

MINUTES

- PRESENT:** Gordon Smith (Chair)
Caroline Allen (Vice Chair) – from 6.40pm
Jean Cook
James Farmer (Student – HE)
Coral Josephs (staff)
Trevor Morgan
Matt Sims
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)
Piers White
Jackie Wilding
- ALSO ATTENDING:** Keith Oxspring (Chief Operating Officer -COO)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive -DCE)
Jo Bland (Director of Human Resources - DHR)
Ann Monaghan (Assistant Principal – AP) – to
Kristoff Kerr (Vice President – Student Body),

Kat Cooper – HE/FE Prevent Co-ordinator, BIS
- CLERK:** Melissa Drayson
- APOLOGIES** Clare Mackie
Anita McGowan (staff)
Peter Olusakin
Craig O'Donnell
Kevin Zuchowski-Morrison was not present
- QUORUM** The meeting was quorate throughout
- TIMING** 6.00 – 8.45pm

Item no.		Action Lead
15.22	i. Chair's introduction and welcome to new governors	

The Chair welcomed new governors, James Farmer and Coral Josephs. James had been elected HE Student Governor for a one year term of office. Coral had been elected Business Support Staff Governor for a four-year term of office.

The order in which agenda items were taken would be altered to so that the Self-Assessment Report and Student Governor report were discussed first as being key items for discussion.

**Item
no.**

**Action
Lead**

Governors' Briefing: The Prevent Duty

Presentation by Kat Cooper, FE/HE Prevent Co-ordinator for BIS.

Kat Cooper, London HE/FE Prevent Co-ordinator for BIS, was also welcomed to the meeting to present a briefing on the Prevent Duty. Kat had been working with the College on its approach to Prevent and had provided a number of sessions for both staff and students at the college. The slides from the presentation were circulated to all governors following the meeting.

Key points of discussion focussed on the concept of 'British Values'. Ofsted interpreted this as equipping people for life in modern Britain, and would review the promotion of British Values as part of an inspection. Although individual liberty was at the heart of British Values, this did not supersede individuals' right to seek protection from discrimination under the Equality Act.

A key aspect of an effective approach would, however, be an open dialogue where staff and students felt safe to express opinions and concerns.

Governors asked about the college's ability to prevent internet access to inappropriate materials or websites.. It was confirmed that existing filtering systems already established for safeguarding would also be effective for Prevent. It was stressed that the college was not able to control internet activity off its premises, but its role in providing students with information and skills to critically evaluate content was vital..

More information was sought about how Prevent should be promoted with apprenticeship providers. The Local Authority would be the primary agency working with businesses. With regard to apprenticeship providers, the onus would be on the college to ensure that risk assessments were performed and assessors fully trained. Again, practices should mirror those in place already for safeguarding.

Governors discussed how they should monitor the effectiveness of measures. It was agreed that progress on the Prevent Action Plan should be reported, with validation by the Safeguarding Link Governor, Caroline Allen. Student surveys would also play a part in monitoring students' perceptions of feeling safe at the college.

ii. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from those listed above.

