



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE
CROYDON COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION,
Wednesday 2 July 2014 at 6.00pm in Room 405a**

PRESENT: Gordon Smith (Chair)
Caroline Allen
Stephan John
Anita McGowan
Trevor Morgan
Ryan Raghoo
Frances Wadsworth (Principal)
Piers White
Jackie Wilding

ATTENDING: Jo Bland (Director of HR)
Melissa Drayson (Clerk Designate)
John Harper (Managing Director, Chequers Contract Services Ltd,
present as an observer)
Keith Oxpring (Interim Chief Operating Officer - COO)
Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive – DCE)
Jane Stroud (Clerk)
Francis Uwagboe (Student Governor Designate)

APOLOGIES: Clare Mackie, Craig O'Donnell, Kate Ward

PART A

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
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Agenda Item 1(iii) Minutes of the Last Meeting

Review of Community Engagement & Marketing (see also 5(i))	Board	workshop/ Agenda item
Chair's Action to approve updated Safeguarding Policy	Board	Matters arising
Chair's Action to approve Governors' Appointments Procedure	Board	Matters arising

Agenda Item 2(ii) Principal's Report on Progress inTLA

Chair's Action to approve preparation of submission at cost of c£30k to open a school, and setting up of company	Board	Principal's report etc
Strategic planning to include review of shifts in progression and destinations and the extent to which the College is demand led	Board	Workshop

Areas for continuing focus in quality improvement	LQC	Report back from committee chair
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Agenda Item 2(iii) Report from LQC

Updated QIP and Targets to come back to Board for approval	Board	Report back from committee chair
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Agenda Item 3(i) Budget for 2014/15 and Financial Forecast

Chair's action to be used, if necessary, to approve revised Budget, on recommendation of F & R Committee	Board	Matters arising
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Agenda Item 3(iii) Risk Management

Refresh risk management system	Board and Committees	Agenda items
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1 PRELIMINARY ISSUES

(i) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted as above.

The Chair welcomed Melissa Drayson, John Harper, Keith Oxspring, and Francis Uwagboe, all attending a Board meeting for the first time.

(ii) DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No new declarations were made.

(iii) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 26 March 2014 were **agreed** and **signed** as a true record.

a Matters Arising From These Minutes

Item 2(i) Principal's Report:

In response to the Chair's question regarding quality of candidates from ICE, the DCE reported that no students had been transferred to the College from the ICE Academy. Over 70 students were interviewed but none demonstrated the necessary standard of English to succeed at a higher level course. This highlighted that the recruitment process for some providers was not as rigorous as it should be. The College was exploring a partnership with an Australian company, Acquire, for the provision of distance learning packages, but would enter into a partnership only if the College controlled the admissions process and academic standards.

Item 2(iv) Annual Review of Safeguarding:

The Designated Safeguarding Governor and the Director of HR had reviewed the updated Safeguarding Policy (attached to the papers). There was one outstanding issue regarding whether the Safeguarding Governor should be a member of the Local Authority Safeguarding body. DCE to follow up and confirm.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Designated Safeguarding Governor should recommend the final version of the updated Safeguarding Policy for approval by Chair's Action.

Item 2(v) Review of Standards:

A review of community engagement and marketing would be carried forward to the Autumn term.

Item 5(ii) Report from Search & Governance Committee 15 January 2014:

The Designated Safeguarding Governor and the Director of HR had met just prior to the Board meeting to determine what would be best practice, according to latest guidelines, with regard to criminal and security checks on new governors.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Designated Safeguarding Governor should recommend the final version of the updated Governors Appointments Procedure for approval by Chair's Action.

b. Additional Report on Recent Decisions

15 April 2014: Chair's Action had been used to approve the appointment of BDO as Internal Auditors.

It was **RESOLVED** that Baker Tilly continue to carry out the internal audit of Student Data as this was an area of expertise that the Tenon internal audit team had carried over to Baker Tilly on their merger.

