

RICHMOND & HILLCROFT ADULT & COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Board of Richmond and Hillcroft Adult and Community College held at 6.00pm
Thursday 24 May 2018 in PK9, Parkshot, Richmond

- Present: Ms Louise Fluker, Chair
Mr Mark Albrow, Lead Governor for Safeguarding/Prevent and Learner Involvement
Mr Richard Brewster, Audit Committee Chair
Ms Helen Darracott
Ms Gabrielle Flint, Principal
Prof. Andrew George, Quality & Standards Chair
Mr Gavin Hardcastle-Jones (attended for items 1-5, 10)
Ms Theresa Hoenig
Prof. Linda Jones, Co-Vice Chair
Ms Jane O'Shea, Co-Vice Chair
Ms Farah Rachlin
Ms Lisa Sharp
Mr Graham Tharp
Mr Nigel Ware, Finance & Resources Committee Chair
- In attendance: Ms Gaynor Bray, Vice Principal – Teaching & Learning,
Ms Sue Carter, Vice Principal – Learner Experience
Mr Neil Wallbank, Director of Finance
Ms Sara George, Interim Clerk

The meeting remained quorate throughout.

PRESENTATION ON MARKETING STRATEGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Ms Fiona Carthy, Head of Marketing, gave a presentation to the Board updating governors on progress with the Marketing Strategy and use of social media. It was noted that the revised Marketing Strategy has been aligned closely with the objectives of the recently approved Strategic Plan.

Developments in the use of the merged College's brands were highlighted, along with improvements in monitoring the impact of marketing activity and the increase in digital activity. A redesign of the course guide had been very well received and had saved the College a considerable amount of money. The new website has seen an increase of 9% in online enrolments. Further functionality included within stage three of development should improve this percentage. Social media use has increased by 50%. The diverse nature of the College's audience, course affordability for some learners and the segmentation of the market were noted as the key marketing challenges going forward.

The key objectives of the marketing strategy were highlighted; an increase of 1000 enrolments per year, closer engagement with employers, an increase in uptake of 19+ adult learner loans, a 15% increase in online engagement, a top 100 Edurank rating and greater local news coverage. These will be achieved with the completion of the transition to the new RHACC brand (whilst building the identities of the sub-brands), by improving the strategic and tactical approach to digital marketing, by careful planning of segmented activity, by improving stakeholder relations and by maximising exposure to the events held on site.

Benchmark and trend data, for example from website hits, social media engagement and emailer responses will be used for monitoring and evaluation. Monthly reports will be provided to the College Management Team, with updates provided to the Quality & Standards Committee. A review of the Strategy will take place at the mid-year point.

Governors fed back that the website, at present, feels only reflective of the Parkshot campus, not a two site college, partly due to the imagery used but also because the Hillcroft map is not included in the 'how to find us' section and the history page only details that of RACC. Ms Carthy noted the comments and indicated that technical issues have affected the inclusion of the Hillcroft map. Stage three development of the site will resolve the map issue and will also enable scrolling pictures on the home page that will include ones from

Hillcroft. As a critical business tool, the website will be constantly updated to make best use of new technology and online trends and to make the customer experience as easy as possible.

A governor suggested providing discount packages for employers that may wish to enrol their staff on leisure or wellbeing courses for reward/recognition or as an employee benefit. Ms Carthy responded that course guides are mailed out to larger employers in the area and that discounts could potentially be negotiated. It was noted that although enrolments in business courses have fallen in 2017/18, the amount of guided learning hours in this area has risen due to the increase in vocational level 3 longer programmes.

In response to the Board's thanks for her presentation, Ms Carthy commented that she was happy to receive further feedback on the marketing strategy or the website going forward. Updates on the implementation of the Strategy will be provided to the Quality and Standards Committee.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair informed the Board of the resignation of Mr Gavin Hardcastle-Jones, who was thanked for his much valued contribution to the Finance & Resources Committee and the Board. Mr Hardcastle-Jones stated that he was retiring with sadness having learned a great deal. He also commented on the dedication of the Board members.

Mr Daniel Kemp apologised for his absence. It was noted that Mr Kemp had also tendered his resignation from the Board effective at the end of the academic year.

2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 22 March 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

Three sections within the minutes were identified as confidential for redaction prior to publication. Interim Clerk

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

Lottery Project

The Vice Principal for Learner Experience reminded governors that the Lottery Project had almost reached the end of its second year. A meeting with the Lottery Project Funding Officer, at which the objectives for year three will be finalised, is scheduled for 13 June. Enrolment activities have been passed to curriculum teams to manage, leaving the Project Managers free to focus on work with partner organisations. In the first year 25 new women's organisations became partners; 27 have been recruited in year two. 18% of women attending H2020 taster sessions have gone on to further in-house provision, having received pre-entry guidance and IAG. It was noted by the Vice-Chair, Linda Jones, that in her experience the Lottery is unlikely to claw back unspent funding.

4. **MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

Finance & Resources Committee (10 May 2018)

It was agreed that the items on Deer Park School and Tinies nursery should be redacted from the published minutes. Interim Clerk

The Board noted the minutes of the standing committees.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No new declarations of interest were made.

6. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – MAY 2018**

The Principal presented her report for May 2018, noting that further analysis will be conducted into the small increase in numbers of young learners. It is suspected that this increase is due to the additional offer of non-funded courses for families, such as wildlife drawing.

The Principal reported that the services between the Annex building and the Magistrate's Court have been successfully separated; however due to complications with the infill of the

courtyard, the refurbishment project is slightly behind schedule, with completion now due in December rather than October. Hard-wearing, stackable furniture is being sought for both the Annex and the Link café areas.

