The drop-out rate in the previous year had been high- and measures had been taken to address this.

Pay Claim

- The UCU pay claim had been reported and discussed at F&R Committee, along with the risk of industrial action. The impact of a further year with no pay rise on staff morale and turnover was raised and discussed

Student Success

The Board was delighted to note the continued range of volunteer opportunities and awards that students were achieving.

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Although the overall picture currently presented was encouraging, the Board was mindful that neither 2014-15 outcomes nor 2015-16 learner numbers were finalised. It was important, in the face of a number of exciting strategic opportunities and challenges, to maintain a focus on the core business of the College and, in particular, the learner experience.

AGREED:

- (i) That the Board ratify formally the decision made by electronic resolution to withdraw A Level provision
- (ii) that the Board be briefed on the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework at a future meeting
- (iii) That Governors be sent details of GOAL as part of an overall programme of student engagement activities
- (iv) That advice be taken to establish whether existing governor liability insurance provided cover under the Prevent Duty
- (v) That the F&R Committee consider the impact on staff morale and turnover of financial constraints and discuss alternative options for rewarding staff

DCE/AP

Clerk

Clerk/COO

DHR/F&R

ii. The Learner Experience: Student Governor report

Oral report by the FE Student Governor and Vice President of the Student Body

Students had taken part in a range of activities relating to the new Prevent Duty. These included a joint meeting with other agencies at which members of the Student Executive spoke; talks by trained professionals in college, and the launch of a 'Hot Topic political discussion slot' on Moodle.

Croydon College students had won Croydon Civic Awards, including Fundraiser of the Year and continued to be represented on the UNICEF Steering Group. A new initiative, STAR (Student Action for Refugees, had been launched. So far this term, fourteen new students had signed up for volunteering opportunities.

Student participation on the Croydon Council Scrutiny Panel (reported to the July Board meeting) was still strong, with a programme of training and meetings between July and December 2015. Themes for the Scrutiny Panel would include 'Homelessness in the Borough and its effects on young people.' A discussion forum had been held on the UN Refugee Crisis the previous day, attended by a representative from STAR and the local Conservative MP, Gavin Barwell. The next month's focus would be on extremism.

Governors commented on the inspiring depth of engagement of the College students and asked that every opportunity should be taken to publicise the range of students' contributions to their wider community.

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15.17 Property
Supporting paper by Jill Small, Property Consultant, presented by the Principal and with input from Eversheds.

Due to commercial sensitivity it was RESOLVED that a confidential minute should be taken as a Part B item

15.18 BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Finance and Resources Committee Report
Oral report by the Chair of F&R with tabled recommendations

Key issues discussed by the Committee were:

- Password protection of Board documents sent by email would be implemented in line with the Clerk's email to all governors
- The 2014-15 financial out-turn as described in the Principal's report, and that current year's performance to date was in line with the budget;
- The auditors would be visiting the College the following week to start work on the preparation of the statutory accounts. The year-end out-turn picture discussed by the Committee would be subject to adjustment, including FRS17 pensions.
- Approval, on behalf of the Board, of minor changes to the Tuition Fees Policy and Debt Collection Policy, to give the Chief Operating Officer authority to waive fees for 24+ loan students who leave at the beginning of a course
- Recommendation of the Disciplinary Procedure to the Board for approval following a review which proposed no changes.
- Review of the Committee terms of reference to produce a more streamlined version and recommendation of these to the Board.

Governors asked whether the three-year financial plan would be revised in the light of ongoing strategic discussions. Preferred options would be for a costed business plan to be developed for each project which would stand alone from the core budget.

RESOLVED: that, on the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee,

- i. The Staff Disciplinary Procedures be approved**
- ii. The revised F&R Terms of Reference be approved.**

15.19 GOVERNANCE

- i. Governance self-assessment preliminary outcomes**

Consideration of outcomes would be deferred until the December Board

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meeting, pending receipt of further returns. Any members who had not yet completed the online survey were encouraged strongly to do so.

ii. Governor recruitment and committee membership

Supporting paper by the Clerk

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on an interview held with Mark Wilson, who had been nominated by Shachi Blakemore to succeed her as co-opted Audit Committee member. Mark had a finance background but, more recently, a wealth of experience in strategic management. He now worked as a self-employed business consultant.

It was noted that Stephan John's departure created a further vacancy on the Audit Committee and expressions of interest were sought from governors to join the committee. Governors were reminded that current F&R members, the Chair of the Board and the Principal were precluded from membership.

RESOLVED: that the following be approved:

- (i) The revised Committee membership, which included the appointment of Kevin Zuchowski-Morrison to F&R committee and Jean Cook to LQC**
- (ii) The appointment of Gordon Smith as Chair of LQC on a pro-tem basis until a new permanent Chair could be found**
- (iii) The appointment of Mark Wilson as co-opted member of the Audit Committee.**

15.20 Other Business

The Chair thanked Stephan John for his magnificent support to Croydon College and contributions to the Board during his four years as governor. Stephan stated that he was proud of his long association with the College since 1979, having studied here, taught here and then having served as a co-opted governor before becoming a full governor.

Stephan was presented with a small gift as a token of the Board's appreciation of his contribution to the College.

15.21 Evaluation of the meeting

The Board evaluation form was circulated as a new initiative. Governors were asked to complete and return it to the Clerk before leaving.

Signed _____ (Chair)

Date: _____