

**CROYDON COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
12 JULY 2016**

**MINUTES**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Gordon Smith (Chair) Soraia Barbosa (Student governor designate) – to 6.45 Jean Cook Martin Corney Coral Josephs (Business Support staff) Trevor Morgan - from 6.50pm Craig O'Donnell Frances Wadsworth (Principal) Piers White Jackie Wilding
<b>ALSO ATTENDING:</b>	Keith Oxspring (Chief Operating Officer -COO)
<b>CLERK:</b>	Melissa Drayson
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Clare Mackie Anita McGowan (Academic staff governor)
	Caroline Allen (Vice Chair) and Matthew Sims were not present
<b>QUORUM</b>	The meeting was quorate throughout
<b>TIMING</b>	18.00 – 20.42

<b>Item no.</b>		<b>Action Lead</b>
	<b>Presentation: School of Art Exhibitions</b> <i>Tim Strange, Head of School of Art</i>	

Governors were given a brief outline of the 2016 School of Art Exhibition and viewed the Fashion film . They were also given an insight into the School of Art's involvement with the launch of the Tamara Tech Club, links with Rise Gallery and student involvement in various community art projects, including the redesign of shop fronts on London Road.

With 600-800 guests, this year's Art Exhibition had probably been the College's most successful, resulting in some students selling pieces or being invited to exhibit artwork elsewhere. The video shown had enabled images from the exhibition and shows to be disseminated to a wider audience, including schools.

The Board commended the Head of School and his staff on the great journey of improvement that the School of Art had been on, moving from unsatisfactory to good in the space of a few years.

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**i. Chair's introduction, apologies for absence and new interests.**

The newly elected student governor, Soraia Barbosa was welcomed to the meeting. Soraia would give the student governor report and observe part of the meeting, before starting in the role properly from September. The Student Governor report would, therefore, be taken first. The Chair also requested that item 6i, Chair's Succession Planning, be taken at the start of the meeting.

*The items appear in the minutes in the same order as on the agenda.*

Anita McGowan was welcomed back to the Board as Academic Staff Governor in her absence. She had sent apologies as she was collecting her MBE.

It was reported that Kevin Zuchowski Morrison had been in discussion with the Principal regarding an alternative role within the College, more directly focussed on the School of Art. This would be a better fit with his other business commitments and would allow the School of Art to benefit from what was already a really positive connection.

There were no new declarations of interests.

**ii. Minutes of the meeting on 23 March 2016**

RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**iii. Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

Prevent

Advice from the insurers on Prevent insurance had been re-circulated to governors. The later item (4.i.e) on Terrorism Insurance Cover was also relevant. Individual governors had been contacted to ensure completion of online Prevent training, which was increasingly important.

14-16 provision

As reported in the Principal's report, the Council had shown interest in the College's bid to be a 14-16 provider and discussions were currently taking place. It was likely, however, that this would only be a one-year contract.

**2. Evaluation of Standards**

**i. Principal's Report**

*Supporting paper presented by the Principal and CEO*

An update on the written report was provided, and key headlines were highlighted. The addition of Heads of Schools reports on Student Successes was noted.

**1.0 Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The year had shown fewer outstanding, but also fewer inadequate, lesson observations. Governors were reminded that observations were only one of a range of measures of performance, which were reported in full to LQC.

## **2.0 Personal development, Behaviour and Welfare**

Student feedback confirmed that students continue to feel very safe at the college. The College had recently been re-awarded 'Rights Respecting College' status by Unicef, and was still the only college to have this accolade.

## **3.0 English and maths**

Significantly more students had taken English and maths qualifications during 2015-16 than in the previous year and work done to improve attendance in both subjects had had some success. Despite significant effort, improvements in achievement rates were anticipated to be marginal at best. The College had put a number of measures in place to boost success in 16-17, including a new graduate trainee teacher scheme to attract and develop new staff.

It was agreed that Governors should continue to maintain close scrutiny of Maths and English in the next year.

## **4.0 Applications**

The number of applications for 16-18 was holding steady compared to the previous year, but 19+ applications had declined. This was thought to be due to both the level of competition and the impact of 24+ and 19+ loans.

A decline had also been seen in HE course applications, especially to the School of Art. It was believed that lower offers from higher-ranking universities was having an impact on recruitment.

