

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 13 July 2023 at Parkshot (RBS 22)

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

In attendance: Ms Haifa Abdul Amir, VP Curriculum & Quality (VP, C&Q)
Mr Neil Wallbank, Vice Principal, Finance & Resources (VP, F&R)
Mrs Sara George, Interim Clerk

The meeting remained quorate throughout.

1.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Mr John Riglin sent his apologies. The Chair welcomed Ms Chu to her first Board meeting and reminded Governors that meetings will be held face to face going forward.	
2.	<u>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2023</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record. It was agreed that information within the Hillcroft Capital Development item should be redacted for the website.	Interim Clerk
3.	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u> None	
4.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> The Principal, the Vice Principal for Finance & Resources (VP, F&R), the Vice Principal for Curriculum & Quality (VP, C&Q), Mr Tharp and the Interim Clerk declared an interest in item 9d – Budget setting for 23/24.	
5.	<u>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</u> The Principal stated that the College has ended the year in a relatively positive position despite a number of challenges, due to the hard work and commitment of the staff team. The funding bid to the GLA for digital skills training for the Creative Industries was unsuccessful. However, RHACC has benefitted from the planning process and has used this to inform the existing offer to the local creative sectors. Partnerships are in development with Richmond and Orange Tree theatres. The Government announcement regarding pay increases for teachers (of 6.5%) was discussed. The DfE also announced additional funding for FE, however, it is unclear at this	

	<p>point whether any funding will reach adult education. It was noted that any additional funding may be received via the Teachers' Pension Grant.</p> <p>The Principal outlined the staff structure chart for 2023/24, highlighting the change from two Directors of School to one Director of Teaching and Learning which will promote cross-College working and the sharing of best practice between curriculum areas. The changes aim to protect jobs and ensure appropriate management oversight and workload. Changes will cost £160k.</p> <p>Mr Ware suggested that the change might increase the burden of the Executive Team. The Principal replied that once the new Head of Quality and Director of Teaching and Learning start in post, the current high pressure on the Executive capacity should reduce.</p> <p>Mr Ware asked who was driving the digital transformation programme after the departure of Ms Symons so that momentum on the projects was not lost. The Principal replied that the VP, F&R has oversight, with the experienced Dayo Ogunjobi serving as Interim Head of IT.</p> <p>In answer to a question from Ms O'Shea about the provision of IAG when there is only one 0.6FTE Information and Guidance Officer, the Principal indicated that IAG is delivered at different levels throughout the organisation; general course information is available via Reception and Learner Services (whose staff all have IAG L2 qualifications), teachers also signpost progression opportunities in class. Variable hours IAG Advisers work with the Established IAG Officer to provide impartial careers advice.</p> <p>Ms O'Shea commented on the encouraging learner and enrolment numbers. The Principal reported that there was strong interest at the recent Open Days, particularly from learners interested in a career change.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Principal's Report for July 2023.</i></p>	
6.	<p><u>ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT</u></p> <p>The Principal presented RHACC's Accountability Statement, which needs Board approval prior to submission to the ESFA by 31 July. The Statement follows the proforma provided by the ESFA, priorities in the Curriculum Strategy and also incorporates feedback provided by the Quality & Standards Committee. It was noted that the Statement can be changed at any time.</p> <p>Ofsted will use the Statement to judge how well RHACC is meeting local needs.</p> <p>Ms O'Donnell noted that the London LSIP included a statistic that 67% of businesses don't know what their future skills needs will be, and asked whether RHACC was providing enough provision that included soft skills. The Principal responded that course information is being reviewed to ensure that transferrable skills, as soft skills are referred to, are highlighted.</p> <p><i>The Board approved RHACC's Accountability Statement.</i></p>	
7.	<p><u>TEACHING AND LEARNING</u></p> <p>Teaching & Learning Quality Report</p> <p>The VP, C&Q presented the Teaching & Learning Quality Report, highlighting that attendance is 1.1% below target at 85.9%. Not all achievement data is yet available yet but achievement on funded courses is predicted to improve by 5.5% on last year, and non-funded courses by 3.5%. Observations of lessons continue to show that teaching and learning is good. OTLA reports have informed CPD both for July and September.</p> <p>The Chair requested information about the achievement of different ethnic groups, which the VP, C&Q agreed to share at the next meeting. The Principal noted that management</p>	VP, C&Q

scrutinise this information at meetings of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Group.

The Board noted the Teaching & Learning Quality Report.

IAG Strategy 2023 – 2025

The VP, C&Q presented the IAG Strategy for 2023 – 2025, which was recommended for approval by the Quality & Standards Committee. Changes further aligned the IAG Strategy to the Curriculum Strategy.

The Board approved the IAG Strategy for 2023-25.

Matrix report 2023

The VP, C&Q presented the Matrix inspection report for 2023, noting the four-day assessment which resulted in RHACC passing all 27 separate criteria. Accreditation lasts for three years, with annual monitoring visits. Some areas for development were highlighted, which will be included in the main self-assessment process. Recommendations that will be included in the Quality Improvement Plan for 2023/24. The Chair passed on the Board’s congratulations to the staff involved.

The Board noted the Matrix report for 2023.

Supported Learning Quality Audit

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<p>8.</p>	<p>REVIEW OF CHILDCARE PROVISION</p> <p>The Principal presented the review of childcare provision and the proposal that the creche at Parkshot is closed at the end of the academic year. The college is able to pay for offsite childcare provision which is an increasingly popular option for learners. The review highlighted a number of risks associated with onsite provision that include the small building with limited outdoor space, lack of childcare expertise at creche management level, decline in use. When surveyed, current service users stated that having access to a creche was not one of the reasons for choosing the College. Assistance will be provided to learners to find alternative provision, and a leaflet (in multiple languages) is being created that details childcare entitlements and local providers.</p> <p>The Principal noted that the five variable hours creche staff have been consulted about the closure and potential redeployment opportunities. All have requested redundancy.</p> <p>Mr Munby asked whether the available funding would cover the full cost of alternative childcare, as private providers are likely to charge more. The Principal confirmed that funding would cover full costs. The Chair asked whether the College knew that there were local spaces available. The Principal indicated that this was not known, as vacancy numbers were likely to change and the college could not give this assurance to learners.</p> <p>Ms O’Shea asked about the creche details that were included in the current course guide and on the website. The Principal confirmed that the website information could be changed easily but the printed information would remain until the new guide was produced in January. The leaflet will be available for any learners enquiring about creche provision and staff will be briefed accordingly.</p> <p>Mr Jones confirmed that the Finance & Resources Committee were willing to recommend the closure, Ms Raj confirmed that the Audit Committee were also recommending closure and Ms Clarke confirmed that the Quality & Standards Committee also agreed.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the proposal to close the creche at the end of the 22/23 academic year.</i></p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>FINANCE AND RESOURCES MATTERS</p> <p>Management Accounts – April 2023</p> <p>The VP, F&R presented the Management Accounts for April 2023, noting that they had been scrutinised by the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 5 July. The accounts</p>	

show an overall deficit of £757k against a budgeted deficit of £506k. Total income is £179k lower than budget, with total pay costs over budget due to the increased LGPS contributions required from April. Non-pay costs are above budget due to the significant increase in utilities costs. The EBITDA is a £270k deficit against a budgeted deficit of £28k. It was noted that the accounts assume 100% usage of the GLA allocation, as opposed to the 102.9% achieved. The GLA are likely to pay to 103% of allocation, which would result in additional income of £150k. The financial health grade remains at 'requires improvement', with the staff costs to income ratio at 72%. The cash position has been bolstered by just over £1m of capital grants from the DfE.

Mr Ware asked whether the continued financial health score of 'requires improvement' would result in intervention from the FE Commissioner. The VP, F&R replied that there are no indications that this would be the case. In response to a question from Mr Munby as to whether the financial risks were included in the overall College risk register, the VP, F&R replied that not achieving the budget was included as a risk. Ms Clarke queried whether the overspend in administration costs related to the underspend in the teaching costs budget. The VP, F&R explained that administration costs include the business support staff costs (Finance, MIS, IT, Exams and Learner Services staff) and agency and recruitment costs. The overspend in examination costs resulted from the awarding bodies increasing their fees. Mr Jones noted that the Finance & Resources Committee had asked the VP, F&R to provide a more detailed breakdown of what was included within administration costs going forward.

The Board noted the Management Accounts for April 2023.

Draft Budget 2023/24

The VP, F&R presented the draft budget for 23/24, which is being recommended by the Finance & Resources Committee. The draft budget reflects a proposed 3% pay increase for all staff, an income target of achieving 103% of the GLA funding allocation and increasing tuition fee income to £2m. The draft budget forecasts a £751k deficit for the year, with a negative EBITDA of £100k. The cash balance includes the capital grant funding received, spend of the grant will be determined as part of the Estates Strategy. The financial health score remains at 'requires improvement'.

Mr Jones noted that the budget had been discussed at length by the Finance & Resources Committee, particularly in relation to the risks and sensitivities, and while it thought the budget was realistic and achievable, it believed that the required increase in volume would be a big challenge. The Marketing Strategy Action Plan would therefore be scrutinised in the Autumn term to ensure that the volume increase was achievable. It was also noted that if inflation rises beyond the budgeted 5% then this increases the risk.

Ms Clarke asked whether exam fees could be separated out from tuition fees, so that learners pay them separately, particularly if it is unclear what the examination costs are going to be. The VP, F&R replied that the College is not allowed to charge fees for some courses, such as English and maths. The Principal added that in the past exam fees were separated, but learners had then decided not to take the examination, which affected achievement rates.

Ms O'Shea asked whether the 5% increase to tuition fees may be a barrier to enrolment for some learners and whether a competitor analysis had been scrutinised. The VP, F&R replied that when the competitor pricing exercise was conducted in February/March, there was little information available. Comparisons with competitors vary at course level, with some costs higher and some lower – overall prices appear to be average.

The Board approved the budget for 2023/24.

10.	<p><u>HILLCROFT CAPITAL UPDATE</u> [Item Redacted]</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Hillcroft Project update.</i></p>	
11.	<p><u>AUDIT MATTERS</u> Risk Register and Action Plan / Heat Map Ms Raj, Chair of the Audit Committee, presented the Heat Map and Risk Register & Action Plan, highlighting the risks that had increased in score (risk 1: <i>Loss of Key Staff</i>, risk 2: <i>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</i> and risk 5: <i>Teaching and Learning quality falls below relevant benchmarks and standards</i>). She reported that the Audit Committee had discussed at length what actions could be put in place to mitigate the current staffing issues. The Finance & Resources Committee had similar discussions.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Heat Map and the Risk Register & Action Plan.</i></p>	
12.	<p><u>SEARCH & GOVERNANCE</u> External Review of Governance The Interim Clerk presented the external review of governance conducted by Stone King LLP, noting the Search & Governance Committee’s suggestion that the new Clerk be tasked with creating an action plan from the recommendations once in post. This was agreed.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the external review of governance and agreed that the Clerk be tasked with creating an action plan.</i></p> <p>Governance self – assessment process 2022/23 The Interim Clerk presented the recommended governance self-assessment process for 2022/23, noting that a revised questionnaire will be discussed by each Committee at its first meeting of the 23/24 academic year.</p> <p><i>The Board approve the governance self-assessment process for 22/23.</i></p> <p>Recruitment of an Independent Governor <i>The Board approved the appointment of Matthew Pope as an Independent Governor.</i></p> <p>Terms of office <i>The Board approved the reappointment of Jane O’Shea to the Board for a further year and continuation of her role as Link Governor for Safeguarding and Learner Involvement. The Board also approved the appointment of Nigel Ware as a co-opted member to the Capital Projects Steering Group in the role of Chair.</i></p> <p>Board memberships & Committee structure 2023/24 <i>The Board approved the memberships and Committee structure for 2023/24, including the appointment of John Riglin as Audit Chair, Jane O’Shea retiring from the CPSG and joining the Audit Committee, the appointment of Sharon Raj to the CPSG and the appointment of Matthew Pope to the Finance & Resources Committee.</i></p>	Principal

13.	<p><u>MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES</u></p> <p>Capital Projects Steering Group: 24 May 2023 Finance & Resources Committee: 25 May 2023 Search & Governance Committee: 14 June 2022 Remuneration Committee: 14 June 2023 Quality & Standards Committee: 29 June 2023 Audit Committee: 4 July 2023</p> <p><i>The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committees.</i></p>	
14.	<p><u>ITEMS TO APPROVE</u></p> <p>Risk Management Strategy 2023/24 Ms O'Donnell suggested that the definition of the likelihood of a risk occurring was somewhat ambiguous. The VP, F&R agreed to review the wording.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Risk Management Strategy for 2023/24 subject to amended wording.</i></p> <p>Financial Regulations 2023/24</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Financial Regulations for 2023/24</i></p> <p>Draft Board workplan 2023/24</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Workplan for 2023/24</i></p> <p>Draft meeting dates 2023/24</p> <p><i>The Board approved the meeting dates for 2023/24</i></p> <p>Committee terms of reference 2023/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Audit Committee II. Finance & Resources Committee III. Search & Governance Committee IV. Quality & Standards Committee V. Capital Projects Steering Group <p><i>The Board approved the Committee terms of reference for 2023/24</i></p>	VP, F&R
15.	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>The Chair noted that Mr Brewster was retiring from the Board having served two terms of office. Mr Brewster will visit the October meeting to say farewell in person.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Mr Ware was retiring from the Board after serving 10 years and 3 months but would be serving as the co-opted Chair of the CPSG. Mr Ware was thanked for his service.</p> <p>The Chair noted that Mrs George was completing her role as Interim Clerk, with a new Clerk taking up the role in August. Mrs George was thanked for her service.</p> <p>The Principal noted the retirement of Mr George as Chair, having served on the Board for 12 years. Mr George was thanked for his time as Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee and as Chair and was presented with a gift of learner artwork.</p>	