

## GOVERNING BODY

### MINUTES

of the meeting of the Governing Body of Richmond Adult and Community College held at 6.15pm  
Thursday 8 October 2015 in PK10, Parkshot

Present: Ms Louise Fluker, Chair  
Mr Mark Albrow  
Mr Richard Brewster  
Dr Vince Cable  
Mr Kevin Finnigan  
Ms Gabrielle Flint, Principal  
Prof. Andrew George  
Mr Gavin Hardcastle-Jones  
Ms Gabriela Koczian  
Ms Jane O'Shea  
Ms Amanda Rowlatt CBE  
Dr Michael Sevvitt  
Mr David Sidonio  
Mr William Symington

In attendance: Ms Gaynor Bray, Vice Principal for Curriculum and Learner Services  
Ms Shereen Sameresinghe, Deputy Principal  
Mrs Sara George, Clerk

The meeting remained quorate throughout.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 16<sup>th</sup> JULY 2015**

The minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015 were approved. The Chair requested that items 6 and 7 be marked as confidential business. Clerk

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

None

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 11f – Appointment of a third governor to the Federation Joint Governance Committee. Mr David Sidonio declared an interest.

5. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal presented her report, which covered developments since the Governing Body meeting of 16 July 2015. She informed the Governing Body that the MIS Team were working on the format and quality of the data presentation, along with the assumptions used for modelling.

The 38% course closure rate for ASB courses was highlighted as a concern. The Principal replied that, with no feeder provision, it was difficult to know who is likely to enrol. The course closure rate has historically been 30-40%. The changes to qualification funding has also had an effect, along with the recession and increased competition. There was a college KPI to reduce the course closure rate to 20% which was achieved, although learner numbers were also lower. It will remain as a KPI. New courses are being offered and some courses that are closed in October will be offered again in January if there is learner interest. Trends in enrolment are tracked and the course offer adjusted as a result.

The College has been busy with enrolments, which are 20% up on this time last year.

A question was asked about financial forecasting, as the deficit has decreased since the July Governing Body meeting. The Principal reported that this was due to an improvement in the number of enrolments by subcontractors and a reduction in part time sessional teaching costs. Accuracy of forecasts continue to be worked on by the management team.

In response to a question the Principal commented on whether Area Reviews presented an opportunity or a threat. She considered that they could present a threat, with the prospect of fewer and larger colleges and further reductions to adult funding. It was important to take the opportunity of the review process to highlight the college's work and she was pursuing lobbying and other possibilities for federation. Area review had now been added as a risk in the Risk Register.

It was agreed that a presentation from the Events and Marketing Teams would be scheduled for a future Governing Body meeting. Principal

***The Governing Body noted the Principal's Report***

**6. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**Teaching and Learning Quality Report**

The Vice Principal for Curriculum and Learner Services presented the Teaching and Learning report. She emphasised that success rates on funded courses were significantly above national rates, however 60% of the College's provision was non-funded in 2014/15. Achievement gaps are narrowing, however the 16-18 provision was still problematic in terms of retention, attendance and success. The learners in this bracket form 1% of provision.

The SAR will be scrutinised and challenged by the Quality & Standards Committee before the final version is brought to the Governing Body meeting on 10 December. The Ofsted report judgements will be reflected in the SAR. The Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee commented that the predicted success rates used at the time of the Ofsted inspection have proved to be accurate and this will be included within the SAR.

A question was asked about the tracking and re-enrolment of leisure learners. The Principal replied that tutors encourage learners to re-enrol from term to term and year to year. The Marketing team are improving their communication with learners, creating emails at a course level rather than by School.

***The Governing Body noted the Teaching and Learning Quality Report***

**Learner Recruitment Report**

A question was asked about whether the College was able to predict future enrolment trends, bearing in mind that government funding is likely to be cut further. The Principal replied that focus has been centred on areas that attract funding, such as English, maths and employability. Improvements have been made to the information available to learners regarding financial assistance and loans, and new ways of delivering provision are being investigated, such as short courses and lectures. A question was raised as to whether data was available on the number of loans taken out by RACC learners that are paid back. There is a danger that, in the future, loans will only be given to students that are considered likely to pay them back. The Principal replied that details of the progression to employment of learners who have received loans can be tracked as part of the destination survey.

Principal

***The Governing Body noted the Learner Recruitment Report***

**7. FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**Management Accounts – July 2015**

The Management Accounts for July 2015 had been circulated and were received.