## **5.0 Apprenticeships**

Recruitment of 16-18 apprenticeships was lower than the previous year, and achievement of the contract target for 16-17 would be challenging. Conversely, the 19+ contract would not accommodate current apprentices and planned recruitment, so the SFA had been approached for a review of the allocation. The impact of changes in Adult Skills Budget funding (with virement no longer allowed) was currently being evaluated and discussions were being held with the SFA to mitigate any negative impact. Apprenticeships were a challenging market for many FE colleges, and work was being done to prepare the college to maximise on the introduction of the apprenticeships levy. There was agreement that this area of work was a key priority, but recognition that the contribution it makes is very poor in some areas,

## **6.0 Partnerships**

It was noted that a report would be brought to the Finance and Resources Committee regarding future partnership arrangements. Whilst there were concerns about Acquire Learning, the Learning Curve partnership was both productive and resulted in provision of high quality. Lee Stafford had also proven successful in attracting learners to the College and discussions were in place to assess how this might be developed further, especially in terms of apprenticeships. The partnership with Chelsea FC had resulted in healthy recruitment and early issues with quality were being addressed.

## 7.0 KPI dashboard

Predicted vocational achievement was in line with target. Functional Skills Maths at Level 2 continued to be a serious concern. Improvements in attendance and punctuality were a result of considerable management resource, and there was still some way to go to reach targets. It was noted that measures to reduce staff days lost to sick leave had proven successful.

The Principal thanked governors who had attended student events during the year, and participated in the GOAL scheme.

The Appendix, "The future of post-16 education", provided for background information, was noted.

Governors raised the following questions:

- *What would be the expected outcome if the College were to be inspected?*  
The 2015-16 results will be very important and inform both the likelihood of an inspection and its outcome, though the emphasis is more fully on the current student experience witnessed than in previous inspections. Ofsted used a risk-based approach to deciding which institutions to inspect. It was noted that both LQC and Audit Committee had discussed the issue in depth and that the robustness of the SAR remained a key component of good quality leadership and focus for setting a suitable QiP and thus for governor monitoring. Governors acknowledged the current risk of distraction, due to the high number of strategic challenges on the Exec and Board agenda. It was vital for the college and Board to keep focus on the quality of teaching learning and assessment.
- *What is the anticipated impact of Brexit on the recruitment of apprentices?*  
It was considered that Brexit would have a profound effect on the jobs market across a range of sectors. Governors noted that two major reports had recently been published: Lord Sainsbury's Report and the Post 16 Skills Plan, which may result in major reform of post-16 education and skills delivery. In addition a further report 'Consultation on Developing an Insolvency Regime for the Sector' was a reminder that the FE landscape is a turbulent one with some colleges in significant difficulty. Taken together, these raised some major questions about the shape of the sector in the future.
- *Looking back over last 12 months, what has had the most positive impact on the quality of the student experience?*  
The Principal reported that this had been discussed at the last staff meeting of the year, where areas highlighted their achievements and strengths and also the areas they now needed to focus on. The common strand that came across was the strengthening of an holistic college approach to addressing improvement. The whole college approach to owning what needs improving was a major step forward. Examples were better joint working between support teams and curriculum areas but underpinning this was a shared sense of

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ownership and responsibility for the whole student experience. Curriculum team workshops, and 'Pace and Progress' meetings of middle and senior managers sharing problems and solutions were a positive communications feature that had helped move this forward. GOAL for students and Staff - and Governors engagement in this feedback mechanism were also cited as valuable tools. The business support staff governor endorsed this and said that weekly 'huddle meetings' for highlighting the week's priorities and for picking up issues, had proved especially helpful. It was observed that more effective 'dispersed leadership' was becoming apparent through the college and a greater sense of ownership and responsibility.

**ii. Learning and Quality Committee (LQC) report**

*Supporting paper presented by the Chair of LQC –minutes of the meeting on 14 June 2016*

The Chair provided an update to the committee minutes. Shadow Quality and Achievement rate data Which had been considered by members at the LQC meeting had now also been emailed to committee members. The Chair summarised the meetings that she had had with the DCE, as part of good practice regular reviews in place to ensure that the data sets prepared and presented to LQC continued to meet reporting needs and KPI priorities. Other LQC matters noted by the Board included:

- The proposal for a future Board briefing on Prevent
- The approval by the committee of the Admissions and Progression policy and the Respect for all – Student Disciplinary policy
- The Director of HR, Jo Bland, would be retiring. The Assistant Principal, Ann Monaghan, would be taking on the role of safeguarding lead. Jo was thanked for her support to the Board and Committees.

The revised Equality Strategy was discussed and governors given assurance that monitoring of objectives would be mapped across committee business.