2 EVALUATION OF STANDARDS

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

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Principal referred also to the separate circulation of the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA) draft report and the Investors in People (IIP) Report. She highlighted the following:

1. The key theme of the draft QAA report had been the high quality support for students and the strategic approach to embedding employability;
2. The QAA report was still subject to accuracy checks;
3. The opportunity to work with the University of Sussex for another 5 years had been re-confirmed through rigorous revalidation;
4. Progression had been a key priority for curriculum planning, as illustrated by the flow charts attached to the report. Re-shaping the curriculum organisation and conflating the management roles within a School structure had achieved coherence in the FE and HE offers. In the process nearly £1m had been saved;
5. Overall internal applications were more robust than in the past; external applications were in line with expectations but there was no room for complacency;
6. The Queens Award for Volunteering, a very impressive achievement, had been given out at the Awards Ceremony;
7. The Minister of State, Matthew Hancock's visit on 13 June had been a success;
8. The contract for the sale of the Tower Block had been agreed and the risk transferred to the purchasers. The College was now in possession of a 10% deposit by the purchasers. The remaining amount was due either when planning permission was granted or by 30 September, whichever came first.

She then went on to describe in more detail some preliminary discussions that had taken place with Croydon Council about the possibility of opening a secondary school or developing a Free School on the Barclay Road site. There were both curriculum and economic drivers for further exploration of this initiative and an opportunity to have progression of students and aspiration at the core of the vision. There was a narrow window of opportunity in which to submit an initial application to the Secretary of State. The application would have to be submitted by October. The Chair and the Executive would be meeting with a consultant the following day who could write the bid. She asked that the

Board agree Chair's Action to an outlay of £30k to produce the initial application and the setting up of a company, if this was necessary. There would be no other commitment at this stage. If the application was granted and the Board decided to take it further, then the EFA would grant £300k to further develop a business plan.

In the discussion that followed there was concern from some governors that this initiative, whilst admittedly at an early stage, had not been fully discussed by the Board. The Principal responded reminding members that it had been raised and discussed in outline earlier in the year at the Board workshop, and as a result of that discussion a Strategic Imperative (*'Progression opportunities maximised'*) had been incorporated into the refreshed Strategic Plan 2014-20 to encompass this possible opportunity and the aspiration to secure more higher level Masters programmes too. This was part of considering how to build upon the opportunities the College's 'Good' OFSTED grade would open up that had not been available previously. Governors also wanted to know more about the process. The Principal volunteered to write a formal paper for governors that would include the next steps. In response to other questions she confirmed that Free Schools did not need to be tied to a religion. The Chair responded to a question over whether he had a conflict of interest given that he was the Principal of a school in the community. At this stage he did not feel that there was a conflict, in the same way that he perceived no conflict with his role as a governor of the College. He would continue to keep this under review.

The Chair promised to keep members informed, and that, if necessary, a small group of governors would be convened to look at the outcome of the consultant's work in September, prior to a full discussion of the issue by the Board at the meeting already scheduled for 1 October. He summarised that Croydon needed more schools to meet demographic needs, and that this initiative could add value to the community and the College, but must not distract from the day to day running of the College.

The Chair congratulated officers on the predicted success rate of 84% and asked if there was anything else, not already captured in the QiP, that the College could be doing better. The wide range of performance within that rolled up whole college figure was noted and there were areas that required improvement as would be clear in the SAR. Areas to focus on were consistency of the rate of improvement, retaining students within the first 40 days of the year, and Functional Skills, particularly maths. The DCE highlighted the competition for good maths teachers.

The Chair commented that the key to all these issues was good quality and that staff were carrying out good quality work on a day to day basis. He asked the Staff Governor what the general feeling was among staff.

Anita McGowan, Staff Governor, replied that staff were buoyant that their work had been recognised through external inspection and review. This was tempered by an unproductive fear over funding cuts and the future. It would help staff to know that their work was appreciated by the Board. The Chair responded that he had written a letter of thanks to all staff after the OFSTED inspection and he hoped the appreciation of the Board was recognised. Staff he had spoken to did understand the financial challenges the College was facing. This was a national issue. The second issue was to enrol students and meet targets.

