



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE
CROYDON COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION, Wednesday 5
December 2012 at 6.00pm in Room 420.**

- PRESENT:** Helen Walley (Chair)
Caroline Allen
Deane Braid-Lewis
Ben Geeson
Kene Ibezi
Chukwudi Ihekwereme
Roz Liard (to item 6)
Stephan John
Anita McGowan
Anthony Parker
Gordon Smith
Tim Thirlwall
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)
Kate Ward
Piers White
- ATTENDING:** Neil Blackmore (Clerk)
John Blake (Observer, Consultant)
Chay Champness (Chief Operating Officer - COO)
Ann Monaghan (Director of Learner Performance & Quality, to item 6)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive – DCE)
- APOLOGIES:** Clare Mackie

5pm-5.45pm Workshop: Board's Oversight of the College's Improvement Journey

The Principal introduced J Blake (ex-principal of an outstanding college) who was providing external comment on the workshop and on the Board meeting, reflecting on quality of reporting, management and Board working and challenge. The Principal outlined the presentation "Croydon College – Our Journey", a holistic overview of the College's improvement progress. She described issues and progress as they affected both learners and the Board: strengthened quality culture; Governors' direction on information standards; restructuring and audit; refreshed committee structure and membership; robust monitoring; and performance management. Some inconsistencies and variations remain within the College but she stated that Management is now confident that it knows the steps necessary for action and that there is a robust approach to address. The Vice Chair noted the complexity of local communities and the challenging backgrounds that some students experience, which necessitated particular care, noting issues in secondary education in the borough where performance is not strong. The Principal cited the unusually powerful learner voice at the College and the ways in which this impacted on wider learning and outcomes. The Chair stated that this workshop showed that the College understood how to performance-manage to deliver good outcomes, providing support for staff whilst prioritising excellent teaching for learners and noted capability being addressed. She further asked Managers to think about ways use the skills of inspirational teachers to drive best practice. Governors asked that Managers evidence how learner satisfaction impacts on areas such as attendance. The Chair stated that feedback from the learners will be the crucial aspect of understanding why teaching succeeds. Governors wanted clarity that learners deserve Grade 2 as a minimum (effectively, a compliance) standard in their learning sessions and stated that those teaching at Grade 1 or 2 had to feel valued as staff members and motivated to share best practice. The Chair stated that the Board must never lose sight of its duty (and the College's) to deliver the best possible education outcomes to learners.

THE MEETING

The Chair welcomed the newly elected HE Governor Chukwudi Ihekwereme.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and noted as above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No new declarations were made.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3.1 Matters Arising From These Minutes

There were none.

3.2 Additional Report on Recent Decisions

The report was **RECEIVED**. The following decisions were made by using the revisions to the Instrument & Articles of Government in October 2012, which allow decisions by email:

1. 23 October 2012 - It was proposed by the Principal that Caroline Allen become Equality & Diversity Governor. A majority of Governors voted by email to support the proposal and it was passed; 8 November 2012 –
2. A confidential item was proposed via F&R Committee, seven Governor votes having been received in person on 7 November 2012. A majority of remaining Governors voted by email to support the proposal and it was passed. It was **RESOLVED** that the content would remain confidential until the annual review of confidential items.

