

RACC

Richmond Adult Community College

Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019





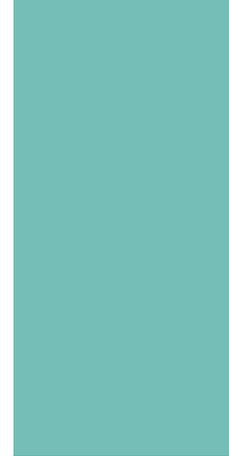


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Our Mission

‘To enable adults to unlock their talent and release their potential through learning, skills and enterprise.’



Our Core Beliefs

1. Learning changes lives and life chances. It enables individuals to develop the skills for employment, wellbeing and greater independence. It fosters active citizenship and helps to build resilient communities.
2. Everyone can benefit from learning regardless of age, ability, background or prior attainment.
3. Barriers to learning caused by disability, disadvantage, low confidence and work and caring commitments can be removed and learning made accessible through modular programmes of study, enabling technology and personalised learning and support.
4. Adults learn and acquire the skills and knowledge to succeed in work and life through a variety of means such as formal, accredited courses and informal activities such as events, lectures, social and networking opportunities.
5. Adult learning is most potent in a diverse environment where learning is personalised and the goals, skills, abilities and starting points of each individual are recognised and planned for.
6. The role of the teacher is central. Skilled teaching enables adults to learn independently, develop opinions, the skills to enquire and to gain confidence to express their ideas.
7. Partnerships with organisations from the voluntary, education and business sectors can enrich learning opportunities, enhance learning outcomes and provide a sustainable means of delivering our mission.



Our Vision for 2016-2019



By 2019 Richmond Adult and Community College will be a beacon of excellence in adult learning in all its forms. The Parkshot Campus will be a creative and cultural hub for Richmond and South West London providing information, support and guidance and a vibrant range of formal and informal learning, enterprise and wellbeing activities for adults of all abilities, ages and backgrounds enabling them to progress in work and life and achieve their potential.

Collaboration with voluntary, public, education and business communities will enrich provision and improve learning outcomes. These enrichment opportunities include work experience, volunteering, specialist speakers, guidance and support, enabling the broad range of learner needs to be met. Partnerships between organisations that support adult learning will provide an efficient method of planning provision across the region, delivering services and sharing best practise.

Rationale for a New Strategy

During the 2012-15 period RACC has been successful in achieving:

- High academic standards with success rates on government priority qualifications in the top 15% nationally in 2014/15.
- 'Good' Ofsted rating with 'Outstanding' features.
- The development of the Parkshot site into an award winning learning campus and community resource.
- A diverse and inclusive learning community. Ofsted praised RACC's 'exceptional' learner support that enables adults of all abilities and backgrounds to access learning.
- The continued meeting of the broad range of wellbeing and personal development learning needs that are not supported by government funding through the development of fee funded provision and bursaries.
- Some cost savings by consolidating onto one site and sharing leadership and management services through federation.
- Partnerships that provide additional support and progression for learners.



The 2012-15 strategy addressed the withdrawal of government funding from adult learning and was initially successful in achieving KPIs for increases in learner numbers and community engagement. However the reduction of funding has been more rapid than forecast by Government in 2012. This has meant that grant funding has decreased faster than it has been possible to replace it with income from fees and other new services. This has affected the whole FE sector. The National Audit Office reported in July 2015 that the financial performance of over half of all colleges was worse than they had anticipated in their two year forecasts. Therefore a new business model is required to achieve a sustainable future for adult learning.

The Community We Serve

Richmond-Upon-Thames and Surrounding Areas

RACC serves a broad range of learning needs. The population of Richmond and surrounding areas, in line with London, increased in the period 2001-11 and continues to rise (Richmond by 8.5%, Kingston by 12% and Hounslow by 20%). Income levels and house prices in Richmond are 20% higher than the England average. Consequently it is a popular location for professionals and families. It has a higher proportion of young children under 9 years (13%, 25,000), less young people aged 16-35 and higher proportions of adults aged 30-49 (22%) and 49-65 than the England average.

