

RICHMOND AND HILLCROFT ADULT AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Board of
Richmond and Hillcroft Adult and Community College
held at 5.30 pm on Thursday 11 July 2024 at Parkshot (RBS 22)

Present: Ms Sharon Raj, Chair
Ms Gabrielle Flint, Principal
Mr Nick Jones
Mr Dave Munby
Mr Matthew Pope
Mr John Riglin
Ms Claire O'Donnell
Dr Elaine Hawkins
Mr Graham Tharp, Staff Governor
Ms Sue Preston
Mr Robert Dykes

In attendance: Ms Haifa Abdul Amir, Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality (VP, C&Q)
Mr Neil Wallbank, Vice Principal, Finance & Resources (VP, F&R)
Ms Laura Morgan, Clerk to the Governors
Mr Nigel Ware, Chair of Capital Projects Steering Group (item 7 only)

Apologies:
Ms Rosa Chu
Ms Jane O'Shea
Dr Siu Wo Im

The meeting remained quorate throughout.

1.	<u>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies were received from Rosa Chu, Siu Wo Im and Jane O'Shea. The Chair welcomed Sue Preston and Robert Dykes to their first Board meeting. Everyone present at the meeting introduced themselves. It was noted that the two new Independent Governors would complete their induction at the beginning of the new term. Governors noted that Kate Clarke had completed her term of office and her last meeting was Quality and Standards Committee on 27 th June 2024. Kate was thanked for her contribution to the Governing Board at RHACC and had been presented with a piece of student artwork as a token of appreciation. It was also noted that there had been some technical difficulties with accessing all the papers on GVO for this meeting. This is being investigated with GVO.	Clerk
2.	<u>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2024</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were approved as an accurate record subject to some minor amendments. It was agreed that the highlighted areas in the minutes would be redacted for publication on the website	Clerk Clerk
3.	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u> There were no matters arising.	

4.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></p> <p>Graham Tharp, Staff Governor declared an interest in item 6b. It was noted that several governors had an interest in item 11a.</p>	
5.	<p><u>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</u></p> <p>The Principal's Report recognised the achievements of this academic year which have included a successful Ofsted inspection in December 2023, good progress on the QIP priorities and good achievement for learners. It was noted that the financial situation remains challenging and the Hillcroft Capital Project will need to be considered in light of the possible impact that it could have on the long term sustainability of the College. It was also noted that there continues to be difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff due to pay.</p> <p>The new Government policy on Further Education is not yet clear but it is unlikely there will be any additional funding and it is uncertain what format any curriculum and qualifications reform will take.</p> <p>Governors noted the positive student stories from the recent Learner Awards.</p> <p>Governors asked for more detail regarding the merging of academic departments. This will reduce the current 6 departments to 4 which brings economies of scale. There are no job losses predicted associated with the mergers and it is considered this can be done with minimal disruption and impact on staff morale.</p> <p>The potential for growth at Parkshot was also discussed. Management plan to generate further income from events and hires within the existing infrastructure at Parkshot. Governors requested that a staff organisation chart is included in the Autumn term Board meeting</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Principal's Report for July 2024</i></p>	Clerk
6.	<p><u>FINANCE AND RESOURCES MATTERS</u></p> <p>The Vice-Principal, Finance and Resources presented the following:</p> <p>a) Management Accounts – May 2024</p> <p>The Management Accounts to the end of May 2024 had been discussed at the Finance and Resources Committee on 26th June 2024 and that these reflect a difficult year with income approximately £80k below budget. This is mostly due to reduced tuition fee income as a number of courses have moved from fee/co-funded to fully funded. There is a limited allocation from GLA and more learners are now eligible for funding.</p> <p>The financial health of the College remains as Requires Improvement. There is a Financial Recovery Plan and the actions from this are included in the budget.</p> <p>It was noted that some of the budgeting is done on a 1/12 basis and some (such as Variable Hours Staff Costs) is phased.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Management Accounts for the period to May 2024</i></p> <p>b) Budget for 2024/25</p> <p>The Budget for 2024/25 was discussed at the Finance and Resources Committee on 26th June 2024 without a pay increase for staff being included. Following discussion at the Finance and Resources Committee, the Budget presented to the Board now includes a 2% pay increase with supporting reasons. The budget does not include any decisions taken about the Hillcroft Capital Project which will be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p>This budget has been set in a challenging position and it is unlikely that there will be any additional funding available. Governors noted the following:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GLA has previously funded up to 103% of the allocation (last year this was 105%) but the 24/25 funding rules have this capped at 100%. Multiply funding is due to finish in March 2025 The 2% pay increase for staff reflects the increased cost of living and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff. This is 2% across the board. Staff costs: income is consistent at 72%. The Finance and Resources Committee had requested information on salary benchmarks and this is included as Appendix 1. It was noted that these benchmarks are against similar jobs and not the same organisation. A tuition fee increase of 3% was agreed in March 2024 alongside changes to concessions The budget leaves fees at a level consistent with the current year of approximately £2m The Employer contribution for the Teachers Pension Scheme was increased by 5%. This is currently funded by the DfE The budget still leaves RHACC's financial health as Requires Improvement with a £240k deficit EBITA next year There is a need for further work on cost reduction and increasing income as the main income line (GLA funding) is capped. There is a need to recruit more fee paying learners however these are not necessarily a priority learner group The Finance and Resources Committee recommended the approval of the budget with the proviso that the budget may need to be revisited depending on the Hillcroft Capital Project decision. <p>Governors noted that a new proposed system for judging financial sustainability would have the College graded as 'Inadequate' however the VP F&R explained that this proposal has now been in place for a number of years but there has been no indication of it being adopted.</p> <p>Governors questioned whether using interim and sessional staff costs more. It was noted that there is an increased cost in using agency staff compared to established staff. The difficulty in foreseeing some of the funding changes was discussed and the ongoing need to look at the provision (for example closing classes or increasing class sizes). The Financial Recovery Plan will be reviewed and aligned with future strategic discussions.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Budget for 2024/25 with a 2% pay increase for staff.</i></p>	VP (F&R)
7.	<u>HILLCROFT CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT</u> <i>[This item has been redacted]</i>	
8.	<u>TEACHING AND LEARNING</u> The Vice Principal (Curriculum and Quality) presented the Teaching and Learning Quality Update a) Teaching and Learning Quality Update It was felt this has been a positive year with good progress made on QIP priorities. Lesson observations have taken place with a large number meeting or exceeding standards. The Quality Review week has shown improvements since Ofsted. RARPA moderation has also shown improvements with some inconsistencies which are being addressed individually. The Learner Survey response rate has improved but is still below the GLA target of 50%. Governors noted the good progress in the Teaching and Learning Quality Report and thanked the Quality Team for their hard work. <i>The Board noted the Teaching and Learning Quality Update</i>	
9.	<u>LEARNER FEEDBACK REPORT 2023-24 Term 2</u> The governors recognised that this was a very clear report and there were no further questions.	