There was a discussion about the value of statistical and graphical presentation of shifts in progression, and the mapping of progression to ultimate destinations. This should inspire students and help the Board to understand how the College was changing in shape and size as part of its strategic planning process. The Chair said that this might be picked up at the Governors' October workshop. The DCE commented that there was increasing demand from employers and young people for Construction courses. There was a request that the workshop address the extent to which the College was demand led.

It was **RESOLVED**

1. That Chair's Action should be used to approve the preparation of a submission to the DfE to set up a secondary school, the allocation of £30k for this purpose, and also the setting up of a company for this purpose if it was needed; and that
2. The Board should receive for information a formal report from the Principal outlining the option of setting up a secondary school and clarifying the steps involved.

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

The minutes from the meeting on 4 June 2014 were **RECEIVED**. The Chair of Governors (who had chaired the meeting) reported that the Board would receive the Quality Improvement Plan for approval in the Autumn, once outcomes for the year were known. There was a discussion on the meaning of 'affirmation' in the context of the QAA report not making any affirmations. It was thought that these were only made for research universities.

The DCE said that the final (academic) targets for 2014/15 would depend on the outcomes for 2013/14. Members asked if the Mark Book, on which the 2013/14 targets were predicated, was validated. The Vice Chair stated that the Audit Committee had requested that student progress monitoring systems be one of the areas audited next year.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Initial Targets for 2014/15.

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

A verbal report was **RECEIVED** from Ryan Raghoo, Student Governor who introduced his successor for 2014/15, Francis Uwagboe He reported on a number of activities including the UNICEF Pledge Award Ceremony and the Queen's Award for Volunteering. Student aspirations had been raised. They now wanted to lead on projects and to receive awards. A delegation of College students had been nominated by UNICEF to meet with Theresa May, Home Secretary, to lobby for action against child trafficking. They had been selected because of the number of letters, petition signatures and poems they had generated. He also reported that two students had spoken at Speakers Corner (in Croydon), and he read governors his own poem about child trafficking: 'Ask Yourself'.

The Chair thanked Ryan Raghoo for his significant contributions to the Board and to the College during the year, and wished him well with his university plans. Mr Raghoo then thanked the Chair, the Principal and the DCE for their support during the year and presented them with tokens of appreciation.

3. BUSINESS PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

(i) BUDGET FOR 2014/15 AND TWO YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

The report was **RECEIVED**. The COO described the national context of cuts in funding. To date the College had achieved savings of c£900k from established posts. The assumptions used in the Budget were shown in the paper. The Budget showed a small surplus, but work was still being carried out on some of the detail which would be presented to the Finance & Resources Committee at a meeting called for 25 July. It was important to achieve a realistic Budget that would also give confidence to the SFA (Skills Funding Agency) and the College's bank.

In answer to a question the COO confirmed that staff ratios were approximately 80/20 full time to part time staff, and about 80/20 permanent to non permanent staff. The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee confirmed that a detailed discussion about the Budget had

taken place at the committee meeting in June, and that the ratios given were likely to move further towards 90/10.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Budget for 2014/15 and the Two Year Forecast, but that Chair's Action could be used to approve a revised Budget, on the advice of the Finance & Resources Committee, provided that the proportions within the Budget did not change.

(iii) MINUTES AND REPORT FROM THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE 19 JUNE 2014 (including Financial Monitoring)

The report was **RECEIVED**. The financial monitoring paper had been circulated separately. The cumulative net position as at the end of April showed £196k negative variance against budget. The full year forecast showed £847k deficit, £899k worse than budget. Between April and July there were significant non pay costs, and the costs of restructuring which were mitigated by a reduction in ongoing pay costs. The May accounts themselves showed no change to the year-end figures. The College would not have had a liquidity issue if the sale of the Tower Block had not gone through, but the cash position would be comfortable once the proceeds had been received.