iii. Declaration of interests

There were no new declarations of interests

iv. Minutes of the meeting on 30 September 2015

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record and were

Item no.		Action Lead
	signed by the Chair	
	v. Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda	
	<u>15.16.iv</u> The action to check the governors' liability insurance for coverage of the Prevent Duty was outstanding.	Clerk
15.23	<p>i. Self-Assessment Report 2014-15, targets for 2015-16 and Quality Improvement Plan <i>Supporting paper presented by the DCE</i></p> <p>The SAR had been circulated and was taken as read, with updates to the information provided reported orally and key headlines discussed:</p> <p>It was noted that the members of the Learning and Quality Committee, accompanied by Jackie Wilding, had met to review the draft SAR. The preceding validation and benchmarking process had included engagement of an external consultant (former Additional Inspector for Ofsted and now an Associate FE Commissioner). The resulting judgement agreed was that overall effectiveness is a grade 2, ie. Good.</p> <p>Governors were satisfied that there was rigour in the judgement process and a high level of management awareness of areas of weakness, and a robust plan was in place to deal with these. This was especially the case with Maths and English where there had been significant work to shift the culture and establish ownership of Maths and English across the whole curriculum.</p> <p>Governors questioned the judgement that the cohort which was seen to be more at risk was that of looked after children (LAC). It was clarified that this was based on historical data but informed our decision to monitor this group to ensure parity of outcomes. Governors noted that the number of LACs at the college/within the LA was significant compared to many other colleges and LAs and this group of students were benefiting from a range of initiatives designed to better support them and track their progress.</p> <p>Governors noted that the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was an organic document. In response to governors' comments it would be updated to reflect the range of ways in which English and Maths was being promoted.</p> <p>The Higher Education equivalent to the SAR, the Annual Monitoring Report, was still undergoing completion and would be validated by the Chair of Governors and the Vice-Chair of LQC. It was suggested that governors might receive one consolidated QIP/AMR Action Plan for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>The proposed targets for 2015-16 were considered to be realistic and challenging.</p>	
	RESOLVED:	

Item
no.

Action
Lead

- (i) that the Self-Assessment Report 2014-15 be approved with the following grades:

Outcomes for learners:	3
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:	2
Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare:	2
Effectiveness of Leadership and Management:	2
Overall Effectiveness:	2

- (ii) That the annual targets 2015-16 be approved
(iii) That the Quality Improvement Plan 2015-16 be approved.
(iv) That the Chair and Chair of Audit Committee have delegated authority to approve the finalised AMR

Chair/DCE

AGREED: that governor learning walks would be arranged in the new year to include a focus on Maths and English.

Clerk

ii. The Learner Experience: Student Governor report

Oral report by the Vice President of the Student Body, Kristoff Kerr.

Student involvement on the Croydon Council scrutiny panel had continued, with success. The theme of the panel meeting on 17 November had been homelessness. The panel had included seven college students and had been chaired by the Vice President. Feedback from local councillors was that it had been inspirational and an invitation had been issued for the panel to continue. An article had also appeared in the Croydon Advertiser.

The Student Executive had been tasked by the SMT to encourage students to focus on Maths. A number of proposals had been made, all of which had been accepted, an initial meeting held with the relevant Heads of English and maths and plans agreed for implementation in the New Year.

Members of the Student Executive and the Unicef Steering Group had attended Prevent Training and had instigated discussion carousels which had been chaired by the Vice President.

Other feedback from students included:

- The shorter lunch break created difficulties for some students in terms of buying lunch and getting back to class on time
- Restricted access to the library

The Principal reported that both of these issues had also been raised at her Student breakfast and would be looked into by management. However, the first point raised had very mixed feedback from students with many students welcoming the shorter break as it allowed them to have a slightly shorter college day and therefore fulfil other commitments such as work, family etc.

**Item
no.**

**Action
Lead**

The board asked for its thanks and congratulations to be fed back to the student body for the outstanding achievements and levels of engagement demonstrated through their volunteering activities.

iii. Principal's Report

Supporting paper presented by the Principal/CEO

It was noted that the Teaching, Learning and Assessment content had been covered as part of the earlier SAR and Prevent discussion. In addition, the Board considered the following:

3.0 The KPI dashboard was in the process of being adjusted to reflect the college's changing priorities and the new QSR, although it was difficult to translate this into a simple dashboard. Governors asked that previous year performance should be added as a comparator where possible.

DCE

4.0 Finance: The Autumn Statement had contained less challenging news than expected in terms of future sector funding, although there was concern that area uplift and disadvantage funding would be affected. The freeze on 16-18 funding levels would also represent a real terms cut over time. The September management accounts had been considered by Finance and Resources committee, and the summary of discussions was in the committee report.

5.0 Property: The outline planning application for the College Green project would be considered by the Council in January. Subject to the outcome, the Committee of Chairs would be asked to consider a further draft of the Heads of Terms with a view to bringing a final version to the Board for approval in due course. The West End project had been paused for the time being, but there was sufficient time within the planning consent window to recommence the scheme at a later date if necessary. Council feedback on Heath Clark was noted and the intention to soft market, with no obligation, outlined. The Board was satisfied that a prudent approach was being taken, in line with its responsibility for both protecting its assets and working in the best interests of the Borough.