Aging Population

Richmond has an aging population with increases in the older age ranges predicted to continue to increase over the next 5 years placing a strain on services. The 2012 Borough Profile and 2013 Census show that there has been a 49% increase in the number of people aged 60-64 since 2001 and a 27% increase in residents aged 65-69 years and over 90 years. 4% of people aged under 65 have 3 or more long term health issues, this rises to 44% for residents aged over 65. 51% of people over 75 years live alone, this is higher than the London average of 35%. 12% are carers and face additional isolation issues.

Mental Health Needs

Although the proportion of adults who have a limiting disability are relatively low in Richmond and South West London compared to London as a whole the number of people with mental health conditions including dementia have risen and further increases are expected in line with the population increase. In Richmond the rate of depressive and anxiety related conditions are the same as in England despite the relatively high levels of affluence. The 2014/15 Richmond Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, February 2015, states that mild to moderate mental health issues are under reported in Richmond and that 20% of patients, 20,000 people, visiting their GP report anxiety and depression.

Richmond Live Well, Recovery College and LBRuT Preventative Health and Dementia Services identify older people, adults with learning difficulties and adults who are new to the UK as groups who are vulnerable to poor mental health because they face isolation and do not access NHS services. The Foundation for People with Learning Difficulties report (2014) that between 25-40% of people with learning difficulties also suffer from mental health problems.



Increasing Ethnic Diversity

Although Richmond is less ethnically diverse than London it is more ethnically diverse than England overall. From 2001 to 2011 the level of White British residents fell from 79% to 71% and the level of White Other residents increased with 5% of residents born in Europe and outside the UK. This is higher than the Greater London level of 2.6%. The 2011 census identified that 10% of Richmond residents, 18,619 local people, do not have English as their main language.

Education Levels

Attainment levels of Richmond children are relatively high. Young people from less advantaged areas travel to study in Richmond. At key stage 2, where only 13% of pupils are from out of borough, achievement levels in local schools are 9% higher than national averages. At Key Stage 4, where 49% of pupils come from out of borough, only 51% achieve A-C GCSE grades and 62% of pupils eligible for free school meals do not gain 5 A*-C grades at GCSE, this is 8% higher than the London average. Adult qualification levels are high. 65% of adults are educated to degree level or above and only 6% of residents hold no qualifications, placing the qualification levels of Richmond adults in the top 5% nationally.



Relative Deprivation

Richmond's unique geography enables relative prosperity and deprivation to coexist. The borough is divided by the Thames, its 22 miles of river frontage and large areas of open land (one third of its 5,095 hectares) separate Richmond's 12 towns and villages and gives them their own unique identities. There are 6 areas with above average levels of deprivation (Castlenau, Ham, Heathfield, Hampton, Mortlake and Whitton) and 11 small areas where 9% of residents live at increased levels of deprivation compared to England (2010 IMD). Unemployment levels, low across Richmond as a whole, are higher in these areas.

There are strong links between unemployment, poor health and deprivation. 12% of Richmond residents who report poor health and low levels of wellbeing are resident in the areas of deprivation. The Richmond Borough Profile 2012 and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014/15 shows a 5 year difference in life expectancy between those reporting the best and the worst quality of wellbeing. The neighbouring borough of Kingston has a similar profile with some areas such as Coombe Hill with unemployment levels 10% higher than the London average and areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived in England.

The Community We Serve *(continued)*

Richmond-Upon-Thames and Surrounding Areas

Employment and Business Needs

Employment levels in Richmond and surrounding areas are comparatively high with 69.8% of the population aged 16-74 economically active and in some form of paid employment (62.6% in Outer London and 62.1% in England). Unemployment levels at 3% are low compared to Outer London (4.9%) and England (4.4%). Long term unemployment levels are the lowest in Greater London, 0.6% compared to 1.08%.



Richmond- Upon-Thames has a healthy economy of £3.4bn GVA (gross value added). The Richmond Business Survey 2015 reports high expectations for growth over the next three years, 66% of businesses plan to grow, 3% higher than in London. Wider employment projections indicate growth of 22,100 jobs by 2031, three quarters of which are in business services. Oxford Economic research states that 'all the 7 boroughs within the (London South) Sub Region are expected to experience net job growth over the same period, with Richmond expected to be the fastest growing borough in South London.' (ref Employment forecasts for South London Response to the Examination in Public, SLP 2010).

