



Croydon  
College

**CROYDON COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION  
CORPORATION**

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
1 OCTOBER 2014**

**MINUTES**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Gordon Smith (Chair) Caroline Allen (Vice Chair) Stephan John Anita McGowan (staff governor) Matt Sims Francis Uwagboe (student governor) Frances Wadsworth (Principal) Kate Ward Piers White Jackie Wilding
<b>ALSO ATTENDING:</b>	Keith Oxspring (Chief Operating Officer -COO) Andy Smith (Deputy Chief Executive)
<b>CLERK:</b>	Melissa Drayson
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Claire Mackie Trevor Morgan Craig O'Donnell
<b>QUORUM</b>	The meeting was quorate throughout
<b>TIMING</b>	6.00 – 8.10pm

<b>Item no.</b>		<b>Action Lead</b>
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**New Croydon Academy: A presentation to outline the proposal**

*Presenter: Martin Church.*

*PowerPoint slides are attached to these minutes*

Governors were given a PowerPoint presentation outlining:

- The background to and legal structure of an academy/free school
- The timeline for establishing the New Croydon Academy
- The detail of the proposal in terms of vision, opportunity, school places, location and curriculum focus,
- Finances and funding available
- Opportunities and risks for the College
- Current support for the School in terms of high profile supporters, outcomes of consultation, community engagement activities, and potential student numbers.

Governors raised questions on, and discussed, the following:

- It was important that the appropriate level of college management involvement in setting up the school was

Item  
no.

Action  
Lead

defined and understood from the outset as this could, potentially, create a significant demand on college resources. It was agreed that clear leadership would be required to ensure that development of the school did not impact upon the smooth running of the college. The employment of an experienced Project Manager would be key. The PM would work to a project steering group chaired by a member of the College Exec. Further down the line, the appointment of the right headteacher would be crucial along with securing appropriate support for the new Head.

- It was confirmed that the college's financial exposure was limited only to the £30k development costs which were approved by the board on 1 July. The Company (academy trust) would bear any financial risk following approval, although there may still be reputational implications for the college as sponsor if there were issues.
- The need for separation in governance between the college as sponsor and the Trust was noted. The college would be a Corporate Member of the trust and, as sponsor, would have the right to appoint a defined number of directors, but beyond that, the degree of influence and control of Croydon College Board of Governors would be limited.
- Reasons why the bid might not succeed were explored. These related mainly to local competition and some conflicting political views about free schools as well as views re the development of College Green. It was felt, however, that the College was in a unique position to sponsor an academy;
- There was some concern that the college and the School would be catering for some students in the same age-range (ie sixth form of the school) and whether there might be tensions between the student groups. It was recognised this would not materialise as a potential issue until 2022, when the year 7 intake had worked their way up the school. Close working across the two organisations would mitigate against this being an issue it was felt.

The Board was keen to ensure that there was a further opportunity for review, should the bid be successful.

**AGREED: that a detailed implementation plan should be brought back to the Board prior to any final-sign off, with actions to mitigate against adverse impact on management team capacity and other due diligence.**

**RESOLVED (by a unanimous show of hands) that the proposal that the Free School submission be lodged by 10 October be APPROVED.**

#### 14.1 i. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from those listed above on Page 1.

**ii. Declaration of interests**

No declarations were made in relation to any item on the agenda.

**iii. Minutes of the meeting on 2 July 2014**

The minutes were **approved** as an accurate and fair record and were signed by the Chair

**iv Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

2. (i) Under the discussion on the development of the Free School bid, the Chair confirmed that he did not consider there to be a conflict of interest with his position as a headteacher of another local school.

2 (ii) It was confirmed that the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) would be brought back to the Board via LQC in December.

**AGREED: that the Chair would provide a formal note stating that he had no conflict of interest in respect of the Free School bid.** GS

**14.2 EVALUATION OF STANDARDS**

**i. Principal's Report on Progress to Improving Teaching, Learning and Assessment**  
*Supporting paper by the Principal and Chief Executive*

Headlines from the paper were discussed:

Quality and Success

- Long success rates were still in the process of being finalised. Current indications were that they would reach 83% but may not get to the target of 84%. Governors asked if there were any particular areas which were underperforming. It was confirmed that, at a Subject Sector Level, improvement was across the board. There was, however, still some concern around SSA1, which included Public Services, Childcare and Health and Social Care as this had performed below national average for two years. The restructuring should allow a greater focus on implementing improvement in this area.
- Vocational Business courses had shown a marked improvement since vocational Business provision had been split from Business A Level
- Construction had shown strong enrolment and staffing was now stable. A structured assessment would be undertaken in the first 42 days
- Governors asked if destination data would be brought to the Board. This was in the process of being collected. Although there was no benchmark, the data would be presented with the previous two years for comparison.