4 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Principal outlined the ongoing focus on Teaching, Learning and Assessment and the way in which curriculum managers held current records of, and agreed, for each member of staff, three action points to improve their performance and learning. This had started as the 3-2-2 plan to bring all teaching to Good but had accelerated to being an impetus for all staff to improve whatever their level, and for teachers to also share best practice. The Principal outlined the Student Mentoring Scheme and the peer mentoring that was the next stage of development bringing in other externals and peer mentoring, with training for mentors. The Principal overviewed the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, approved by LQC, and the many ways that were now being employed to harness stakeholder input and to bring the college to be the vibrant nucleus of its community. The COO updated Governors on the progress on the Tower Block contract negotiations. The Principal thanked C Allen for her engagement on the Board's behalf monitoring Safeguarding and Equality & Diversity with key managers. The NTI process was noted as well as the heralding of best programmes. The Vice-Chair/Chair of LQC stated that at the next LQC there would be direct feedback from a manager with a division with an NTI to show improvement strategies. This was then augmented to suggest one of the best areas to also showcase, highlighting how they are spreading best practice. Governors asked about the performance profile of heads of division, noting their critical role in effecting change. The Principal stated that appraisal and performance management was rigorous with inconsistencies being actively addressed, that there were differences in ability currently but a very good management development programme tailored. Governors commended that all relevant staff having an improvement action plan and noted that the Principal is personally scrutinising appraisals to assure robustness.

Governors asked whether the College would review whether A levels should remain a significant part of the College offer, noting both issues of provision to our communities and effectiveness of that provision. The Principal and DCE stated that A level provision in terms of quality and enrolments was an issue for a number of providers and was indeed under review as part of curriculum and business planning. LQC would monitor quality and demand on A levels as well as the curriculum profile overall. The Chair warned against any possible impact on learners if significant areas of provision were dropped, requesting that the College check provision elsewhere. There was agreement that the planning would never be to remove areas to just raise success rates by cutting out poor provision, that planning would be to assure good learning routes which matched learner aspiration and gave a route to success.

Governors asked for more information on how the College grades itself on health and safety in order to assess its journey. The Student Governor agreed to talk away from the meeting with COO about learner involvement in health and safety awareness.

Governors followed up recent discussions about equality and diversity. They asked about platforms for learners to air their views on equality and diversity. The Principal stated that enrichment work was strong, with a very ambitious and comprehensive E&D focus, but that E&D in the classroom needed improvement to be of the same calibre. The DCE stated that staff sometimes lacked confidence to address E&D opportunities in class and that this was being addressed. He stated that in the learner survey, Respect was used to air E&D. He added that the College needed to address the value-added impact of E&D to learners in achieving and progressing. The FE Student Governor outlined the emphasis of Respect in the College enrichment programme, noting the recent Diwali celebrations. The HE Student Governor noted progress in E&D awareness among HE students and vibrant activities and involvement, but that he was ambitious to develop more.

5 KPIS & OVERVIEW

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE noted the Employer Responsive 16-18 as below target and that this may lead to SFA clawback, although partnership was a possible option being explored. He noted that many providers are finding it difficult to recruit to target. Governors asked about the persistence of attendance issues. The DCE agreed that this was an issue which had been well monitored but pockets of inconsistency remained and the best practice needed building on further. It was noted that areas with stronger middle management were improving at the fastest pace and tenacity was the key aspect. The effectiveness of improvements was being tracked to assess the impact where there had been success.

The COO noted that income from funding in 2013-4 is currently being modelled as a result of the EFA changing its funding mechanism. The COO stated that he is confident that for 2012-3 other areas are broadly to funding/income target. The COO stated that the rise in sickness levels was probably a reflection of strengthened reporting rather than trend.

6 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The SAR was **RECEIVED**. It was noted that this had been discussed in detail at LQC and significant external validation effected. The DCE further outlined the relationship between the Overall Judgements of the SAR. He also outlined the areas for improvement, noting that all quality improvement plans related to these areas. The Principal noted that LQC had recommended some additional areas of improvement and that these were being added. Governors stated that the SAR was a well-written summary of the ongoing improvement journey with frank assessment of the current position. Governors stated that governance

should be threaded through the Leadership & Management section to demonstrate the strong direction and leadership the Governors have given in the year. Governors also suggested the inclusion of some tables to give more evidence/context to statements about improvement. Governors requested an articulation be developed of what metrics or descriptors would be used to describe a “Grade 2 culture”. Governors questioned why enrichment, which is outstanding, had little apparent impact on the overall assessment. Managers stated that there needed to be more evidence on its impacts. The Chair asked about where analysis is referred to, there should be some statement about what actions will be taken.