The Richmond business environment is entrepreneurial and ambitious, characterised by very high levels of self-employment, at 21% of the working population it is one of the highest in London. The workforce is predominated by senior, technical and professional occupations with 74% in this bracket compared to 53% in London. 62% of residents (55,500) commute out of the borough to work in central London and the City. Creative industries provide 16%, 11,500, jobs in the borough, significantly higher than London generally. Google and Ipsos MORI (April 2013) research identified Richmond as the heart of the digital economy with the highest concentration of small businesses using the web to boost business in London and the third nationally.

At 92.4% the proportion of microbusinesses is particularly high and higher than London. The borough is an established 'home working hotspot' with over a fifth of borough businesses home based and over one third are likely to want to move out of their home in the next three years. The Richmond Business Survey 2015 identifies lack of premises as a barrier to growth. There has been a 24% loss of office space as a result of changes to planning regulations. Richmond has less creative/maker workspaces than other parts of London.



The Non-Resident Workforce

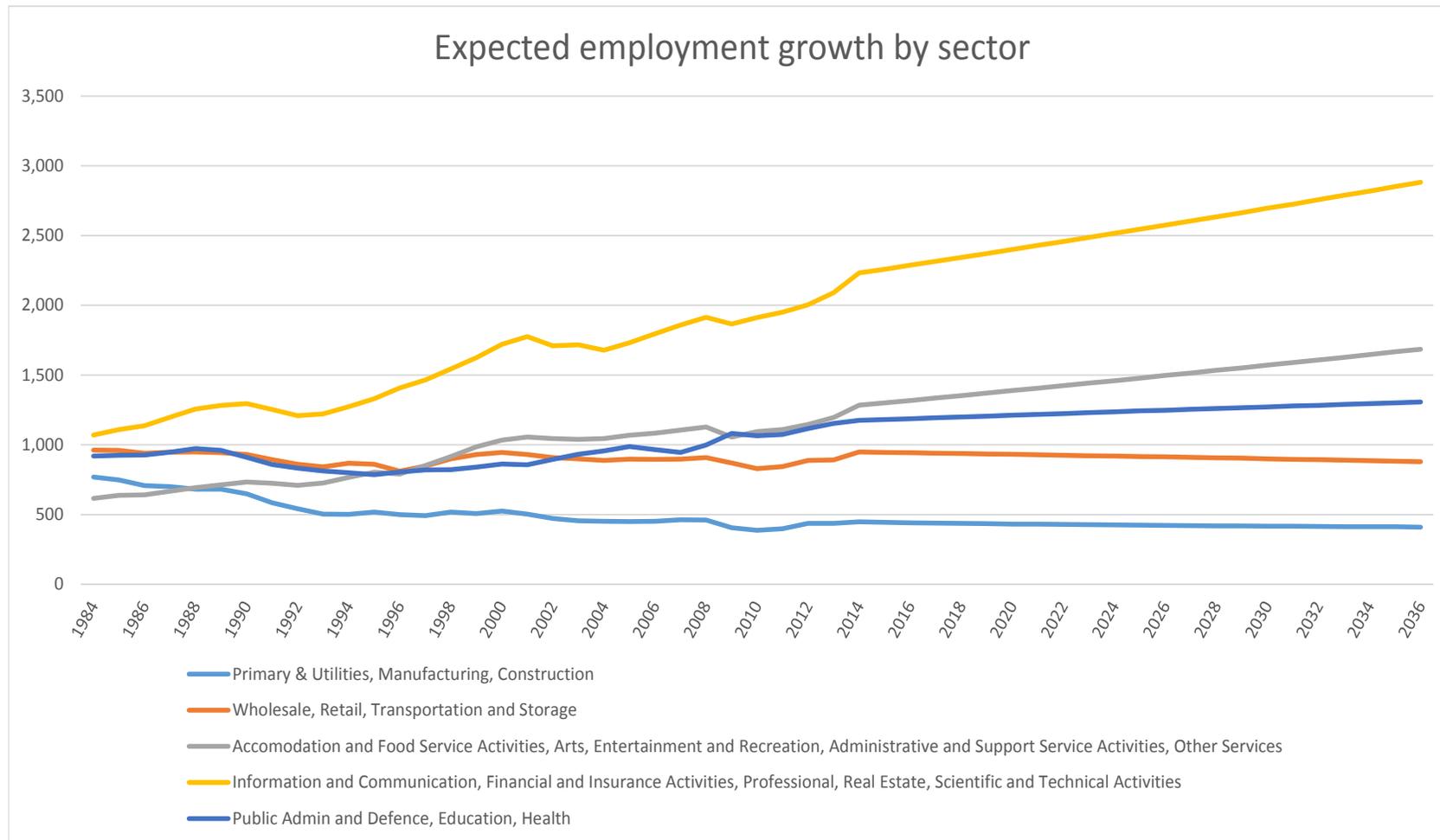
There are 67,000 working people in Richmond. 34,500, 50% of workers, commute in to the borough and have lower skill levels than the resident population. 89% work in service industries, 10% in professional services and 8% in personal services.

