

PRESENT: Gordon Smith (Chair)
Caroline Allen
Ben Geeson
Kene Ibezi
Stephan John
Clare Mackie
Anita McGowan
Trevor Morgan
Craig O'Donnell
Ryan Raghoo (until the end of item 2(iii))
Matthew Sims
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)
Piers White
Jackie Wilding

ATTENDING: Jo Bland (Director of HR)
Chay Champness (Chief Operating Officer - COO)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive – DCE)
Jane Stroud (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Kate Ward

The following table identifies the main issues and challenges from this meeting which are to be followed up either at subsequent Full Board Meetings, or at Committee meetings, or by members of the Executive Team

Issue for follow up	Committee Executive	Report back to Full Board
Agenda Item 2(i) – Principal’s Report on Progress in improving Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA)		
Improvements in Teaching and Learning Functional Skills	LQC	Through Report from Committee Chair
Agenda Item 2(iv) – Annual Review of Safeguarding		
Chair’s Action to approve Safeguarding Policy or to next Board meeting	Chair of Governors/ Board	Through Matters Arising
Agenda Item 2(v) – Review of Standards		
Review of Community Engagement and Marketing	Board	Through Agenda Item
Agenda Item 3(iii) – Report from the Search Committee		

1 PRELIMINARY ISSUES

(i) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

(ii) DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No new declarations were made.

(iii) NEW GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

It was **RESOLVED** to approve, on the advice of the Search & Governance Committee, the appointment of Jackie Wilding as an external governor. This was with immediate effect for a four year term of office subject to confirmation after two years. Jackie is an equity partner in a Croydon based firm of accountants.

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the appointment of Ryan Raghoo as FE student governor, following the resignation of Mariam Sow.

The Chair welcomed both new governors to their first meeting.

(iv) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 28 January 2014 were **agreed** and **signed** as a true record.
a. Matters Arising From These Minutes

Item 3.1: 8 March 2014 Chair's Action had been used, as previously agreed, to approve the College Self-Assessment Report for 2012/13

b. Additional Report on Recent Decisions

21 February 2014: Electronic written resolutions had been used to approve proposals by the Search & Governance Committee:

1. An increase of Board determination to 17 with the addition of an external governor;
2. The two vacancies on the Board should be filled by individuals with strategic HR skills and strategic finance skills;
3. The re-appointment of Piers White as a governor with effect from 24 March 2014;
4. confirmation that Kene Ibezi and Kate Ward should complete their four year terms of office;
5. The appointment of student governors, ex officio, to the Learning & Quality Committee.

17 March 2014: Chair's Action had been used to approve additional partnership activity for Learning Curve of £431k. This was endorsed by members.

2 EVALUATION OF STANDARDS

The Chair introduced this section pointing out how the agenda had been re-arranged to focus on the evaluation of standards by the Board, and how it contributed to raising performance.

(i) PRINCIPAL'S REPORT ON PROGRESS IN IMPROVING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT (TLA)

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Principal highlighted the following:

1. The good progress made with retention such that predicted success could be 87%;
2. The introduction of MyProgress Tracker had led to a more forensic approach to monitoring individual learner progress;
3. The improvement in attendance, although the College was not complacent
4. Better reporting on punctuality;
5. The completion of most OTLs (Observations of Teaching and Learning) and also the more rounded picture now being given by learning walks;
6. Two recent OFSTED visits- one for University of Sussex partner delivery, the other a support and challenge visit. The Principal congratulated the University of Sussex on being graded as a grade 2 for teacher training programmes delivered by Croydon College. There had also been an OFSTED 'support and challenge visit' on 11/12 March. The feedback letter, attached, noted good progress since March 2013, the robustness of the QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) and the determination of managers seeking improvement. English, maths and learner tracking remained priorities;
7. The very positive feedback from the Employability and Progression Week, in which students had mock interviews, experience of work, and assistance in considering their next career steps.
8. The likely reduction to 8 weeks in the Judicial Review period necessary before planning permission could be granted on the Tower Block. The auditors had informed the College that as long as planning permission was granted in June, then the contract could be treated as unconditional;
9. Congratulations were due to Chay Champness, the COO, on his appointment to Guildford College as Vice Principal Finance and Resources; and
10. A recent informal meeting with the new FE Commissioner, David Collins, who had outlined the recurring features of failing colleges.