The Director of LPQ outlined how the Grade 4 outcomes for learners came from the tying together of all outcomes and learner progress. This then further ties into value-added impacts. She also noted that long success rates were below national average which meant the outcomes were not satisfactory, though noted some areas where results had risen significantly. The Student Governor queried the effectiveness of measures to improve punctuality and attendance. The DCE outlined the system of Learning Walks and how this is followed up with management, learners and teachers in divisions and how the system serves to remind staff and learners of their responsibilities.

There was discussion about the grade for overall effectiveness and a recognition of the significant distance travelled.

The SAR was then **APPROVED** for submission to the SFA portal.

7 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, PLUS LETTER OF REPRESENTATION FOR SIGNATURE

The Report and Financial Statements were **RECEIVED**. The COO noted the unqualified opinion. He also outlined the disaggregation of the LB Croydon Local Government Pension Scheme. He stated that corporations should not become overly concerned with FRS17 liabilities but should assess the consequences of how authorities may choose to manage any deficit in the pension fund. He stated that there will be a government review of local government pension funds in the next years which will be mindful of the costs employers will likely incur. A large current deficit remains.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements were **APPROVED**. It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair of Governors and the Principal should sign the Letter of Representation.

8 GOVERNANCE ITEMS

8.1 Student Governor Report

The FE Student Governor made an oral report on recent activities: UNICEF UK inviting Croydon students to go to Parliament to lobby the Secretary of State for Climate Change; the visit of Abp Desmond Tutu, which came about because of student engagement with the Tutu Foundation; the founding of the College debating team; peer-training mentoring.

The newly elected HE Student Governor made an oral report. His candidacy proposed strengthening HE student life at the College, including increased social groups and events. He was hoping to launch a HE students’ page on the College website, a suggestion box for HE students and to also promote the debating society to HE students. The Chair commended the reports and stated the Board was very encouraging of such approaches.

8.2 Governor Reports On Non-Committee items

The following oral reports on engagement activities by Governors were **RECEIVED**:

K Ward was taking part in GOAL in the following week. She also made a short oral report on the positive atmosphere which Stakeholder Forum which she had attended. T Thirlwall reported on the Performance Review he had attended. He noted its value in showing the Governors the detail "on the ground" to headline information Governors received and recommended that other Governors attend upcoming reviews. K Ibezi reported on the Student Parliament, which he noted was lively and very well attended. He asked how concerns raised there are followed through. The Student Governor, who chaired the Student Parliament, stated that some concerns can be dealt with easily. Where necessary, he liaises with the Student Life Manager to investigate more substantial or managerial routes. The Principal commended the Student Parliament at the College as being able to seek solutions themselves with staff support as appropriate. C Allen outlined recent work as Safeguarding and E&D Governor. She had previously challenged staff to provide evidence on the impact of safeguarding on learning. At a subsequent meeting, she reported much stronger evidence was supplied. She would be coming to College for further E&D work this week. The Vice Chair reported that the Director of Operations had given him a tour of refurbished facilities and he believed that it was going to be a very impressive learning space.

ACTION: The Clerk to investigate further opportunities for Governor safeguarding training.

9 FINANCIAL MONITORING

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO outlined the report. He noted that the charging of the current fee on PT HE students was proving significant and is being investigated. This relates to a significant increase in fees; this is a national issue. He confirmed that the refurbishment project was being delivered to budget.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO outlined a comprehensive review session on risk management in which a large number of managers had taken part. The Chair of Audit noted that a manager who owns risk will come to each Audit Committee in future, which is a powerful opportunity for the Committee and for the manager.

11 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

11.1 Audit Committee 21 November 2012

The Chair of Audit introduced the minutes and reports recommended for approval or forwarded for information, which were **RECEIVED**. The Chair of Audit commended the Annual Report on Fraud as one of the best he had seen in an educational establishment. The Chair of Audit outlined the Audit Committee Annual Report. He noted the recent receipt of a partial-year Internal Audit Report from MacIntyre Hudson and stated that he was currently pleased with both the performance of RSM Tenon (and the effective management response) and Baker Tilly as Internal and External Auditors respectively. He further noted that robust action had been taken to close out internal audit recommendations. He outlined the improvement plan of the Committee.

The following items were **APPROVED**: Audit Committee Annual Report; Annual Report on Risk Management; Annual Report on Fraud. The Internal Audit Annual Report was **RECEIVED**.

11.2 F&R 7 November 2012

The Chair of F&R introduced the minutes and reports recommended for approval or forwarded for information, which were **RECEIVED**. He noted that the UCC Tuition Fees delegated to the Committee had been approved. The Chair of F&R asked that the March 2013 meeting examine the impact of PT HE fees on enrolment. The Chair of Governors

stated that the pay award would depend on College performance. This item refers only to the discretionary uplift on pay, not to contractual spine progression. The Chair of Audit also noted that there had been a discussion at Audit Committee about the impact of auto-enrolment. Governors asked about the specifics of performance in this respect. The Principal stated that she wished to reward excellent individual performance but that the pay award this year would depend on the wider College performance. Changes to the Financial Regulations were outlined, notably the changes to waivers to tendering limits, where appropriate. Governors instructed the COO relaunch the Bribery Policy to all staff as the Academic Staff Governor suggested that non-budget holders may not be as aware of it as budget holders.

ACTION: The COO to bring a report on the impact of PT HE fees to the March 2013 F&R meeting.

ACTION: The COO to relaunch the Bribery Policy to all staff members.

The following items were **APPROVED:** the Annual Pay Award Position to defer a decision to the March meeting; Financial Regulations; Redundancy Policy. It was also noted that there were no revisions to the Budget.

11.3 LQC 28 November 2012

The Chair of LQC introduced the minutes and reports forwarded for information, which were the Annual Monitoring Report to the University and the Quality Improvement Plan, both approved at the meeting, which were noted. The SAR had been discussed at item 6.

The Chair of LQC referred to the discussion at LQC about the QIP and how the Board can triangulate its purpose within the Strategic Plan. He also outlined discussion around the AMR, and the University member's positive statements about the outcomes for an HE cohort such as Croydon's.

The chair reminded that LQC would be monitoring NTIs closely as well as challenging managers to demonstrate how best practice is being addressed and action plans progressing.

ACTION: The Clerk to distribute the QIP 2012-3 and Strategic Plan flyer to all Governors.

11.4 Search & Governance Committee 7 November 2012

In the absence of the Chair of Search & Governance, the Clerk introduced the minutes and reports recommended for approval or forwarded for information. The Clerk noted the addition of a standing item on succession planning to the Committee's agenda.

The following items were **APPROVED:** Role Description: Chair of Governors; Role Description: Vice-Chair of Governors; Role Description: Committee Chair; Attendance of Members Policy; Attendance of Non-Members (including members of the public) Policy; Removal Policy; Procedure For A Meeting To Consider the Removal of a Member of the Governing Body. The Governing Body Self-Assessment Summary with additional comments from the Committee was also noted.

ACTION: The Clerk to publish the Attendance of Non-Members policy and role descriptions on the College website.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair outlined that J Blake would feed back on papers, timeliness and impact to the Chair, Principal and Clerk. The Chair also noted that as part of the Governor Development

Plan, she will be attending Eastleigh College Governing Body next week and meeting their Chair.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the meeting of Wednesday 6 February 2013 would likely be used for a workshop and that the next formal Governing Body meeting would take place on 27 March 2013 6pm. The Clerk will advise in due course.

The meeting then ended at 8.30pm.