	<i>The Board noted the Learner Feedback Report 2023-24 Term 2</i>	
10.	<p><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>a) Risk Register and Action Plan</p> <p>i) Heat Map</p> <p>ii) Risk Register and Action Plan</p> <p>The Heat Map and the Risk Register and Action Plan were considered at the Audit Committee in June 2024. Governors noted the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk 4 (There is low demand for provision as learners and stakeholders are unaware of the range of courses available or of the support available) is the only risk which has shown movement. • Risk 16 (2023/24 budget is not delivered as planned which could have subsequent implications for 2024/25 and beyond) could be considered a red risk and should be reviewed in light of the decision regarding the Hillcroft development. • Other risks relating to Hillcroft will also need to be reviewed • There is a need to develop an IT strategic plan • Sustainability will be incorporated into the Risk Register when the new Head of Estates is in post and a sustainability strategy is devised. • The wording of Risk 2 (Failure to appropriately develop the skills and expertise of teaching and management staff results in a drop-in standards, lack of succession planning and lack of management capacity) will be revised. <p><i>The Board noted the Risk Register and Action Plan</i></p> <p>b) Appointment of External Auditors</p> <p>The Audit Committee recommend the appointment of Buzzacott as the External Auditors</p> <p><i>The Board approved the appointment of Buzzacott as External Auditors</i></p> <p>c) Risk Management Strategy 2024/25</p> <p>There have been no changes to the Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Risk Management Strategy 2024/25</i></p>	VP (F&R)
11.	<p><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>a) Governing Board appointments</p> <p>i) Extension of term of office for Jane O'Shea until July 2025</p> <p>This was unanimously agreed</p> <p>ii) Lead Governor for Safeguarding</p> <p>Elaine Hawkins was unanimously appointed as Link Governor for Safeguarding</p> <p>iii) Lead Governor for Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>Siu Wo (Tarloff) Im was unanimously appointed as Link Governor for Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>b) Committee Membership 2024-24</p> <p>it was noted that the Principal will continue as a member of Quality and Standards Committee.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference and membership of the Capital Projects Steering Group will be revisited by the Search and Governance Committee in the Autumn Term in light of the Hillcroft Capital Project decision.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Committee Membership for 2024-25</i></p> <p>c) Individual Governor and Committee Self Assessment</p> <p>The Board noted the arrangements for the individual governor and committee self assessment.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Committee Chairs</p>

	<p><i>The Board noted and approved the arrangements for Individual Governor and Committee Self Assessment</i></p> <p>d) Feedback on the Chair Governors and members of the SMT were asked to provide feedback on the Chair of Governors by email to the Clerk. <i>The Board approved the arrangements for feedback on the Chair of Governors</i></p> <p>e) Review of Instruments and Articles Update This was deferred to the next meeting</p>	Governors
12.	<p><u>ITEMS TO APPROVE</u></p> <p>a) Standing Committee Terms of Reference Amendments agreed at the Search and Governance Committee meeting of 22 May will be made to these documents.</p> <p>b) Board Work Plan Amendments agreed at the Search and Governance Committee of 22 May will be made to the Board work plan .</p> <p>c) Financial Regulations</p> <p>d) Programme of Meetings 2024/25</p> <p>e) Governor Expenses Policy</p> <p>f) Governor Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy</p> <p>g) Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure</p> <p>h) Accountability Statement</p> <p>i) Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p><i>The Board approved all items under section 12 with the amendments to be made to 12 a) and b)</i></p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
10.	<p><u>MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search and Governance Committee – 22 May 2024 • Capital Projects Steering Group – 11 June 2024 • Finance and Resources Committee – 26 June 2024 • Audit Committee – 24 June 2024 • Quality and Standards Committee – 27 June 2024 <p><i>The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committees.</i></p>	
12.	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>The Senior Management team were thanked for all their hard work in a challenging year.</p>	