Members queried how much the College knew about standards at the ICE Academy. The College was in discussion with this private HE provider about the transfer of HND Business and Creative Media students to Croydon College. Officers replied that all the students were being interviewed before admission to ensure they were of an appropriate ability. They were looking for opportunities to learn, following the closure of the Norbury centre after a BIS and Student Loan Company investigation of the Academy, but the College would only take on students who could succeed.

Members commented on the impressive trajectory of quality indicators and the genuine solid picture being presented. They congratulated the senior team on the well led, managed and delivered improvements that were having a positive impact on students. However it was also noted that the same determination needed to be applied to stop the decline in student numbers, in order to secure the future of the College. Although a drop in school leavers was predicted until 2020 it was pointed out that it was also predicted that a higher percentage of school leavers from lower socio economic groups would be accessing HE. The College needed to steer a path through until 2020, getting its message out into the community and reaching out to bring in lower socio economic groups. It was commented that there was 'fantastic information' in the Student Governors' report, but that the information was not available on the website and that opportunities to celebrate achievements from wider activity and their use in promotion were perhaps being missed.

(ii) MINUTES AND REPORT FROM THE LEARNING & QUALITY (LQC) COMMITTEE

The minutes from the November and March meetings were **RECEIVED**. The latter had been sent out separately from the main pack. The Chair of the Committee stated that the March meeting had confirmed members' understanding of the College's position in November. There had been considerable discussion of TLA (Teaching, Learning and Assessment) issues, much of it positive. Highlights were as follows:

1. My Progress Tracker and the Mark Book were being used effectively to monitor progress, and were recognised by OFSTED as such;
2. The Student Governor had been welcomed to an LQC meeting for the first time;
3. The discussion about progress in English, maths and Functional Skills: These were important areas to work on, given the need for these skills by the business community;
4. The report on Equality and Diversity measures: The Committee had reviewed the report for widening gaps that would require action. There were none at the moment;
5. The approval of the Admissions and Progressions Policy; and
6. In general, the good understanding that the LQC has of what is going on in the College, and the trust that has been developed with managers.

(iii) THE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCE: STUDENT GOVERNORS' REPORT

A written report was **RECEIVED**. The FE Student Governor was thanked by the Chair for his work in producing the students' magazine. The Student Governor said that there were 'fantastic things going on in the College' and highlighted three activities:

1. The Borough wide 'Fill the Trolley' competition that had fed 38 families over Christmas, and for which the College had received a special award from Croydon Council. 2200 items had been donated by students;
2. Following the success of 'Fill the Trolley', the UNICEF steering committee had led a 'Hope for the Homeless' initiative. Firstly the College had arranged a conference for local schools in which outside organisations had provided workshops on issues facing the homeless. This had been followed by an invitation to those on the road to recovery to visit the College for a meal and to meet students. Now, IT and Hospitality students were offering to teach individuals who were recovering; and
3. Croydon Speakers Corner Trust: A local charity was promoting free expression and public debate and aimed to establish a Speakers Corner in Croydon. This would show case student talents in the community, and students were being given the opportunity to design a logo.

The Student Governor answered questions on what these activities added to the student experience (good employability skills, public speaking, leadership skills etc), whether external organisations were sufficiently involved (10 charities had been involved in the homeless event), how the activities were publicised (The Big Issue had been invited to the homeless event, the Guardian wanted to interview him, but the Student Governor acknowledged that more could be done), and how students got involved (via the Enrichment Fair and a general open door policy).

Governors commented that these experiences would give students the confidence to use and develop their skills, had a positive impact on the community, and would attract future students. Governors reiterated the importance of getting the message out to help recruit students with good attitudes who would see such activities as part of their success and future employability.