The neighbouring borough of Kingston has a similar profile with a higher proportion of women part-time workers with low skill and qualification levels who are paid below the national average.

The Skills and Employment subgroup of the London LEP states that 33% of Londoners lack qualifications at Level 2 and identifies raising Londoners' skill levels as key to providing employers with an able workforce. It predicts there will be 2.2 million new job openings by 2015 in the knowledge economy of the digital, science and technology, financial and professional services areas.

This will require a workforce skilled from Level 2 to Level 5 in the areas of E-commerce, Business Services, Creative and Business Technologies, Human Science, English and Maths. The Richmond Business Survey also identifies the development of both low and high level IT skills within the workforce as key to business growth.

Expected growth in London in the knowledge economies



(Source GLA Economics - London and Sectors Employment 2015 dataset)

RACC Learner Profile

RACC's learner profile is very diverse and more diverse than Richmond as learners travel from surrounding areas of Kingston, Hounslow and London.

2014/15 saw the following learner profile:

- 44% of learners are from BME groups
- 14.3% have a disability
- Women 75%, Men 25%
- 515 learners are enrolled on ESOL provision with additional second language speakers enrolled across the curriculum
- 36.1% studied for their first Level 2 or Level 3
- 2,456 (31.3 %) have declared unemployed, of which 1,106 are 'unemployed, looking for work'.

Learner age bands

- <16 0.3 %
- 16-18 1.3 %
- 19-59 80.4 %
- 60+ 18.0 %

RACC provides an inclusive and supportive environment for adult returners to education. BME learners and learners who have a disability achieve on par with their White British peers and success rates are high at 90%.

Summary of RACC Learner Groups and Needs

- Adults seeking English, maths and employability skills
- Adults with disabilities and learning difficulties seeking greater independence, wellbeing and employment opportunities
- Adults seeking routes to Higher Education and training
- Adults of all abilities seeking personal development, wellbeing and leisure activities
- SMEs and microbusinesses seeking the skills to grow their businesses
- Young people (aged 19-23 years) who need a second chance in education



Market Influences - Challenges

1. Government Policy for Adult Learning and Further Education

The period 2012–16 has seen Government further withdraw support for adult learning by prioritising young people, national skills needs and Apprenticeships. This has meant that although in 2012 the Coalition Government forecast a 20% reduction in funding by 2015 the rate of cuts have been much higher. Grant funding was cut by 28% in 2014/15 alone. The use of remaining adult funding has been restricted to Foundation Level English, maths and employability qualifications up to Level 2 and for the Government's Apprenticeship programme. Adults over the age of 23 years who have more advanced learning needs are required to finance their own learning. Adult learning loans were made available in 2013 but are only available for approved qualifications.

Government's prioritisation of funding for addressing unemployment, national skills shortages and increasing apprenticeships has made it more difficult for RACC to use its remaining grant funding to meet local learning needs. Wellbeing learning and SME business start-up needs are outside Government funding. The small demand for apprenticeships is met by Richmond Council's service Way to Work. The number of adults participating in further education have fallen by approximately 1m since 2012/13. RACC Government grant funded provision has reduced from 95% of provision in 2011/12 to 36% in 2014/15. Fees have been introduced or increased to maintain the curriculum breadth that is required to meet the range of learning needs in Richmond however learner feedback indicates that not all learners can afford to pay fees and those that can need to have the reason for increases explained to them and to feel that they are getting added value for the extra expenditure.