6.0 The exceptional levels of engagement and activity of the students was, once again, commended.

iii. Ofsted and the New Common Inspection Framework
Powerpoint presentation by the DCE. Slides provided to all governors after the meeting.

The key differences between the new and old CIFs were reported and discussed:

- No graded lessons
- No grading of different subject areas
- Short inspections for Good providers
- Leadership was now listed first in the gradings. The culture of the provider, as set by leadership, was a key

Item
no.

Action
Lead

aspect. Governors asked how the college might ensure that there was consistency among staff in terms of upholding standards, operating systems and buying into culture in areas where there were challenges in the sector re recruitment. This was agreed to be a key challenge for management.

- Prevent was important and the further development and promotion of British Values. However, it was also important to note that the Duty was newly in place and this first year is one of implementation
- Outcomes – a continuation in the important focus on progress for all students rather than ‘flat’ success rates For example, the challenge to improve English and maths is one of ensuring all students are working towards and achieving at a level higher than that they already have attained. The challenge for colleges was demonstrating how they measure and report on progress – both in year and year on year
- The introduction of a grade for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare. Although there is very strong practice across the college providing evidence for this key grade the essential impact measure is tangible expression of aspiration for all so high attendance, good punctuality and significant personal development shown through good progression. Attendance and punctuality have both improved year on year but the college recognises that there is still more to do.

It was considered that Governors would gain an enhanced understanding of student progress from participating in Learning Walks, GOAL and other activities which would enable them to triangulate the data that they received in meetings with the learner experience. The Board requested a cycle of data reporting points to clarify expectations of what governors should review and when. Management were also asked to look into the provision of high level summaries of data from the ‘My progress tracker’ programme.

DCE

DCE

The Principal reported that the Chief Inspectors’ Annual Report had recently been published. This showed a significant decline in the number of colleges achieving a good or outstanding inspection outcome so far this year, under the new framework (from 77% to 35%)

AGREED:

- (i) **that student progress would be monitored through LQC, using measures devised by management**
- (ii) **that there would be strong focus on attendance and punctuality within the college and this would be reported to LQC**

15.24 Safeguarding Policy and Implementation Plan
Supporting paper by the Director of HR

**Item
no.**

**Action
Lead**

The policy had been updated to reflect new statutory guidance in particular relating to Prevent and the Mandatory Reporting Duty for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). It was confirmed that the Safeguarding Governor, Caroline Allen, had been involved in the review process. As outlined in the earlier Prevent presentation, the emphasis of the college's approach was on partnership working and equipping student to protect themselves and keep themselves safe through a range of activities. The Plan was, therefore, an organic document.

Security was a key concern for the board and there was further discussion about how the college and local business and community partners might work closely together in the best interests of learners.

RESOLVED: that the Safeguarding Policy be approved ad the implementation plan noted.

15.25 Area Review and Strategic Option Update

Confidential Item

It was noted that London, for the purposes of the review, had been divided into four areas, and it was likely that the Area Review for London South, the area in which the College was located, would start in April or May. The Principal outlined the emerging vision for the future and opportunities that presented for the College and Croydon

Staff, stakeholders and the Board had been consulted on the Strategic Plan to ensure that it reflected the changing landscape and opportunities for the College and the area. A draft of the new Strategic Drivers summary 2015-2022 had been circulated for further comment, reflection and approval. This now reflected the shift in focus away from International recruitment to reflect the opportunities emerging through growth in Apprenticeships and significant HE development possibilities with Sussex University The opportunities, in partnership with Sussex, to develop a STEM and Higher apprenticeship agenda and become an Institute of Technology was also appealing. Comment was made that there should be a reflection of the need to ensure sustainability through maximising on partnership and growth opportunities. It was noted that there was an alignment of objectives of key partners – Croydon Council, the College and Sussex University – which brought significant opportunity.