The following points were made in discussion:

1. The delay in receipt of loans from the student loans company led to an opportunity cost in interest income not generated, however interest rates were very low.
2. Reductions in levels of funding were expected, however the mix of students for 2014/15 – a higher proportion of full time students, together with an increasing number of students in 2014/15, should lead to a slight improvement in funding for 2015/16.
3. The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee pointed out that there were some increasing costs in pipeline, citing the increased costs in future years for National Insurance and Pensions mentioned in the Committee's minutes at the top of page 89.
4. The Principal pointed that there had been an over delivery in one line of income because usual tight monitoring of income being generated had not been possible due to national SFA software systems issues. The College was waiting to see if the verbal assurance that colleges would not be hampered by this national issue would be honoured.

(ii) MINUTES AND REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 3 JUNE 2014 (including approval of Internal Audit work to September 2014 (no paper) and a Policy on the Engagement of External Auditors to supply other services)

The report was **RECEIVED** from the Vice Chair of Governors, a member of the Committee. She highlighted that the Committee had given a steer for the new internal Audit Service strategic plan to look at sustainability. The Committee had also asked for an updated commentary on remedial action in the Risk Management Plan.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve

1. The Internal Audit assignment to September 2014 proposed by BDO; and
2. The Policy on Engagement of External Auditors to supply Services other than Financial Statements Audit and Regularity Audit.

(iv) RISK MANAGEMENT

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Principal acknowledged the need to refresh the risk management process. The membership of the Risk Management Committee had been reduced to focus debate. A risk management workshop was to be arranged with the Risk Management Committee, BDO and the Chair of the Audit Committee to refresh the approach

to risk. This would look at how risks were identified and presented. The Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee said that it was important to identify opportunities as well as manage risks and the Principal acknowledged that clarifying both risks and opportunities was critical. It was noted that recent widely publicised unwise decisions of some colleges should not deter others from taking any risks at all, so long as those risks were fully understood.

5. GOVERNANCE ISSUES

(i) GOVERNANCE REPORTS ON NON-COMMITTEE ITEMS

Trevor Morgan reported that he had attended the UNICEF Pledge Award Ceremony and the Art and Fashion Show. The students had presented themselves extremely well and he hoped that their achievements were well recognised in the community generally. He had been proud of the students and had had useful conversations with staff and students.

The Principal reported that the Chair of the Audit Committee had been due to attend an Audit Committee meeting at CONEL, but that this had had to be postponed due to his work commitments.

The Chair urged all governors to continue with Learning Walks and GOAL (go out and listen) next year in order to understand the decisions they were asked to make. He proposed to ask the Assistant Principal to draw up a formal procedure for Learning Walks.

Piers White commented that the Mathew Hancock visit had provided a good opportunity for governors to talk to key external stakeholders, and he complimented the Principal on her networking. The Chair noted how impressed the Minister had been at the range of activity he had observed.

The Vice Chair commented that there seemed to be good news about the College nearly every week, and congratulated officers that this was getting into the local press. The Chair stated that promotion of the College would be one of the subjects for the October workshop. It was suggested that governors follow the College on Twitter.

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

The report was **RECEIVED**. The Chair of the Committee highlighted that the Governing Body was still searching for a governor with strategic HR skills, and asked members for help in finding a suitable candidate. He also reminded members to send in the questionnaire on the appraisal of the Chair that had been circulated by the Clerk.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Governor Person Specification and Role Description.

(i) ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The report was **RECEIVED**. the Clerk reported that all committees had reviewed their terms of reference during the summer term.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Terms of Reference of Committees.

(ii) DATES AND AGENDA PLANS FOR NEXT YEAR

The report was **RECEIVED**.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the meeting dates for 2014/15 and also the agenda plans.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked the Student Governor and the Clerk, both attending their last meetings, for their services over the past year.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 1 October 2014 at 6pm (to be preceded by a Governors Workshop and Governors Self Assessment)

The meeting ended at 8.10pm

[Clerk's Note: the Clerk has moved the following items from the Part B to the Part A minutes. Original items remain confidential.]

1 REVIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS 2012/13

The report was **RECEIVED**. All confidential items received by the Board during this period related to named individuals.

It was **RESOLVED** that all the confidential items for 2012/13 remain confidential in perpetuity.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair