

## 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 8 December 2022 at Parkshot (RBS 22) and via Teams

Present: Prof. Andrew George, Chair  
Mr Richard Brewster  
Ms Kate Clarke  
Ms Renuka Fernando  
Ms Gabrielle Flint, Principal  
Mr Nick Jones  
Mr Dave Munby  
Ms Claire O'Donnell  
Ms Sharon Raj  
Mr John Riglin  
Mr Graham Tharp, Staff Governor  
Mr Nigel Ware (remote)

In attendance: Ms Haifa Abdul Amir, VP Curriculum & Quality (VP, C&Q)  
Ms Gaynor Bray, VP Teaching & Learning (VP, T&L)  
Mr Paul Smith, Vice Principal, Operations (VP, O)  
Mr Neil Wallbank, Vice Principal, Finance & Resources (VP, F&R)  
Mrs Sara George, Interim Clerk

The meeting remained quorate throughout.

1.	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b> Mr David Izett and Ms Jane O'Shea sent their apologies. Ms Haifa Abdul Amir, Vice Principal for Curriculum & Quality was welcomed to her first Board meeting.	
2.	<b><u>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2022</u></b> a) The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022 were approved as an accurate record. b) The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022 were approved as an accurate record.	
3.	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></b> <b>24 November 2022 minutes: Post Audit Management Report</b> The Chair of the Audit Committee informed the Board that she had undertaken a confidential conversation with Ms Catherine Biscoe, Engagement Partner at Buzzacott LLP, and confirmed that there was nothing of major significance to note.	
4.	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></b> The Chair reported that he had been made an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow in Leadership, Organisation and Behaviour at Henley Business School. The Board agreed that this is not a conflict of interest.	
5.	<b><u>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</u></b> The Principal presented her report for December 2022, highlighting the positive start to the academic year in terms of learner numbers and progress towards meeting the AEB funding target. The change in colleges' status from Private to Public sector following the Office for National Statistics reclassification was also discussed. The Principal welcomed the appointment of the new Vice Principal for Curriculum & Quality, and reported that the Vice Principal for Operations was due to leave RHACC at the end of February 2023. She	

	<p>thanked Mr Smith for his significant contribution to the College and indicated that work would be undertaken in the new year to review the best use of staffing resources to meet RHACC's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>The Principal reported that the Finance &amp; Resources Committee had requested that the forecasts within the Financial Recovery Plan be extended until 2024/25. The Recovery Plan will be shared with the Board and progress will be reviewed by the Finance &amp; Resources Committee at an additional meeting in January 2023, prior to the Board Strategy Day.</p> <p>The Chair enquired about the risk of losing the Merton SEND contract because of the current retendering exercise. The Principal noted that RHACC have held the contract for the last five years and that Merton Council have not expressed any issues with the current provision. The contract bid includes a plan to extend provision to cover mental health related subjects. It is thought that RHACC will be in a strong position regarding contract renewal due to its knowledge of the learners and venues etc. The GLA funding bid for the creative and technical sectors was also noted.</p> <p>In answer to a question from Mr Jones as to whether the ONS reclassification would affect procurement for the Hillcroft capital development, the Vice Principal for Finance &amp; Resources (VP, F&amp;R) noted that the procedures should not be additionally onerous. One immediate benefit of the reclassification is that the DfE has allocated RHACC £86k of capital funding for energy efficiency improvements.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the Principal's Report for December 2022</i></b></p>	
6.	<p><b><u>FINANCE AND RESOURCES MATTERS</u></b></p> <p><b>a) Management Accounts – October 2022</b></p> <p>The VP, F&amp;R presented the Management Accounts up to 31 October 2022, reporting a deficit of £295k (against a budget of £170k), mostly because of the reduction of tuition fee income. The promising start to the academic year in terms of enrolments was noted; if enrolments follow last year's profile, then the tuition fee budget is likely to be met by the end of the year. It is hoped that the College will over-achieve the GLA's funding allocation, however more work is required to meet the ESFA allocation (for learners residing outside London). The Financial Health score remains stable at 'requires improvement'; the cash position is just under £3m. A plan is in place to achieve the ring-fenced Multiply funding. Forecasts show only 50% achievement of NSF funding, however this is similar to other providers in the GLA area.</p> <p>A Financial Recovery Plan has been created that will look at income streams, how to achieve more value per learner, competitor pricing, boosting hires and events income and the staffing structure. The plan will be circulated and discussed by the Finance &amp; Resources Committee in January and the Board at the February Strategy Event. Mr Jones noted that the Finance &amp; Resources Committee were confident that the Plan formed a good basis for moving forward, with the action plan including a review of course contributions.</p> <p>Mr Brewster asked whether there was evidence of an improving trend for tuition fee income. The VP F &amp; R replied that £1.1m had so far been achieved, and this is almost at the level of full year figures achieved in 2021/22. Overall, there are signs of an improving trend although it is likely that tuition fees generated through adult learner loans would not achieve budget as a result of some courses now being fully funded rather than being funded through loans.</p> <p>In answer to a question from the Chair regarding the timescales involved in moving the financial health score from requires improvement to good, the VP F &amp; R noted that forecasts indicate a mid-range requires improvement or a low good score in 2023/24, depending on fee income levels. The Financial Recovery Plan has been extended to three years to enable the Board to see the trajectory of improvement.</p>	VP, F & R