**RESOLVED: that in accordance with the recommendation of the LQC, the Equality Strategy 2016-20 be approved.**

**iii. The Learner Experience: Student Governor report**

*Oral report by the new President of the Student Body, Soraia Barbosa*

Soraia stated that she was looking forward to working with Board as student governor and reported on key student events:

- The Pledge award, which celebrated student volunteering, had been attended by 120 students as well as the Mayor and other notables. During the year, students had clocked up 3500 volunteer hours. 9000 hours had been undertaken in four years.
- Heads of Schools had nominated their student successes. This year's winner had been Access.
- A range of activities were being planned for 2016-17, including cultural

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awareness month, Black history month and refugee awareness activities

- The effects of Brexit on students would be a key topic. A priority would be to keep students informed and to engage them in discussion.

Governors echoed the view that this had been an exceptional year in terms of student engagement in a number of causes and activities. Governors who had attended student events were thanked for their support.

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### **Strategic Update**

*Supporting paper by the Principal; updated Chair's Steering Group Terms of Reference and maps of the location of local Colleges (tabled)*

*RESOLVED: that due to their commercially sensitive nature, a confidential, separate, minute would be taken of some of the discussion*

The Minutes of the CSG in May were noted. Changes were proposed to the Terms of Reference of the group to reflect the need to be able to respond quickly to changes and strategic demands, through delegation from the Board. It was agreed that, when matters of property were to be discussed, members of F&R would be invited to attend CSG meetings.

An update was provided on the proposed disposal of Heath Clarke. The bid deadline was 27 July. A meeting of the CSG would be held on 25 August to consider bids and make recommendations. It was noted that uncertainty created in the property market by Brexit might impact on the bids that might be forthcoming, but that these would be evaluated in full by CSG, in view of the Board's responsibility to achieve best value for its assets.

The Principal gave an overview on the latest news from the sector, regarding discussions and potential partnerships.

The Board discussed the aim of the Area Review process to create fewer, larger – and hopefully more robust- Colleges. Rather than assuming that bigger was better, it was believed that the priority was to find the right partnership, establish the potential for growth in income lines along with efficiencies and ensure future sustainability. There was speculation that the sector was likely to come under even greater financial pressure. Recruiting students would become increasingly challenging and the future support of the banks for the sector as a whole might become more challenging for some. . The college needed to be prepared for changes to funding routes (loans/the levy) and adjust the focus of its networking, effort and marketing accordingly. The College's options should not be limited to considering mergers with other colleges but should be a full review of prevailing options and partnerships including employers and the private sector.

The Board supported the view that Croydon College, as a strong college, was currently viewed as the solution to the problem of weaker colleges. However, the strength of the college had been hard-won, and should not be risked.

**RESOLVED: that the revised Chair's Strategy Group Terms of Reference, providing the powers to consider specific urgent items on the Board's**

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behalf, be approved.

#### 4. Business Planning and Management

##### i. a. Budget 2016-17 and financial plan

*Supporting paper for approval, updated version tabled*

It was noted F&R committee had considered the budget on 29 June. The tabled version contained additional narrative and schedules to reflect the SFA financial model. Annex 1 was a checklist provided by the SFA to create consistency across the sector in terms of the information provided to Boards of Governors prior to approval of budgets. It was intended as an internal tool which would enable Boards to identify any gaps and areas for action or additional reporting.

The Chair of F&R confirmed that the 2016-17 budget had been subject to forensic analysis and was, therefore recommended for approval with the extrapolations for Years 2 and 3. The financial objectives had not, however, had such a high level of scrutiny and it was requested that these should be discussed in more detail in September.

**RESOLVED: that the 2016-17 budget and financial forecast be approved.**

##### b. Finance and Resources Committee report

*Supporting paper: Minutes of the F&R meetings on 25 April and 29 June 2016*

No issues were reported from the April meeting. It was noted that student numbers were now included in the monthly finance report.

Specific delegated authority for the CSG was sought to enable consideration of matters relating to the sale of Heath Clarke and College Green to be undertaken on behalf of the Board over the summer, with final decisions brought back to the Board for approval by written resolution. Governors stressed the important of achieving best value and asked what the risk of not selling Heath Clarke would be and whether there would be any cash flow issues. It was confirmed that, due to its reserves, the College was not dependant on the sale.

**RESOLVED: that on the recommendation of the FR Committee**

(i) **the updated Tuition Fees Policy be approved.**

(ii) **delegated authority be given to the Chair's Steering Group to scrutinise property matters on behalf of the Board, including the disposal of Heath Clarke, and to bring proposals to the Board for approval by written resolution.**

**AGREED: that an analysis should be provided to the CSG to aid understanding of the impact of different property outcomes on the college, and any associated risks.**

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**c. Updated financial position**

*Supporting paper: May management accounts*

It was noted that key issues had been reflected in the Principal's report.

**d. FRS 102**

*Supporting paper presented by the COO*

The Board noted that the recommendations had been discussed in detail by both the F&R and Audit Committees, as reflected in the minutes.