(iv) CONSIDERATION OF AND APPROVAL OF

Annual Equality and Diversity Report

The report was **RECEIVED**. For students the report covered 2010/11 to 2012/13 with current figures also for participation. The report showed trends in ethnic profile against the local community by ethnicity (from 2011/12 only), and success rates by age, gender, ethnicity and learning difficulties / disabilities. Most of the statistics had already been to LQC.

In answer to questions the DCE confirmed that the high White British percentages shown on table 1.2 reflected partnership work. On another question with regard to what the College was doing to improve the success rates of LLDD students, he pointed out that the College's LLDD students were making more rapid progress with success rates than their peers, but the real issue was to raise the success rates of all students. It had been observed that those students who declared a difficulty or disability and took up support did much better than those who did not. The College was following up on those who did not take up support.

Staff data had been analysed for the 2011/12, 2012/13 and August 2013 to December 2013. It covered age, gender, ethnicity, management, length of service, disability and recruitment. There was a discussion about the Equality objective to promote BAME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) staff into management. More analysis was needed, but there were examples of BAME managers taking up shadowing opportunities under BLI (Black Leadership Initiative) schemes. Governors emphasised the need to promote the development of all staff with internal and external progression. Governors asked to see staff profile by grade in future.

The Director of HR gave the following responses in answer to questions:

1. It was not known why all three staff who had been subject to disciplinary hearings in 2012/13 were BAME, however it was useful to note that of a further six who had resigned prior to hearings taking place, four were White British;
2. Clarification was given on table 2.7 Turnover, that Employee Turnover included redundancies, and that Voluntary Turnover did not include redundancies but did include retirement; and
3. The reference to a 'maintaining a modern and diverse workforce' on page 47 referred to the 'logjam' for younger people getting into the workforce, and that the employment of a greater proportion of younger people was positive.

Governors congratulated the College on an excellent report that was fair and based on a good set of statistics.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Annual Report.

Annual Review of Safeguarding

The report was **RECEIVED**. The DCE apologised that the updated Policy had only just been received back from the College's solicitors. It would be brought back to the next meeting of the Governing Body or approved by Chair's Action with the support of the Safeguarding Governor. The report included the framework of responsibility and oversight, and an overview of safeguarding activity in the College between March 2013 and March 2014.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Annual Report.

(v) REVIEW OF STANDARDS

The Chair requested that governors review Current Strengths and Areas of Concern in small groups and give feedback.

In summary strengths were seen as:

1. Improvements in retention and output; and
2. The clarity and transparency of reporting, validated by governors' visits to the College.

Areas of concern mentioned were:

1. The strategic need to build relationships with local authority organisations, national organisations, partnerships and the media
2. The need to focus marketing on the integrated experience of being a student

The Chair declared that community engagement and marketing should be reviewed later in the summer.

3. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Principal reported on the extensive consultation for the Strategic Plan summary. The thrust of changes had been towards employability, and a new strap line was presented for approval. Other elements had previously been endorsed by governors. Governors commented that it might be difficult to remember so many Values, and that the College's sense of ambition should be quantified in the next iteration.

Notwithstanding the comments it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Strategic Plan, Values, Mission, Public Value Statement and Strap Line.

4. BUSINESS PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

(i) FINANCIAL MONITORING

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO reported that as at the end of January the current year end forecast was a £842k deficit, but that HE Part Time income and 16 – 18 apprenticeships were presenting the College with challenges. Pay and non-pay costs had been pared back, but the College had had to engage third parties to achieve the necessary SFA funded activity. Up to £385k additional partnership activity would be needed, the final figure required would be decided upon after two more weeks of ILR (Individual Learner Record) reports. The College would receive additional income from the transfer of HND students from the ICE Academy. Even allowing for a delay in receipt of cash for the Tower Block the forecast for July put the College in an SFA financial health rating of 'satisfactory'. Bad debt provision had been increased by £164k due to the shift from HE block funding to individual loan finance, following the 'rag rating' of individual debts.