The College has yet to hear if the bid to offer LLDD provision on behalf of Merton Council have been successful. This contract would offer £160k each year for three years, using Merton community venues. As RHACC is already providing some LLDD provision for the Council, and as the College was invited to tender, management are optimistic of success.

The Principal reported that response times to learner feedback had improved from 20% not within policy timeframes to 6% although the Board had yet to receive a report summarising the results as had happened previously. The Principal and Vice Principal for Learner Experience recently met with the Lead Governor for Safeguarding/Prevent and Learner Involvement to discuss learner feedback issues. At this meeting it was agreed that there will not be a Tell Us What You Think programme in term three, to allow time for managers to respond to previous learner feedback and propose changes to current systems. The Board also agreed that managers should be hearing the views of learners in the first instance, rather than governors, who will discuss responses as part of reports received at the Quality & Standards Committee. Further review work regarding the learner voice and views is ongoing. The Board agreed that it was more appropriate for managers to attend the Tell Us What You Think sessions, as long as Governors were made aware of the results in a timely way.

VP Learner Experience

In answer to a question about the South London Partnership (SLP) collaboration framework and how it would impact the College, the Principal said that the framework is a loose one as the Councils do not wish to cede any of their authority to other Councils. The recent Council elections and devolution may change the approach. The SLP has indicated that they will discuss the framework with the College, and a meeting is awaited.

The Board noted the Principal's Report for May 2018.

7. **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Management Accounts – March 2018

The Director of Finance presented the Management Accounts for March 2018, which had been scrutinised by the Finance & Resources Committee during its meeting on 10 May. It was noted that the forecasted surplus is currently £169k, which is in line with budget, and that management are confident of reaching at least 97% usage of the ESFA allocation, thereby avoiding clawback. The College's financial health score is currently 270 – which is generates a grade of 'outstanding'.

Underachievement in some incomes lines is offset by a positive variance in tuition fees of £120k. This comprises a positive variance on fees from funded courses and a negative variance on fees from non-funded courses. Management will analyse: (1) the allocation of income to these two particular budget headings to ensure that it still accurately reflects the profile of provision and that it is being reported under the correct budget heading; (2) bursary groups to see who is taking up what funding assistance and how this affects fee income. It was noted that most RHACC learners pay some type of fee. The Principal confirmed that the College considers the fees set by other Institutes of Adult Learning and Council services based on publicly available information.

Director of Finance

The shortfall in lettings income compared to budget was questioned. The Principal responded that this shortfall was due to Hillcroft lettings which have not been promoted extensively as space will be required for decant whilst refurbishment work is undertaken. Lettings at Parkshot remain buoyant and the additional space once work on the Annex building is completed will assist income in this area. The Director of Finance agreed, in response to a request by Governors to split the lettings income line into Parkshot and Hillcroft.

Director of Finance

The Board noted the Management Accounts for March 2018.

Fee Policy 2018 2019

The Director of Finance presented the Fee Policy for 2018/19, noting that at the March Board meeting, Governors had agreed not to increase tuition fees for the next academic year. Small updates to the policy had been made to reflect new ESFA guidelines. Processes and procedures for bursaries have been removed from the policy into a separate document.

[Redacted question and answer]

In answer to a question about charging fees for 16-18 year olds, the Principal informed Governors that if the young learner was at another college for their main study programme, then RHACC could charge them for their course. If their main college cannot meet all of the needs of their study programme, then the college or Council can purchase additional programmes from RHACC up to the value of their eligibility for funding.

The Board approved the Fee Policy for 2018 2019.

8. TEACHING AND LEARNING MATTERS

Teaching & Learning Quality Report – May 2018

The Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning presented the Teaching and Learning Quality Report for May 2018. In answer to a question about the provision for employers at Battersea Power Station, the Vice Principal reported that the Wandsworth Council initiative recruits learners on short, specific qualification courses, much of which is hospitality based, guaranteeing students an interview on completion. RHACC is participating with a small number of courses, which is only part of a wider employer offer.

A governor queried the entry requirements/personal competencies required for Access and Pre-Access within the women only offer, feeling that learners may not realistically present with all the attributes stated prior to a course (particularly pre-Access). Concern was expressed that the bar may be being set too high, that many of the skills stated would be learned during a course and that labelling the competencies as an entry requirement may preclude those who can obtain them during their studies. The Vice Principal for Teaching and Learning responded that if learners do not possess the relevant competencies, other courses can be provided to help them attain the required skills. As Access and Pre-Access are large qualifications, the College needs to be confident that learners are able to demonstrate the personal competencies required.

The Board noted the Teaching and Learning Quality Report for May 2018.

9. GDPR

The Director of Finance presented an update on the College's preparations for GDPR, and that privacy notices for students, staff and other interested parties had been revised and published by the due date for implementation. The Clerk noted that she had with her printed copies of the privacy notice for governors which she would circulate at the end of the meeting. The Director of Finance outlined that the Information Commissioner had recently published a self-assessment checklist which the team had used to assess preparations for the introduction of GDPR. On the initial completion of the self-assessment RHACC rated as green in most areas, and amber in some. Work continues to make these areas green. The checklist, with indicators of supporting evidence, will be presented to the Audit Committee at its meeting on 18 June.

Director of
Finance

The Board noted the update on GDPR preparations.

10. ESTATES MATTERS (confidential)

[Redacted]

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

The meeting closed at approximately 8.15pm