***The Board noted the Management Accounts for October 2022.***

**b) Financial statements and regularity audits for 2021/22**

**bi) Post Audit Management Report 2022**

The VP, F & R presented the Post Audit Management Report for 2022, noting that Buzzacott had made some revisions to the version presented to the board on 24 November, including updating the LGPS statistics. Mr Ware queried why the report still states that Buzzacott are unable to complete their audit, but the outcome of the ESFA/GLA funding audits has been removed from the outstanding items section. The VP, F & R indicated that the ESFA year end reconciliation has been received, with no clawback, but not the final report, and the GLA year end reconciliation is still awaited. Verbal confirmation has been received that there is no further work required, but Buzzacott will not sign the financial statements until the GLA reconciliation has been received.

The Chair asked that the staff team were congratulated on the clean audit report.

***The Board noted the Post Audit Management Report for 2022, subject to the GLA reconciliation.***

**bii) Letter of Representation**

The Principal and VP, F & R confirmed that nothing had changed to affect the signing of the Letter of Representation, therefore the Board approved its signing by the Principal and Chair.

***The Board approved the Letter of Representation***

**biii) Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2021/22**

The VP, F & R presented the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire for 2021/22, reminding the Board that the format is set by the ESFA each year, and that the College's response had been scrutinised and recommended by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 24 November. Since that meeting additional evidence, in the form of the planned programme of maintenance, was added to the question regarding care of premises.

***The Board approved the signature of the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire by the Chair and the Principal.***

**biv) Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22**

Ms Raj, as Chair of the Audit Committee, presented its Annual Report for 2021/22, drawing specific attention to section 8, the Audit Committee's opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control and processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency and the safeguarding of assets.

On the Audit Committee's recommendation, the Board agreed to reappoint Buzzacott as external auditors.

***The Board noted the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2021/22.***

**bv) Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021/22**

The VP, F & R presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements, informing the Board of some minor changes since the document was reviewed on 24 November. Whilst underlying figures have not changed, notes have been added to the accounts about capital equipment due to the summer works at Hillcroft, and a post-balance sheet event has been added regarding the ONS reclassification. It was noted that if the GLA's year end reconciliation shows any material clawback, further changes will need to be made.

***The Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2021/22***

	<p><b>c) Update on Hillcroft Capital Development</b></p> <p><i>[REDACTED]</i></p> <p><b>The Board noted the update on the Hillcroft Capital Development.</b></p> <p><b>d) Our People Strategy</b></p> <p>The Principal presented the People Strategy, informing the Board that the Implementation Plan which will be developed from the Strategy, will be managed by HR Manager Ulrike Nucera and monitored by the Finance &amp; Resources Committee. Ms Clarke suggested that one of the measures of success for the Strategy could be the achievement of kite marks such as Investors in People. It was agreed that this would be considered.</p> <p>The Chair noted that “coaching and mentoring” is used frequently throughout the Strategy and acknowledged that they were very different approaches, asking whether there would be separate schemes and adding that individuals should not receive both types of support at the same time. The Principal indicated that most of the support required was for curriculum middle managers and would vary dependent on the needs of the individual staff member.</p> <p>Ms Raj asked whether, due to the amount of work to be achieved and the challenge of monitoring everything, measures would be prioritised. The Principal replied that this was why the external support from Rockburn HR was being retained for Ms Nucera. Ms Fernando offered to share an example of a key metrics (for example recruitment and attrition) tracking score card used at Kings College, and this was agreed. It was agreed that the Implementation Plan should identify priority areas and how their outcomes will be measured.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Our People Strategy.</b></p>	<p>VP, F&amp;R</p> <p>Ms Fernando VP, F&amp;R</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>TEACHING AND LEARNING MATTERS</b></p> <p><b>a) RHACC Self-Assessment Report 2021/22</b></p> <p>The Vice Principal for Teaching &amp; Learning (VP, T &amp; L) presented the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2021/22, reminding the Board that drafts were scrutinised by two other IALs and the Quality &amp; Standards Committee. Ms Clarke, Chair of the Quality &amp; Standards Committee commended Head of Quality Ronan Conway for his authorship of the SAR, his first for RHACC.</p> <p>The Chair asked which three strengths and which three areas for development should governors particularly focus on, in preparation for an Ofsted inspection. The VP, T &amp; L responded that three key strengths are a very effective curriculum strategy, an effective allocation of resources and the lack of significant achievement gaps. The Principal added the College’s inclusivity to the list of strengths, and noted the need to measure impact more clearly and obtaining and using destination data as areas for development.</p> <p>Ms Clarke emphasised that Ofsted inspectors will have an expectation that governors have read and understood the key messages within the SAR.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22</b></p> <p><b>b) Quality Improvement Plan 2022/23</b></p> <p>The VP, T &amp; L presented the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2022/23, noting that it derives from the areas for development identified in the Self-Assessment Report, with clear links within the plan to the judgements made in the SAR.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the Quality Improvement Plan for 2022/23.</b></p>	

**c) Curriculum Strategy 2022 - 2025**

The Principal presented the Curriculum Strategy for 2022 to 2025, informing the Board that its creation was delayed due to the need to wait for the GLA, local councils and employers to decide on their priorities post-covid. Colleges are now responsible for meeting the needs of their local communities, taking account of the Locals Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and liaising with the Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) with Ofsted are now responsible for checking that this is taking place. The Principal noted that she had recently met with the local ERB, Business LDN, and reported the risk that they lacked focus on wellbeing. She noted that the data within the Strategy will require review in 23/24 when further information will be available, further from covid, on local needs.

The Principal indicated that the second part of the Curriculum Strategy acted as a position statement for adult education, emphasising the differences in approach to enrichment, the distinction between courses for work and wellbeing and distinguishing between the different types of partnerships developed by adult colleges and how they meet the needs of learners. Once approved, an Implementation Plan will be developed, however it was noted that once the LSIP becomes available in 2023 the Strategy is likely to be amended to meet its priorities.

Ms Raj noted that a sizeable part of the Strategy seemed to be created in preparation for an Ofsted visit, and queried how realistic it was for teachers, especially those on variable hours, to have read and understood the document. The Principal indicated that tutors know who their learners are and understand their needs, therefore it will be more important for Programme Managers to understand the Strategy and be able to articulate the reasoning behind their provision. The Vice Principal for Curriculum & Quality added that Ofsted will triangulate information received from tutors and Programme Managers and will consider levels of responsibility when judging responses.

***The Board approved the Curriculum Strategy 2022 – 2025.***

**d) Feedback from Ofsted 1:1 training**

The Chair provided verbal feedback on the recent 1:1 Ofsted preparation training provided for available Governors, noting that the Board should not be overly focussed on inspections, as the highest priority should always be providing excellence for learners. Consultant Cliff Shaw will be providing a written report for scrutiny by the Search & Governance Committee, which will include some recommendations, and these will be shared with the Board during the Strategy Event.

Anecdotally Mr Shaw has fed back that RHACC Governors are clear on the College vision and the direction of travel, and understood the strategic priorities, but need to be able to illustrate this knowledge with examples and stories. Committees will therefore be encouraged to note their impact and compile stories of how things have been done differently because of their decisions. Ofsted will want to see examples of how the Board, and individual governors, have changed the learner experience.

Key documents, such as the Strategic Plan, Curriculum Strategy and the SAR will be placed into one area of the GVO for easy access by Governors.

***The Board noted the feedback from the Ofsted 1:1 training.***

Interim Clerk

8.	<p><b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p><b>a) Internal Audit Plan 2022/23</b> The VP, F &amp; R presented the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23, which the Audit Committee approved at its meeting on 24 November. It was noted that the HR internal audit will be delayed for a further year to let the new staff team and new software become established.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23.</i></p> <p><b>b) Risk Register and Action Plan / Heat map</b> The VP, F &amp; R presented the Heat Map and Risk Register and Action Plan, highlighting the movement of risk 16: <i>2022/23 budget is not delivered as planned which could have subsequent implications for 2023/24 and beyond</i> from a high to medium risk due to the stable enrolment numbers for term one. Risk 12: <i>Development of the Hillcroft site may not be feasible or financially viable / planning permission might not be obtained</i> remains a high risk due to the continuing number of uncertainties around planning and financing.</p> <p>Ms Raj and the Chair agreed that the Board should discuss risk appetite during the Strategy Event in February. Mr Jones noted that most risks were now clustered into the 2 x 2 medium category and agreed that a discussion to un-pack them would be useful.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Heat Map and the Risk Register and Action Plan.</i></p>	VP, F & R
9.	<p><b><u>ITEMS TO APPROVE</u></b></p> <p><b>a) Financial Regulations 2022 -23</b> <i>The Board approved the Financial Regulations for 2022/23</i></p> <p><b>b) Health &amp; Safety Policy 2023 - 25</b> <i>The Board approved the Health &amp; Safety Policy</i></p>	
10.	<p><b><u>ITEMS TO NOTE</u></b></p> <p><b>a) Annual Learner Feedback Report 2021/22</b> <i>The Board noted the Annual Learner Feedback Report for 2021/22</i></p> <p><b>b) Annual Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Report 2021/22</b> <i>The Board noted the Annual Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Report 202/22</i></p> <p><b>c) Annual Health &amp; Safety Report 2021/22</b> <i>The Board noted the Annual Health &amp; Safety Report 2021/22</i></p> <p><b>d) HR Annual Report 2021/22</b> <i>The Board noted the HR Annual Report 2021/22</i></p> <p><b>e) Search &amp; Governance Annual Report 2021/22</b> <i>The Board noted the Search &amp; Governance Annual Report 2021/22</i></p>	
11.	<p><b><u>MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES</u></b></p> <p>a) Finance &amp; Resources – 20 October 2022 b) Capital Projects Steering Group – 3 November 2022 c) Search &amp; Governance Committee – 3 November 2022 d) Quality &amp; Standards Committee – 10 November 2022 e) Audit Committee – 24 November 2022 f) Quality &amp; Standards Committee – 29 November 2022</p> <p><i>The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committees</i></p>	

12.	<p><b><u>BOARD DEVELOPMENTS</u></b></p> <p>The Chair gave a verbal update on Board developments, announcing that he has decided to stand down as Chair at the end of the 22/23 academic year. The Search &amp; Governance Committee will consider the succession plan and recruitment process. Several Governor's terms of office are also due to expire at the end of the year, and Mr Izett is due to relocate to France in March. The Search &amp; Governance Committee has therefore agreed to stagger recruitment to ensure that there are a manageable number of new members at the same time.</p>	
13.	<p><b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p><b>Gaynor Bray</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for Teaching &amp; Learning, Gaynor Bray, for all her efforts on behalf of the College on the occasion of her retirement. She was presented with flowers and champagne on behalf of the Board.</p>	

The meeting closed at 19:30