2. Government Policy for Schools and Young People

The raising of the school participation age to 18, the opening of school sixth forms and the reducing demographic of young people aged 16–18 years has seen the numbers in General Further Education Colleges decline across London and in Richmond. The introduction of compulsory Study Programmes for young people and mandatory English and maths for those who have not achieved GCSE Grade C by the age of 16 has also resulted in a decline in demand for RACC's largely part time programmes. In 2015 the RACC Governing Body reviewed RACC's provision for younger learners and made the decision to focus on the needs of young people who have completed compulsory education and the small number of young people whose needs cannot be met within the mainstream and would benefit from an adult environment.

3. The High Cost of Provision

RACC makes learning accessible to adult learners through a curriculum delivered through modular, part time programmes of study with several entry points a year. Class sizes for learners from non-traditional backgrounds are relatively small. Information, support and guidance provided to help learners choose the right course and develop study skills is therefore higher than the sector norm but necessary to ensure that learners progress and achieve their goals.

4. Business Processes

Improvements to business processes and technology could provide opportunities to reduce costs of teaching and learning and provision of information. It could make it easier for learners to find and enrol upon their chosen activity, for transactions to take place more smoothly and information on customer preferences to be used in curriculum and product planning. However RACC's current IT infrastructure is not sufficiently up to date to achieve some of these efficiencies and requires significant investment.

Market Influences - Opportunities

1. Continuing Government Support for English, maths and ESOL

Government has expressed a commitment to continuing to support the learning needs of adults who lack English and maths skills and qualifications up to Level 2. A commitment has also been made to continue to fund English for Speakers of Other Languages to meet the needs of the UK's increasing immigrant population. This is an area of RACC expertise where resource has been developed and increased, and quality improved. Provision was judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in May 2015.

2. Higher Education and Adult Learning Grants

London's need for higher level skills and training in creative and digital technologies, IT and Business Services align with the needs and business interests of Richmond residents and RACC expertise within its Richmond Art School and Richmond Business Schools.

RACC has strong Level 3 Access to Higher Education provision and a small Level 4 and 5 provision in Creative and Digital Arts, Accountancy, Counselling and English Language teaching. Curriculum development opportunities exist in these areas that would provide progression opportunities for adults in South West London.

Although take-up of loans since their introduction has been lower across London than the rest of England its take up is increasing in line with Access to HE provision, providing an accessible route to further study for adults on low incomes.



Market Influences - Opportunities *(continued)*



3. Wellbeing Learning for Positive Mental Health

Increased recognition of national mental health needs has led to a Government commitment to support preventative health services that can improve mental health and promote wellbeing. It has also led to an increased awareness of the role of adult learning in improving mental health by increasing the social and mental capital that is required for improved wellbeing.

The cost to business in terms of sickness absence and lost productivity runs to £32.5 billion. In Richmond it is estimated that 1.3% of employees have taken a days sick leave in the previous week (LBRuT Promoting wellbeing and independence- a framework for prevention 2015-18). NHS mental health expenditure is £13 billion a year. The Pursuit of Happiness, NHS 2014, states that 1 in 6 adults in England suffer from depression and anxiety and that self-managed, healthy lifestyles result in improved mental health.

The New Economics Foundation identified '5 Ways' to improve wellbeing levels:

1. Connect with people around you
2. Be active
3. Take notice
4. Keep learning
5. Give – help others and build reciprocity and trust

Its research demonstrates that informal learning activities provide an effective context for individuals to practise and implement the 5 Ways. The Blackfriars Consensus on Promoting Brain Health makes clear links between healthy, active lifestyles and reduced risk of dementia.

The Government made £5m available for informal adult community learning programmes in 2014/15 and further support has been promised. RACC successfully accessed this fund and has developed a wellbeing programme targeted at the needs of older people and people who have a disability, for which there has been strong demand. The potential exists to further develop this programme to meet the needs of younger, working Richmond residents that seek improved wellbeing, work-life balance and healthy lifestyles that they can finance via fees.