**Item  
no.**

**Action  
Lead**

HEFCE would no longer be collecting destination data itself, so the college was using a third party recommended by HEFCE to collect the information

#### Enrolment

The latest indications were that Apprenticeship recruitment had doubled compared to the same time last year. It was acknowledged this was still an area of challenge, but the improvement welcomed. It was confirmed that the Higher Education recruitment target would be reached.

#### Student Welcome and Retention

There would be a strong focus on the 'first 42 days', with a programme of work to avert student loss. Changes from previous years included a shorter induction period, in response to student feedback that they would prefer to start their courses as quickly as possible.

The Student Governor commented that the range of activities put on to welcome students to the college had been 'brilliant'. The existing student body had been excellent in terms of supporting new students.

A key feature of student support and engagement this year was a focus on the whole learner journey, from the point of application to the point of departure. A range of methods were being utilised to gather feedback on the impact of the welcome and induction work, including GOAL, learning walks and Principal and Student lunches.

#### Parent and Carer welcome evening

Turnout for the welcome evenings had been far higher than expected, with approximately 400 parents and carers attending. The engagement with parents and carers was welcomed and plans are to provide further opportunities and events.

#### Property

The expression of interest to the Local Enterprise Partnership had been submitted. Partnership support for this initiative had been extremely encouraging, especially the strengthening relationship with Croydon Tech City..

There was a discussion about the Hollywood filming which was currently taking place in the Barclay Road building, and the opportunities that this presented both for the students employability experience, the College and for Croydon as a whole.

#### Finance

It was noted that variability in forecasting that had emerged initially in the Spring of 2014 would be addressed. The year-end financial picture now looked more positive than previously predicted. The need for clearer communication with governors at an earlier stage regarding any financial variations was acknowledged by management.

ii. **The Learner Experience: The Student Governor Report**

*Oral report by Francis Uwagboe, Student Governor*

Francis distributed a copy of Student Life and took the Board through some of the highlights, including:

- The award of Volunteer of the Year to Anton Bland at the Unicef Pledge Award ceremony. The student body wished to thank Trevor Morgan for attending on behalf of the Board of Governors.
- The Unicef anti-trafficking campaign was now on its second stage, which was focusing on the policy to deport young people back to their home country once they reached 18
- The first student event had sold out. Many more activities were being planned.
- On 25 September, Anton Bland and Sarah Greenidge were nominated for a Fundraiser of the Year award, with Sarah Greenidge being declared the winner.

The Board thanked Francis for his excellent report and asked that their thanks be conveyed to the student body. There was a discussion of the best way in which Student Life might be disseminated more widely. It was considered that the scope for online publishing, and distribution through social media, should be explored.

**14.3 BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

i. **Financial Monitoring – Year –end out-turns 13-14**

*Supporting Paper by the Chief Operating Officer*

The end of year picture was more favourable than forecast.

A number of governors had attended an informal Finance and Resources meeting the previous week to explore the reasons for the variation against the previous forecasts, and to make sure that financial projections were more robust in the future. Management gave an undertaking to communicate any future variations earlier in future and address the issues that had led to the variations.

A Financial Review was being effected as part of that work to ensure controls and practices were robust. This would be reporting to the Finance and Resources Committee.

Clarification was sought about the student fees issue. There were a number of students who had taken out a student loan but left the course half way through the year. The balance on the fees due was now being treated as bad debt.

ii. **Report from the Audit committee meeting on 9 September 2014**

*Supporting papers: Minutes of Meeting with recommendations for Board approval. The Internal Audit Plan was tabled.*

**Item  
no.**

**Action  
Lead**

The Board noted that the Audit Plan had been mapped out following discussions with the Exec about key risk areas and had been given careful consideration by the Audit Committee.

It was noted that a new risk register was being drafted following a workshop with SMT, BDO and some governors to look at best practice and a fresh approach and revised format was agreed. The draft risk register was being compiled with external referencing and would come to the next Board meeting.

**RESOLVED: that, in accordance with the recommendation from the Audit Committee, the Internal Audit Plan 14-15 be APPROVED.**

#### **14.4 GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

##### **i. Changes to Committee Schedule**

The Clerk reported that the Search and Governance Committee would now meet on 13 October, and that there would be an additional Remuneration Committee on the same evening.

There were no reports under items ii) Matters for approval from the Workshop, iii) Approval of Chair's Action or iv) governor reports on non-committee items.

#### **14.5 Other business**

There were no items of urgent other business.

Members noted that the Chef's restaurant had been booked for the Governors' Christmas Dinner at 6.00pm on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December and it was hoped that all would be able to attend. An invitation email would follow.

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

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