

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 9 December 2021 at Parkshot

Present: Prof. Andrew George, Chair
Mr Richard Brewster
Ms Kate Clarke
Ms Gabrielle Flint, Principal
Mr David Izett (remote) (items 1 – 7 only)
Mr Dave Munby (remote)
Ms Jane O'Shea
Ms Farah Rachlin, Vice Chair (remote)
Ms Sharon Raj (remote)
Mr Paul Simmons (remote) (items 1 – 9 only)
Mr Graham Tharp, Staff Governor
Mr Nigel Ware

In attendance: Ms Gaynor Bray, Vice Principal, Teaching & Learning (VP, T&L)
Mr Neil Wallbank, Director of Finance & Resources and Clerk (DoF&R)
Mr Paul Smith, Executive Director, Commercial (ED,C)
Ms Sara George, Executive PA to the Principal

The meeting remained quorate throughout.

| | | |
|----|---|-------|
| | <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p><u>PRESENTATION BY NEIL WALLBANK, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & RESOURCES</u></p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources gave a presentation on College Funding, reminding Governors of the context of RHACC's funding arrangements and sources of income, the complexities of the current systems and eligibility rules.</p> <p>The Governors welcomed the presentation and asked that the slides be made available on GVO.</p> | DoF&R |
| 1. | <p><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></p> <p>Nick Jones sent his apologies.</p> | |
| 2. | <p><u>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2021</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19 October 2021 were agreed to be an accurate record and approved without any redactions.</p> <p><u>MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2021</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Board Meeting held on 25 November 2021 were agreed to be an accurate record and approved without any redactions.</p> | |
| 3. | <p><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p> | |
| 4. | <p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></p> <p>None.</p> | |

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| <p>5.</p> | <p>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</p> <p>The Board received the Principal's report from December 2021, noting that the autumn term had presented staffing issues due to sickness and difficulties in recruitment. The Principal updated governors on the current situation regarding Covid and that it was governments guidance to continue face to face delivery wherever possible. Staff have been made aware that there will be no pay award due to the current deficit and have been asked to control costs as much as possible.</p> <p>The Principal outlined a re-organisation proposal to improve efficiency by moving from a three school structure to a two school structure on the imminent retirement of two Directors of School. A pay benchmarking exercise is also being undertaken to assess the extent to which College salaries are competitive. This includes assessing the potential to move staff on spot salaries onto scales.</p> <p>In answer to a question from Ms Rachlin regarding whether other cost-saving measures will be needed, the Principal reported that staff utilisation is being reviewed to establish the extent to which permanent teaching staff might be able to increase their teaching hours.</p> <p>Professor George suggested that the College could offer to pay for staff to have the flu vaccine; the Principal replied that this would be investigated.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Principal's report for December 2021.</i></p> | <p>Principal</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN</p> <p>The Principal presented the draft Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2025, noting that the feedback provided by the Board at the October meeting and individual feedback from Governors has been incorporated. The draft has been shared with staff, who gave positive feedback on the values and emphasis on service. Once approved, work will commence with staff on how to embody the values, and the Executive team will start to create strategies around 'people', 'digital', 'curriculum', 'partnerships' and 'estate'. These will be brought to the relevant Committees for approval and monitoring.</p> <p>After a brief discussion, it was agreed that references to Surbiton should be removed and replaced with 'Kingston upon Thames', or 'the Borough of Kingston upon Thames'.</p> <p>Ms O'Shea queried the use of 'Our Impact' on page 30, which is not included in the contents and is a further learner journey case study. Mr Izett questioned the vision statements on page 30, feeling that the College was already achieving most of them and felt that they should be more challenging. Mr Simmons said that the values were vague and didn't relate to KPIs. The Principal reported that the values would be interpreted in to behaviours and linked to the appraisal process.</p> <p>Mr Brewster commented on the lack of measurable key performance indicators within the Plan. The Principal replied that the KPIs were taken out of the document following feedback from the board and will be put in to the plans for each of the strategic objectives. In answer to questions related to the KPI of being Ofsted outstanding, the Principal responded that RHACC must aim for this grading with a clearly articulated curriculum intent, implementation plan and impact assessment process. Ms Clarke queried whether the Strategic Plan needed to have details of the resources required to meet the College's vision included. The Chair responded that this information would be provided as part of the next stage of work and in internal documents.</p> <p>The amount of information about the Women's Education provision and national mission was debated, with some governors feeling that additional context around this was</p> | <p>Principal</p> |

| | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| | <p>required, whilst others believing that the coverage was overstated in comparison to the size of the curriculum area. The Principal agreed to review this area.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Strategic Plan subject to the changes detailed above.</i></p> | Principal |
| 7. | <p><u>FINANCE AND RESOURCES MATTERS</u></p> <p>a) Management Accounts – October 2021</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources presented the October 2021 Management Accounts, which had been reviewed by the Finance & Resources Committee in November. At present the College remains on budget, assuming that GLA and ESFA funding allocation is achieved. The current year-end forecast is for 90% of the GLA allocation to be achieved. This could result in clawback of funds. No response has been received from the ESFA regarding RHACC’s proposal to repay the £1.8 million overpayment of funds in May 2018. As a result the cash position remains good, although the financial health score has dropped to ‘requires improvement’ (as expected).</p> <p>Ms O’Shea asked whether the reduction in the availability of rooms for hire will be permanent. The Principal said that Covid restrictions meant that additional teaching room space is required for classes. It is anticipated that this situation will change when all restrictions are lifted and public confidence increases.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the October 2021 Management Accounts</i></p> <p>bi) RHACC Post Audit Management Report 2021</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources presented the Buzzacott Post Audit Management Report, informing the Board that the version presented had been updated, to reflect the current audit status, since the report presented to the Board meeting on 25 November. The outstanding items have been resolved; the GLA funding reconciliation was received on 8 December, and the letter of representation will be signed on 9 December.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the RHACC Post Audit Management Report 2021</i></p> <p>bii) Letter of representation</p> <p><i>The Board approved the letter of representation</i></p> <p>biii) Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2020/21</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources presented the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire reminding the Board that the requested formatting changes had been made and that it had received a clean audit opinion.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire for 2020/21 and delegated signing authority to the Chair and Principal</i></p> <p>biv) Audit Committee Annual Report to the Board 2020/21</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources presented the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2020/21, informing the Board that the new reporting requirement for Committee attendance data had been included. It was noted that external auditors Buzzacott would not be reappointed at this meeting due to the requirement to test the market every five years. A tender process will be conducted in the new year; Buzzacott will be invited to submit a bid.</p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair informed the Board that he had spoken to Buzzacott’s without management present, and they confirmed that there were no issues of concern.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Committee for their work during 2020/21.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2020/21.</i></p> <p>bv) Annual Report and Financial Statements 2020/21</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2020/21, informing the Board that there had been no changes, aside from minor</p> | |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| | <p>presentational changes, since the document was scrutinised at the 25 November Board meeting. Ms O’Shea queried the inclusion of residential college status within the charitable objects. The Director of Finance & Resources indicated that RHACC have contacted the Department for Education regarding amending the College’s status; once their guidance has been received the wording within the Instruments and Articles will be legally changed. Although several Governors felt that its inclusion looked strange, RHACC is still a residential college and therefore it was agreed that this statement of fact should remain within the Report.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2020/21 and delegated signing authority to the Chair and Principal</i></p> <p>c) Update on Hillcroft Capital Development</p> <p>The Director of Finance & Resources presented an update on the Hillcroft Capital Development, reminding the Board that further information on planning and the DfE Capital Grant bid will be available in March/April of 2022. Work is ongoing to provide Buzzacott with evidence to use in the VAT appeal to HMRC. The planning application is scheduled for submission during w/c 13 December. Communication with stakeholders is ongoing; local residents have been assured that they are able to provide comments on the scheme into the new year.</p> <p>Mr Ware asked about local feedback received so far. The Principal replied that she had met with the Glenbuck Court Residents Association for a second time to discuss their concerns about construction noise, tree removal and loss of views.</p> <p>In answer to a question from Mr Munby about Buzzacott’s view of the VAT issue, the Director of Finance & Resources indicated that it is difficult to anticipate what stance HMRC will take but that Buzzacott will develop a case based on the available information. It was noted that if the appeal is not successful then the DfE grant, if received, will cover the additional costs.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the update on the Hillcroft capital development</i></p> <p>[Mr Izett left the meeting]</p> | |
| 8. | <p><u>TEACHING & LEARNING MATTERS</u></p> <p>a) RHACC Draft Self-Assessment Report 2020/21</p> <p>The Vice Principal for Teaching & Learning presented a summary of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2020/21 and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2021/22, initially discussing the QIP for 2020/21 and informing the Board that much of the impact of actions taken last year would only be realised in the current academic year.</p> <p>The Vice Principal for Teaching & Learning highlighted three key strengths from the 20/21 SAR – 1) the excellent teaching and experience of tutors, who are very knowledgeable in their areas of expertise, 2) student behaviour, attitude, commitment and compliance with covid safety measures and 3) the exceptional support for learners from support staff, tutors and via inclusive fee structures and bursaries. The Vice Principal went on to highlight three key areas for development – 1) the broadening of offers in some curriculum areas including defined progression pathways, 2) a formalised and systematic process for evidencing personal development and 3) the capture of intended and actual destination data and its use in planning course activities and progression routes. The following risks were identified by the Vice Principal – 1) that the curriculum strategy does not reflect the needs and wants to the College’s funders, learners and partners, and 2) further impact from the pandemic.</p> <p>It was noted that the Quality & Standards Committee are recommending to the Board that the SAR is published on the RHACC website, partly because the required monitoring of equality, diversity and inclusion activity will be subsumed into the self-assessment report and there is a legal requirement for the College to publish details of how it is responding to</p> | |

| | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| | <p>its duties in this area. Some redactions will be made, mainly of individuals details, prior to publication. The Quality and Standards Committee also requested a more robust external moderation of the SAR, and therefore this will be a three-way process with two other Institutes of Adult Learning next year.</p> <p>Mr Ware queried (page 25) whether it was unusual for learner forums to be unattended. The Vice Principal replied that generic School forums were not as well attended as those for particular curriculum areas or courses; SEND forums are very well attended. Different formats for different learner groups are being investigated.</p> <p>It was agreed that the text regarding AAT provision should include a note that RHACC's achievement rates, albeit low, were better than most other providers in this area.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Self-Assessment Report for 2020/21 and agreed that it should be published on the website with redactions only of individuals information.</i></p> <p>b) Quality Improvement Plan 2021/22 The Vice Principal for Teaching & Learning presented the Quality Improvement Plan for 21/22, which consists of the actions identified within the SAR for 20/21. The Chair asked whether management felt that the actions within the QIP would move the College towards achieving Outstanding. The Vice Principal stated that the QIP was ambitious and targeted the big issues that, once resolved, would move the College towards an outstanding grade. She felt confident that Personal Development would be graded outstanding once the methods of evidencing were in place.</p> <p>Mr Simmons queried the prioritisation of the actions, where discretionary effort was required and where actions would be business as usual. The Vice Principal responded that all of the actions identified require focus and monitoring. The Chair agreed that thought should be given to highlighting what actions are new initiatives and which are a tightening up of usual activity.</p> <p>Mr Ware suggested that the wording of 4bi was amended, as the Digital Transformation Strategy will not be implemented by the Spring term. Mr Ware requested that the words 'richly support' are amended in 4biv.</p> <p>It was noted that the QIP will be reviewed at each Quality & Standards Committee meeting. It was suggested and agreed that review dates for each action be included to assist the Committee with monitoring progress.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Quality Improvement Plan for 2021/22</i></p> | <p>VP, T&L</p> <p>VP, T&L</p> <p>VP, T&L</p> <p>VP, T&L</p> <p>VP, T&L</p> <p>VP, T&L</p> |
| <p>9.</p> | <p><u>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>a) Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 The Director of Finance & Resources presented the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22, noting that the Plan had been agreed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 25 November. The key areas identified for audit are Learner Number Systems and Key Financial Systems, Governance, IT and Cyber Security and GDPR compliance. Funding regulations now state that governance must be subject to an external review every three years. IT and cyber security and GDPR compliance have been highlighted as areas of risk.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22</i></p> <p>b) Risk Register and Action Plan The Director of Finance & Resources presented the Heat Map and Risk Register & Action Plan, noting the movement of one risk, 14: <i>2021/22 budget is not delivered as planned</i></p> | |

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| | <p><i>which could have subsequent implications for 2021 -2022 and beyond</i> to a lower risk score. Mr Ware suggested that it was the wrong time to lower the score of this risk due to the continuing pandemic. The Audit Committee Chair agreed that the covid situation had deteriorated since the meeting on 25 November and the Board therefore agreed that risk 14 should remain at a 3x3 rating.</p> <p>In answer to a question from the Chair about management’s review timescales, the Director of Finance & Resources informed the Board that the risk register is next due to be reviewed in January 2022.</p> <p>The new risk, 12: <i>New business systems (Finance, HR and Payroll) procurement and implementation do not progress as planned</i> was noted.</p> <p>Mr Ware queried why all of the aspects of risk 15: <i>Cut or changes in government funding for adult provision related to: Potential clawback of funding as result of DfE review of Residential funding: New funding streams linked to provision not delivered by RHACC</i> were scored as high risk. The Director of Finance & Resources agreed that some elements may not be high risk and that management would review how these were grouped.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the Heat Map and the Risk Register & Action Plan</i></p> <p>[Mr Simmons left the meeting]</p> | <p>DoF&R</p> <p>DoF&R</p> |
| <p>10.</p> | <p>ITEMS TO APPROVE</p> <p>a) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy Mr Ware queried whether the College has the right internal expertise in relation to EDI and suggested that the Policy be reviewed by a suitably qualified third party. The Principal responded that the Policy was based on what was widely in use in the sector and that once approved by the Board the Policy will be reviewed by the College’s legal advisers.</p> <p><i>The Board approved the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy</i></p> <p>b) Data Protection and Privacy Policy <i>The Board approved the Data Protection and Privacy Policy</i></p> <p>c) LGPS Policy <i>The Board approved the LGPS Policy</i></p> | |
| <p>11.</p> | <p>ITEMS TO NOTE</p> <p>a) Annual Learner Feedback Report <i>The Board noted the Annual Learner Feedback Report 2020/21</i></p> <p>b) Annual Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Report 2020/21 <i>The Board noted the Annual Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Report 202/21</i></p> <p>c) Estates and Annual Health & Safety Report 2020/21 <i>The Board noted the Estates and Annual Health & Safety Report 2020/21</i></p> <p>d) HR Annual Report 2020/21 In answer to a question from Mr Brewster about recruitment to the HR Team, the Principal informed the Board that an Interim HR Manager started on 6 December, and that two HR Advisers will start in January 2022. It was noted that there is a possibility that the Interim HR Manager may be made permanent.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the HR Annual Report 2020/21</i></p> | |

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 12. | <p><u>MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES</u></p> <p>a) Capital Projects Steering Group – 3 November 2021 b) Quality & Standards Committee – 11 November 2021 c) Finance & Resources – 17 November 2021 d) Women’s Education Steering Group – 24 November 2021 e) Audit Committee – 25 November 2021 f) Quality & Standards Committee – 30 November 2021</p> <p><i>The Board noted the minutes of the Standing Committees</i></p> | |
| 13. | <p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p>The Chair asked that the Board’s appreciation be passed on to both staff and learners for their resilience during a difficult term.</p> | |

The meeting ended at approximately 7.45 pm.