Governors asked a number of questions in scrutiny of the accounts. A concern was raised about the ratio of teaching to non-teaching staff and how the trend would be reversed. The Principal replied that one of the objectives of the federation with Hillcroft College was to share business support costs. There is no sector benchmark for this ratio. Some staff in the business support area are learner facing, such as IAG and technicians. Although more learners are enrolling online, many like to talk to staff and face to face enrolments take a long time due to government regulations. The College enrolment of LDD learners also requires more admin support. It was agreed that the Executive should review the classifications of staff between teaching and business support. It was noted that the sharing of staffing costs with other

Deputy  
Principal

Colleges will be key to reducing this ratio and further exploration of opportunities was commended.

### **Revised Two Year Financial Plan**

The Deputy Principal reported that the revised Two Year Financial Plan (2014/15 to 2016/17) had been submitted to the Skills Funding Agency by their 30 September deadline with the changes as outlined in appendix 1. The resubmission was caused by the announcement of a further decrease in funding of 3.9% for financial year 2015/16 and was actively encouraged by the SFA. Since the original submission of the financial plan in July, the estimated outturn for 2014/15 has been revised, along with the budgeted operating deficit. The financial information was shared with the Chair and Vice Chair after the Search & Governance Committee meeting of 28 September, in advance of the submission. The SFA was informed that the submission was made in advance of the full Governing Body meeting.

***The Governing Body approved the revised Two Year Financial Plan and the revised 2015/16 budget***

### **Financial Regulations Update**

The Deputy Principal reported that the College's Financial Regulations have been updated to reflect the changes made to job titles during the restructure. A governor highlighted that in clause 13.2.1, regarding the disposal of surplus/obsolete materials and stores, it would be difficult to judge what the original cost of an item would have been. It had therefore been suggested at the Audit Committee that this should be changed to 'the current market value'. It was agreed that the threshold of £5,000 was too high and should be changed to £1,000.

***The Governing Body approved Financial Regulations for 2015/16 subject to the change to clause 13.2.1.***

## **8. UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The Financial Recovery Plan is currently being finalised and will be presented to the Finance & Resources Committee on 12 November 2015. The Principal asked the Governing Body to approve the strategic objectives, noting that the marketing and learner engagement had been removed from the previous objectives as they develop from the implementation of the objectives. The revised objectives are:

- To achieve excellence in all teaching and learning activities
- To provide an outstanding learner experience that creates a sustainable customer base for all RACC services
- To increase learner participation by developing curriculum provision, services and progression pathways that meet the needs of learners seeking:
  - English, maths and basic vocational skills
  - Disability related support to access learning and achieve greater independence
  - Workforce and business development support across private, voluntary and public sectors
  - Routes to HE and higher vocational training
  - Wellbeing and personal development activities
- To develop a range of revenue generating services that complement the curriculum , college mission and meet local needs
- To establish RACC's Parkshot campus as a community hub for learning, leisure, skills development and wellbeing
- To create and sustain a federation of partner organisations that enhance the learner experience and outcomes and help to achieve a sustainable future for adult learning.

***The Governing Body approved the strategic objectives***

**Shared workspace and business development unit (confidential)**

**Volunteering and voluntary sector representation**

***The Governing Body agreed that work should continue on the bids to secure new contracts relating to voluntary service support.***

**9. CAPITAL PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT**

**Claim for additional cost from Bouygues**

The Deputy Principal reported that a settlement has been reached with Bouygues UK, however the final total cannot be confirmed until the planning issue regarding the coping is resolved.

***The Governing Body noted the claim for additional cost from Bouygues***

**Phase 2 of capital development**

The Deputy Principal reported that less disruption and cost would be incurred if all of the work of Phase 2 of the capital development was undertaken at the same time. Builders would be on site for approximately six months, with work completed in time for the 2016/17 academic year. The budget and the work will be monitored by the Finance & Resources Committee.

***The Governing Body approved the undertaking of all of Phase 2 as one project.***

**Lease of land to Deer Park Primary School**

***The Governing Body noted the lease of land to Deer Park Primary School***

**10. RISK REGISTER AND ACTION PLAN**

The Chair of the Audit Committee recommended the Risk Register and Action plan to the Governing Body, informing them that the Committee had made a few changes, including the addition of the Area Reviews as a risk.

The Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee expressed surprise at the high risk scoring of the QAA review. The Principal reported that there were only 18 learners affected by the review and that the risk score may have decreased by December when more information has been made available. The risk was rated as high as the development of future provision was also involved.

A question was asked as to whether the risk of the College's IT systems being unavailable in critical periods, such as enrolment, was included in the risk score. The Deputy Principal responded that as an incident had not occurred in the time span identified in the Risk Strategy, the likelihood score brought the risk score to 'low'.