AGREED: that governors would feed back any further comments on the draft revised Strategic Drivers by Tuesday 8 December.

Govs

15.26 i. Annual Report and Financial Statements

Supporting paper presented by the Chief Operating Officer

The draft Annual Report and Financial Statements had been considered in detail by both the Finance and Resources and Audit

**Item
no.**

**Action
Lead**

Committees and both reported that they were satisfied that the final document reflected the discussion at each meeting. The Chair of F&R and members of Audit Committee confirmed that they were happy to recommend the Statements for approval.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Report and Financial Statements be approved.

ii. Risk Register and Risk Management Report

Supporting paper by the Principal

A review of the risk register had resulted in the oversight of risk Op2: Income and Contribution Targets being elevated to full Board level. This had previously been jointly monitored by the F&R and LQC Committees. Risk ST1 (a flawed Strategic Plan) was also monitored by the board and had been updated to reflect issues arising from Area Reviews.

AGREED: that the revised risk register be approved.

iii. Finance and Resources Committee Report

Supporting paper, including minutes of the F&R Meeting on 3 November, presented by the Chair of F&R

In addition to the approval of the Financial Statements, the recommendations of the committee were reported. An update was given on the proposal to ensure that all staff were paid the revised London Living Wage. This would affect 33 staff and would cost the college £10k.

RESOLVED: that, in line with the recommendations of the F&R Committee:

- i) The revised Financial Regulations be approved and the Committee's approval of the Treasury and Banking Arrangements and Supply Chain Charges and Fees Policy 2015/16 be noted.**
- ii) The current Staff Grievance Procedure remain unchanged**
- iii) The Committee's approval of the Staff Recruitment Procedures be noted**
- iv) The decision to keep the staff pay award under review be noted**
- v) That the pay of all staff be brought in line with the revised London Living Wage.**

iv. Audit Committee Report

Supporting papers, including Audit Committee Minutes from 18 November 2015 and Audit Committee Annual Report.

RESOLVED: that, in line with the recommendations of the Audit Committee, the following be approved:

- (i) the Annual Report of the Audit Committee 2014-15**
- (ii) The Financial Statements and Regularity Audit**

Item
no.

Action
Lead

Findings Report

- (iii) **The Internal Audit Annual Report 2014-15**
- (iv) **The Internal Audit Plan 2015-16**
- (v) **The revised Whistleblowing Policy**
- (vi) **The revised Freedom of Information Policy**

15.27 Search Committee Report

Supporting papers: Search Committee Minutes from 25 November 2015

RESOLVED: that, in line with the recommendations of the Search Committee, the following be approved:

- (i) **The appointment of Martin Corney, CEO of the Whitgift Foundation, as a governor**
- (ii) **To confirm the following governors in post to the end of their first four year term of office:**
 - **Trevor Morgan**
 - **Matt Sims**
 - **Craig O'Donnell**
 - **Jackie Wilding**
- (iii) **To discontinue the policy of re-confirming governors in post after the first two years of their first term of office**
- (iv) **To appoint Coral Joseph, Staff Governor Business Support, to the Audit Committee**
- (v) **To adopt the AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges**

ii. Board Self-Assessment Report/Action Plan

Oral report by the Clerk

The Board grades itself as 'good' and is found to be compliant with all mandatory provisions set out in the new AOC Code of Good Governance in English Colleges. An assessment was also made against the BIS Document: An Assessment of the Impact of Governance Report in FE Colleges (March 2015).

Themes to emerge from the self-assessment, which will be fed into an action and development plan for the year (to be circulated to governors by email) are:

- A continued focus is required on the fast-moving policy environment, and the impact on curriculum, in order to ensure governors can contribute meaningfully to high-level strategic decision making;
- The development of further opportunities for governors to engage with internal and external stakeholder groups: staff, students and employers.

Clerk

15.27 Other Business

The Chair confirmed that the outcomes of the Remuneration Committee would be reported to the next meeting.

**Item
no.**

**Action
Lead**

Evaluation of the meeting

There was no evaluation of this meeting.

Signed _____ (Chair)

Date: _____