4. Provision for Adults with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Since 2010 in order to promote the independence and inclusion of people who have a disability, Richmond Council have moved from a provider to a commissioning model for services. Council-run services, such as Day Centres for older people and people with disabilities have been closed and replaced with direct payments to service users to enable them to purchase their own activities. Approximately 60% receive direct support payments. Although this transition has been largely successful the 2015 Report of the LBRuT Director of Public Health states that half of Social Services users and carers report that they don't have as much social contact as they would like and that employment opportunities for adults and young people with severe learning difficulties and disabilities remain limited.

People who have a disability are likely to have 2.5 times worse health than their non-disabled peers (Disability Rights Commission 2006). Therefore the 2014 Care Act tasks Local Authorities with providing resources, services and facilities to people who have disability and their carers to prevent or delay ill health and the need for care and support in the future. The Richmond Preventative Care Strategy 2015–18 states the priorities for people with a disability to live as independently as possible, to have access to local services, employment and to have carers who are also supported.

LBRuT have assigned RACC as the key strategic lead for wellbeing activities for adults with learning disabilities due to RACC's outstanding provision for this group who succeed on par with their non-disabled peers and are provided full access to the curriculum through support rated as 'exceptional' by Ofsted in May 2015.



5. The Parkshot Campus

RACC's new Parkshot campus with improved community facilities, refurbished Business School, new Art School and performance spaces provide outstanding learning, work, enterprise and events facilities for Richmond and surrounding areas. Its town centre location and proximity to public transport give it great potential to develop as a centre for a range of commercial activities. The site itself has potential for further development.

RACC's Current Status

Summary of ability to meet learner needs and respond to challenges and opportunities

Quality and Standards

- RACC achieved an Ofsted 'Good' grading in May 2015
- Success rates on Government priority provision at 90% in 2014/15 were 8% above national benchmarks
- RACC is preparing for a review of its Higher Education provision by QAA in October.

Demand and Potential Growth Areas

Participation levels in the following areas are strong:

- Provision for disabled adults on Government funded priority provision
- English and maths qualifications for adults
- English for speakers of other languages
- Non funded wellbeing learning

Areas of potential growth include:

- Access to HE and Higher Education provision
- Wellbeing learning for people who have a disability
- Employability and enterprise training for the unemployed and low skilled
- Business start-up and development for SMEs
- Non funded wellbeing and preventative health related learning for non-disabled adults
- Commercial hire activities for local businesses
- Events programme

There is potential to maintain and extend provision that is Government funded and to also develop new provision that will be funded by fees.





Financial Health

The overall income for the College in 2014/2015 decreased by £1.4 million compared to the previous year, due to a reduction in the funding achieved from the SFA allocation of £1.3 million. The late completion of the capital project contributed to a reduction in learner numbers in 2014/2015. Although overall expenditure was reduced by £700k, this was not sufficient to achieve the budgeted deficit for the year and the final position was a deficit of £1.3 million. However, the College's financial health remains satisfactory with a significant contributor to this being that it has no loans.

The balance sheet therefore shows a deteriorating position with total reserves reducing from £12.7 million to £10.9 million. This includes an increase in fixed assets of £3.7 million following the completion of the capital project.

The key risk for the College is the cash position. Cash days in hand in July 2015 remained high pending the final account settlement of the capital project and planned capital expenditure on phase 2 during 2015/2016. Following the completion of phase 2 at the end of July 2016, based on the budgeted deficit for 2015/2016, the cash position will still allow the College to operate without a loan or overdraft facility.

As a result of the College's challenging financial position it will need to develop collaborations and partnerships to achieve growth targets from a reduced cost base.

Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High academic standards and teaching and learning quality • Ability of learners to pay fees • Facilities, location and transport links • Partnership arrangements • Demand for LLDD, English, maths Government priority provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapidly declining financial health • Higher than sector norm staff costs to income ratio • Learner needs do not match Government funding priorities • Reducing Government grant funding • IT infrastructure
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing costs and extending reach through partnerships • Developing wellbeing provision for fee paying Richmond residents • Developing wellbeing services for disabled residents in receipt of self-directed support funds • HE provision in Art and Design, Business and IT • Exploiting the potential of the Parkshot estate • Potential flexibilities in funding regulations for 2016/17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further cuts to adult grant funding • Lack of infrastructure to effect change in curriculum development and business services • Inability to develop new income streams in line with funding reductions • Increased partner activity on RACC premises dilutes mission and management focus and leads to a reduction in standards. • New partnerships between competitors facing similar challenges results in loss of market share

The Strategy to 2019

The Strategy for 2016–19 is to maintain high academic standards and continue to offer the broad range of provision that meets the breadth of learner needs in Richmond and surrounding areas. Where we will need to drive change is in the diversification of income streams, the development of partnerships that provide additional capacity and resource and through improvement of business processes to enhance the experience of fee paying customers. We will also need to reposition the organisation as a culture, enterprise and wellbeing provider so that our potential customers and partners in these areas understand our potential and the services that we have available for them.

Objectives

1. To achieve and maintain excellence in all teaching and learning activities
2. To provide an outstanding learner experience that creates a sustainable customer base for all RACC services
3. 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 training and support
 - Routes to HE and higher vocational training
 - Wellbeing and personal development learning and activities
4. To develop a range of revenue generating services that complement the curriculum, college mission, meet local needs and finance bursaries
5. To establish RACC's Parkshot campus as a community hub for learning, enterprise and wellbeing
6. To create a federation of partner organisations which enhance learner experience and outcomes and help to achieve a financially sustainable future for adult learning



Driving Change Through Enterprise, Efficiency and Partnership

As always, the strategic objectives seek to maintain and develop standards and breadth of learning opportunities. The key strategic shifts will be made through partnership activities and business processes that achieve efficiencies, enterprise activities that diversify income streams and by positioning RACC to access new leisure, care and business markets. These shifts are summarised, as follows:

Partnerships and Alliances

- The RACC/Hillcroft federation partnership has enabled the reduction of some business support costs and more efficient working however further efficiencies and sharing are required to achieve a reduced cost base that will enable RACC to continue to deliver its mission.
- Partnerships with Richmond Council, The Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Richmond Council for Voluntary Service and voluntary sector organisations have been successful in providing efficient means of accessing learner groups and enriching learning e.g. Entrepreneurs Conference, outreach provision at community centres, capacity building training for the voluntary sector.
- New partnerships will be sought to further develop the benefits achieved to date and explore how partnerships and alliances can be used to plan learning efficiently across the London South region, provide support for learners to achieve and progress and reduce the costs of recruitment and delivery.



Enterprise and Diversification of Income

- RACC has a track record of charging fees for learning that is outside Government funding priorities. Fees will continue to be increased in line with the RACC Fee Policy and market rates. RACC provision receives less Government subsidy than similar competitors so fees can appear high to customers, therefore further fee increases will be determined accordingly.
- To replace lost Government funding and increase income it is necessary to develop new services that support the College mission and vision and meet learner needs using the outstanding new facilities now available following completion of the capital development project. Developing the commercial hires and lettings service for events, exhibitions, meetings and conferences will enrich the learner experience, bring new customers to the site and help to achieve our ambition for Parkshot as a central community resource.
- To complement the creative and cultural offer Richmond Business School provision for the business community will also be developed. Its services will include business start-up support, access to mentoring and business support services.



Improved Business Processes

Technology has an important role to play over the next three years in helping RACC to improve business processes and the customer experience by making it easier to find information about what's on at RACC, how to enrol and by making learning materials more accessible.

To achieve this the website and enrolment processes will be updated, Wi-Fi will be improved to ensure that learners can use their own mobile devices within a professional environment, customer relationship management systems will be developed and customer service training rolled out to all staff.

Positioning RACC to Access New Markets

The development of a fundraising and marketing strategy will enable RACC to explain its enterprise, leisure and wellbeing offers to new potential markets and partners and reposition itself as more than a traditional classroom based learning provider. This will enable it to continue to deliver its mission by boosting income through increased enrolments and revenue and charitable donations that can be used to finance bursaries.



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