**RESOLVED: that the following changes in accounting policy be adopted:**

- **Government grants to be accounted for on the accruals basis**
- **Buildings to be included in the balance sheet at deemed cost at 1 August 2014 and not revalued thereafter**
- **Land to be revalued.**

**e. Terrorism insurance cover**

*Supporting paper by the COO*

A survey of Finance Directors had shown that more colleges were now taking out terrorism insurance cover. Some had been instructed by their bank to do so. The COO would be discussing the proposal, including the quoted premium, with the Insurers the following day. It was agreed that the quote seemed high.

**AGREED: that the proposal to explore the inclusion of terrorism cover as part of the insurance renewal on 1 August 2016 be ratified. An update would be provided to governors by email.** COO

**ii Audit Committee report and recommendations**

*Supporting paper presented by the Chair of the Audit Committee*

It was noted that there was a vacancy on the Committee which, with a quorum of three, created the risk that meetings would be inquorate. Volunteers were sought from the Board to join the Committee. Key issues reported from the minutes were that the transfer of audit partners had been smooth and effective. The Audit Committee had identified the risk of management and leadership distraction from the core priority of Leadership and Management of Teaching, Learning and Assessment as a significant risk for the sector, and this had now been added to the risk register as a separate risk to monitor,

**RESOLVED: that, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee, the following be approved:**

- i. **The Internal Audit Plan 2016-17**
- ii. **The Financial Statements and Regularity Audit Plan**

**iii Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ)**

*Supporting paper presented by the Chair of the Audit Committee*

**RESOLVED: that the Regularity Audit SAQ be approved and signed by the Chair and Principal.**

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5.	<p data-bbox="255 257 438 291"><b>Risk Report</b></p> <p data-bbox="255 291 710 324"><i>Supporting paper by the Principal</i></p> <p data-bbox="255 358 1300 526">The Board confirmed that the new risk, ST3, reflected the key issues relating to maintaining college performance whilst dealing with the impact of significant sector change. Comment was made that this underlined the importance of LQC having the same level of scrutiny as F&amp;R, and for reporting and monitoring to be timely and robust if performance started to decline during the year.</p> <p data-bbox="255 560 1093 593"><b>RESOLVED: that the addition of new risk ST3 be approved</b></p>	
6.	<p data-bbox="255 627 438 660"><b>Governance</b></p> <p data-bbox="223 705 949 739"><b>i Search Committee report and recommendations</b></p> <p data-bbox="255 739 981 772"><i>Supporting paper by the Clerk, presented by the Chair</i></p> <p data-bbox="255 806 1300 929">The Chair reported that he would now be prepared to stand for another term of office following the end of his current term as Chair in August 17. This was in recognition of the need for stability during a time for significant change in the sector.</p> <p data-bbox="255 974 1300 1243">The Chair of Search Committee reported that a new chair's job description had been produced and expressions of interest sought from current governors. As none had been received, the Board had a choice between seeking an external governor with a view to appointing them as Chair, or asking Gordon Smith to re-stand. The Clerk advised the Board that Gordon's current term of office as Governor came to an end in August 2018 by which time he would have served eight years. The Standing Orders only allowed governors to be reappointed beyond eight years in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p data-bbox="255 1276 1300 1377">Governors were unanimously in support of retaining the current chair for a further two years from August 17, to provide consistency during turbulent times. This would be fed back to the Chair by the Chair of Search.</p> <p data-bbox="255 1411 646 1444">Other matters reported were:</p> <ul data-bbox="311 1444 1300 1780" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="311 1444 1300 1545">• Information on governors by protected characteristic would be collected early in September 16, in line with the Board's Membership Policy and the College's Equality Strategy</li> <li data-bbox="311 1545 1300 1780">• Governors were urged to complete any outstanding online training. There was recognition that this had been a weakness in the past year and, notwithstanding the significant contribution that Governors already made, it was stressed that each had a responsibility for their own development and to demonstrate leadership in this respect. The Clerk confirmed that college facilities could be provided to facilitate completion if required.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="255 1814 1157 1848"><b>RESOLVED: that the Board Scheme of Delegation be approved</b></p> <p data-bbox="223 1881 861 1915"><b>ii. Governor reports on non-committee items</b></p> <p data-bbox="255 1948 1220 1982">There were no additional reports from governors on non-committee items</p>	<p data-bbox="1324 1344 1380 1377"><b>PW</b></p>

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**iii Chair's Actions for ratification**

There were no Chair's Actions requiring Board ratification

**7. Other Business and evaluation**

Apologies for the late mailing were given. The Board recognised that this was a reflection of the pressure on the executive but pointed out that it did not aid effective decision making to receive papers late.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_