



MINUTES OF THE PART I MEETING OF THE CORPORATION HELD 26 MARCH 2018

- Present: Mr Robert Hails (Chair)
Ms Sharmin Joarder
Mr Del Attah
Mr Ciaran McSharry
Ms Dawn Hughes
Mr Andy Booth
Ms Yvonne White
Mr Steve Gooch (Joint Head of College)
Mr Richard Beales (Joint head of College)
- In Attendance: Mr Jon Allen (Clerk)
Mr Chris Dearnley (Education Funding Skills Agency)
(For part of the meeting only)

The meeting commenced at 1800.

APOLOGIES, QUORACY & DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

67. Apologies were received from Cllr Chris Wright, Phidelma Keating, and the two student governors. It was confirmed the meeting was quorate.
68. There were no declared interests against any of the agenda items.

MINUTES

69. It was confirmed the minutes of the Corporation Part I meeting, held 15 January 2018, were an accurate record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign the minutes (Paper 1).
70. It was confirmed the confidential minutes of the Corporation Part II meeting, held 15 January 2018, were an accurate record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign the minutes (Paper 2).

OFSTED INSPECTION

71. The Corporation received confirmation of the provisional outcome of the 2-day Ofsted inspection visit that took place on the 20 and 21 March. The Corporation welcomed the positive outcome arising and it was agreed to record thanks to all staff.
72. It was **AGREED** to make available to governors the inspection report when published by Ofsted.

FE COMMISSION LED STRATEGIC PROSPECTS APPRAISAL (SPA)

(Chris Dearnley from the ESFA was in attendance for this agenda item to answer any questions on the SPA process)

73. Received and **NOTED** for information purposes were the following minutes from the three meetings held of the SPA Steering Group:

- SPA Steering Group meeting held 18 January 2018 (Paper 3)
- SPA Steering Group meeting held 15 February 2018 (Paper 4)
- SPA Steering Group meeting held 19 March 2018 (Paper 5)

74. The Chair confirmed that the Corporation is being asked to give consideration to the recommendation from the Steering Group that Croydon College be the preferred strategic partner for Coulsdon College. Members received the proposal from Croydon College that had been considered by the Steering Group (Paper 6).

75. It was clear from both their proposal and presentation that Croydon College was best able to meet, or exceed, the criteria agreed by the SPA Steering Group for selecting the preferred strategic partner for Coulsdon College.

76. Some of the key elements from their proposal included:

- The Chair and new CEO were excited about this opportunity and both have a strong vision for a Croydon partnership from which both Colleges would benefit. They both have experience of merging and academisation.
- They were keen to emphasise, and recognised the importance, that “Coulsdon Sixth Form College would retain its name, identity, branding and local character”.
- They see this partnership as “a strategic fit” between the two Colleges with “opportunities to provide progression pathways” for students within and beyond 16-18 programmes, as an example, onto their Apprenticeships and HE provision which is delivered at their Fairfield site.
- They “understand and support the commitment of Coulsdon College to maintain A Levels offered as a full programme of study, or with vocational aims, and would not wish to make changes to this commitment and arrangements”.
- They were more committed to a level of self-determination by Coulsdon College.
- There was a strong emphasis on pastoral care.
- There was a stronger commitment to investment in staff.
- Critically, they are able to provide a much greater level of assurance around financial stability and much-needed investment for Coulsdon College, both in the short term and longer term.

77. The Steering Group was fully aware that, despite Croydon College recently receiving a second Good rating from Ofsted, their local reputation is not so good. Andy Booth, in his capacity as a local Headteacher, was of the firm view that, if Coulsdon College was promoted as being part of Croydon College, the students will not attend the College.

The perception held by many in the local community is that Croydon College has a serious reputational issue. The communication of any merger with Croydon College will, therefore, be very difficult. Yvonne White, the staff governor, was of the firm view that College staff will not want to be part of Croydon College.

78. The Heads of College agreed as to the need for careful management of the 'message' that there will continue to be a sixth form college within an FE college. The example of Hartlepool Sixth Form College was given in that it remained as a sixth form college following its merger with an FE college. The communication of this message and vision to staff must be an immediate priority, and the Heads of College were asked to invite the Principal/Chair of Croydon College to attend a staff meeting before the end of the term in order to start the communication process.

79. However, even though there were serious concerns as to the local reputation of Croydon College, governors noted that the other strategic options were not judged to be as good, particularly on the critical financial plans. In addition, it was noted that each proposal would have involved significant changes to the operations and character of the College.

80. The Chair asked governors to vote formally on the proposal for Croydon College to be the preferred strategic partner for Coulsdon College.

81. The vote was seven in favour, with two votes against (Andy Booth and Yvonne White). The two dissenting governors acknowledged the majority decision taken and, under collective responsibility, agreed to support the decision taken by the Corporation. It was therefore **RESOLVED** for Croydon College to be the strategic partner for Coulsdon College and to commence the merger process.

82. In terms of the next stage of the process, it was confirmed that the proposed merger would be subject to statutory consultation and with the Corporation having to resolve, at a later stage in the process, their approval to dissolve the Corporation of Coulsdon College and to transfer its assets to the Corporation of Croydon College.

83. The Chair thanked Chris Dearnley for attending this agenda item and, at this point, Mr Dearnley left the meeting.

84. It was noted the decision taken will impact on the current shared services arrangement with Reigate College, and the withdrawal of these services will have to be agreed with Reigate.

DATA DASHBOARD & MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE

85. The College data dashboard (Paper 7) reported on the following:

- Achievement and progression data
- Recruitment
- Student satisfaction
- Finances

86. The data had been reported to both the Planning & Performance Committee and the Finance Committee meetings held this term and both Committees reviewed the data in some detail. It was agreed to refer to the minutes of these committee minutes for further details.

FINANCE

87. The Management Accounts for 7 months up to 28 February 2018 were received (Paper 8).

88. The following key points were noted:

- There were 1,005 students on roll at enumeration date against a budgeted level of 1,113, which will result in a reduction in in-year additional funding of (£505k).
- Full year pay costs are forecast to be £4,360k against a budget of £4,486, a saving of £126k, which reflects staff leavers to date and other known adjustments.
- Total non-pay costs are anticipated to be £1,411k for the year which is (£139k) worse than budgeted. The £150k VAT savings envisaged upon academisation have not been realised along with forecast loan interest repayments of £71k, an interest repayment holiday was anticipated upon academisation.
- Retained deficit (after deduction of depreciation and release of capital grants) for the year is forecast to be (£725k) against the budgeted loss of (£164k).

89. It was **RESOLVED** to note the Management Accounts.

PLANNING & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

90. The following was made available:

- Minutes of the Planning & Performance Committee held 26 February 2018 (Paper 9).
- Quality Improvement Plan 2017-18 (Paper 10).

91. The College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressed the statements as to why the College is not yet outstanding as set out in the Executive Summary of the Colleges Self-Assessment Report.

92. The Planning & Performance Committee was asked to rate their level of assurance in that the Executive Summary was an accurate reflection of the College and that the QIP 2017/18 sets out a clear plan to address areas for improvement and development at a College level. Following review, the Committee was of the view that a high level of assurance can be drawn from the QIP with no additional actions or monitoring required over and above the already agreed monitoring framework, with the QIP being fixed agenda items at meetings of this Committee and all Corporation meetings.

93. The Corporation noted and welcomed the level of assurance given by the Planning & Performance Committee which was also in line with the provisional outcome of the 2-day Ofsted inspection.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

94. Board meeting Monday 02 July 2018 @ 1800

Signed: _____

Date: _____