The medium score of the health & safety and safeguarding system was questioned. The Principal replied that although robust systems are in place, vigilance must be maintained. Safeguarding incidents are reported relatively regularly, and this could increase due to the new Prevent duties. Extra health and safety vigilance is also required due to the new facilities and equipment.

The addition of loss of key staff and therefore access to critical systems was discussed. It was agreed that this should be considered by the Executive team and reported at the next Governing Body meeting in December.

Deputy  
Principal

It was agreed that the College's engagement with Area Reviews, the federation with Hillcroft College and discussions with other Principals should be added to risk 4.

Deputy  
Principal

It was agreed that success rates should be added to the assurance method of risk 5, teaching and learning quality.

Deputy  
Principal

## 11. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

### **AoC new Code of Good Governance**

The Chair reported that the College will need to make some minor changes in order to comply with the new Code of Good Governance, but that it was important that RACC agree to be bound by it. Explanations can be given for any areas where RACC do not wish to adopt. It was agreed that a note should be placed on the website to say that the Code has been adopted.

Clerk

***The Governing Body agreed to adopt the AoC's new Code of Good Governance***

### **Draft Terms of Reference for the Standing Committees**

The Chair reported that the draft terms of reference for the standing committees will be taken to each Committee meeting. These will then be taken to the Search & Governance Committee meeting of 25 November for recommendation to the Governing Body on 10 December.

Clerk

***The Governing Body noted the draft terms of reference for the standing committees.***

### **Governance Self-Assessment 2014/15**

The Chair reminded governors that the governance self-assessment forms part of the SAR process and the process for this year's activity was outlined. The Chair offered the opportunity of one to one conversations should governors feel they would benefit. Governors were asked to inform the Chair or Clerk if they wished for a one to one meeting.

A newly appointed governor queried their ability to complete the form having only been to a few meetings. The Principal responded that a 'don't know' answer might illustrate a gap in the governor induction process and would still be useful and offered the opportunity to meet with Governors who like to discuss the process.

***The Governing Body approved the governance self-assessment process for 2014/15***

### **Governor Skills Audit 2015/16**

The Chair recommended the governor skills audit form, reminding the Governing Body that the process identifies where further understanding is required and areas where the Board may need improvement. It was agreed that the governors could offer more clarification than simply a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

***The Governing Body approved the skills audit process for 2015/16***

### **Governor Expenses Policy**

The Search & Governance Committee recommended the Governor Expenses Policy to the Governing Body.

***The Governing Body approved the Governors Expenses Policy***

### **Staff and Student Governor Appointment Process**

The process of actively engaging students in the appointment process was discussed. It was agreed that students would be asked to contribute questions to the interview panel, which would, as agreed at the Search & Governance Committee meeting, include the outgoing staff and student governors.

Clerk

***The Governing Body agreed the timetable and appointment process for staff and student governors, with the addition of student contributions to the interview questions.***

### **Clerk's Job Description**

The Search & Governance Committee recommended the Clerk's job description to the Governing Body

***The Governing Body approved the Clerk's job description***

**Appointment of a third governor to the Federation Joint Governance Committee**

The Search & Governance Committee recommended the appointment of David Sidonio to the Governing Body. The Committee felt that Mr Sidonio would be a good addition and he was willing to take on the role.

***The Governing Body approved the appointment of Mr David Sidonio to the Federation Joint Governance Committee***

**12. CLERK'S REPORT**

**Corporation Work Plan 2015/16**

***The Governing Body approved the Corporation Work Plan 2015/16***

**Governor Attendance 2014/15**

It was agreed that the final point should be amended to read, 'Several percentages below the 70% are due to new Governors (\*) unable to make scheduled meetings set before they joined the Board, which has affected the overall result. The staff governor informed the Governing Body that she had sent apologies to Board meetings that took place on the dates of College Open Days.

Clerk

***The Governing Body noted the governor attendance for 2014/15***

**Application of the Corporation Seal and Whistleblowing Report**

***The Governing Body noted the Application of the Seal and Whistleblowing Report***

**13. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

The minutes of the Audit Committee of 22 September 2015, and the Search & Governance Committee of 28 September were noted.

***The Governing Body noted the minutes of the standing committees***

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Federation Launch Event**

The Principal informed the Governing Body that a launch event for the Federation with Hillcroft College would take place on the afternoon of Friday 6 November. Invitations will be despatched in the near future.

**Thanks to Staff Governor**

The Chair passed on the thanks of the Governing Body to Gabby Koczian, who retired as staff governor at this meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.