The Chair of Audit confirmed that there had been a lengthy debate at Audit about the treatment of individual debt. Another governor suggested the College review its classification of Part Time HE students undertaking fast tracked degrees as for funding purposes these could be classified as Full Time degrees.

(ii) ELECTRONIC WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS AND REPORT FROM THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MARCH 2014

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Chair of the Committee reported that the meeting itself had not been quorate, but approval of three policies: Data Protection, Information and Technology Monitoring, and Probationary Review had been achieved subsequently by electronic written resolution. He pointed out that the sale of Barclay Road was proceeding slowly.

There was a discussion about changing policy on funding for 18 year olds. The Government had announced that funding for 18 year olds was to be cut by 17.5%, but after protest had capped the impact at 2% for one year. There were many more austerity measure to come it was assumed, and the College needed to take this into consideration with medium term plans.

(iii) MINUTES AND REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING ON 12 MARCH 2014

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Chair of the Committee highlighted the good management practice in following up recommendations, and that the College was about to go out to tender for Internal Audit Services. Four companies would make presentations to a panel on 3 April.

(iv) RISK MANAGEMENT

The report was **RECEIVED**. There had been no changes to the last schedule presented to the Governing Body.

(v) LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION CHANGES

The report was **RECEIVED**. The report provided an update on recent and future developments to the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) and the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). There were two documents for approval. The first, the Dispute Resolution Procedure was written to be as helpful to staff as possible. The second, the Employer's Discretions arose from the introduction of the new LGPS 2014. All discretions, apart from the first which had not been accepted, were in the College's best financial interest.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Dispute Resolution Procedure and the Employer's Discretions

The Chair of Governors then thanked the COO for his work and congratulated him on his new appointment on behalf of the governors, staff and students. He commented on the quality of Chay's work and his wider interest in College life and students, which had been exemplary.

5. GOVERNANCE ISSUES

(i) GOVERNANCE REPORTS ON NON-COMMITTEE ITEMS

1. The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors had attended the launch dinner for the Employability Hub. This had been a successful event that had promoted the College and benefited the students;
2. The Chair of Governors thanked all those who had attended Learning Walks, had been to the Lancaster House reception, and also had met with him for one to one sessions. The latter had been very useful for him;
3. The Chair of LQC reported that he had attended an event run by the AoC on TLA. It was reassuring that many of the ideas and concepts discussed were already taking place at Croydon College. Members commented on the value of Learning Walks to get a sense of what was going on in the Principal's report, so that they could compare their own evaluations with the College's. The Chair of LQC commended a series of videos about good practice on YouTube;
4. Kene Ibezi reported that he attended Student Parliament earlier that day. There had been positive feedback and the Parliament was looking to extend the Freshers' Fair; and
5. The Chair of Governors reported that a candidate had been interviewed by himself and three other key governors for the substantive post of Clerk to the Governors with effect from 1 August. The appointment would be brought to the Governing Body for approval, subject to references, and the agreement of terms and conditions.

(ii) MINUTES AND REPORT FROM THE SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 15 JANUARY 2014

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Jackie Wilding as a member of the Finance & Resources Committee

The Chair of the Committee pointed out that the Governing Body was still searching for a governor with strategic HR experience.

The outstanding item from this meeting, the updated Governor Appointments Policy, would be brought to the Governing Body for approval once the section on criminal and security checks had been updated.

(iii) GOVERNORS CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATED FOR APPROVAL

The updated Governors Code of Conduct was **APPROVED**.

(iv) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 14 May 2014

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AGENDA: PART B (CONFIDENTIAL)

The Chair asked if members needed to discuss the items on this part of the agenda. On receiving a negative reply the business on this part of the agenda was transacted with all members present. (The reports remain confidential).

1 APOLOGIES

As for Part A of the meeting

2 REPORT ON RECENT DECISIONS: ELECTRONIC RESOLUTIONS 14 FEBRUARY 2014

The decisions were noted

3 Minutes and Report from the Remuneration Committee 15 January 2014

The minutes and report were **RECEIVED**

The meeting then ended at 8.30pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair