

GOVERNING BODY

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Governing Body of Richmond Adult and Community College held at 6:15 pm on Thursday, 23rd September 2010 at Clifden

- Present Mr Geoff Varrall, Chair
 Ms Sally Field, Vice Chair
 Dr Tim Woolmer, Vice Chair
 Ms Siân Bates MBE
 Ms Sally Cole
 Ms Christina Conroy OBE, Principal & Chief Executive
 Mr Kevin Finnigan
 Mr Manoj Nanda
 Ms Amanda Rowlatt
 Mr Sebastian Scotney
 Dr Michael Sevitt
 Ms Helen Szyra
 Mr Chris Williams
- Apologies Ms Louise Fluker
 Ms Cindy Rampersaud
 Mr David Sidonio
- In attendance Gabrielle Flint, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality)
 Ms Judith Potter, Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services)
 Mr Paul Coveney, Clerk to the Governing Body and College Secretary
 Mr Robert Innes, Skills Funding Agency Account Manager *[Item 1]*
 Mr Neil Roberts, Skills Funding Agency Head of Provider Accounts, London South *[Item 1]*

Part 1 Non Confidential

Before opening the meeting, the Chair welcomed Amanda Rowlatt as a new Governor, and all present introduced themselves briefly.

1. **FUTURE SCENARIOS – FACING UP TO THE CHALLENGE**

The Chair welcomed Robert Innes and Neil Roberts as representatives of the Skills Funding Agency.

Mr Roberts made a presentation which addressed the changing role of the Agency (intervening now only by exception), and the challenges facing Colleges in the light of the funding cuts expected as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

Mr Roberts advised the Governing Body that the College, while less dependent proportionately on SFA funding than the benchmark for colleges, had been more realistic than others in modelling its likely SFA income over the next three years.

2. **MINUTES**

of the meeting on 31st March 2010 were, with two minor amendments to correct typing errors, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

- Item 16: the Governing Body noted that Rohini Bhattacharya had left the College on 3rd September 2010: there was therefore a vacancy for a Business Support Staff Governor, which would be filled by election

Clerk

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

As a local resident, Sally Cole declared an interest in item 7. The Governing Body noted that this was not an item for decision, and that there was no reason for her to leave the meeting for that item.

5. **DRAFT MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2009/10**

The Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) advised the Governing Body that the 2009 10 accounts remained draft: they would be audited in October. She reported that there were no significant changes since those presented to the meeting on 1st July 2010.

The College had reacted early to the shortfalls on Employer Responsive Income (a large proportion being delivered by partners), Other Income and Fees, and had made savings of c. £900K in expenses. The College was now expecting a break-even position, or possibly a small surplus. The Principal added that turnover for 2010/11 was expected to be similar to the final position for 2009/10: and the necessary cost reductions had now been implemented, and the College had been conservative in its other budget assumptions for 2010/11.

In considering the key performance indicators, the Governing Body noted that the main challenges for 2010/11 related to the proportion of staff expenditure, for which the College had an objective of 65-68%. The Principal reported that the ratio looked higher than other colleges, since RACC did not use contract labour, which in other institutions could serve to distort the true picture regarding the level of staff costs. The Governing Body asked whether there had been any progress on shared services, and noted that the VAT problem made this an unattractive option at this stage – but that the situation might change if the Treasury relaxed the VAT rules for colleges.

The Governing Body noted the draft management accounts for 2009/10.

6. MARKETING AND ENROLMENT REPORT 2010

The Governing Body considered a tabled update on the September enrolment figures.

The Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) reported that enrolments appeared to be satisfactory in comparison with the same stage in 2009/10: the percentages on young learners were lower than last year, but the College had significantly higher targets for 2010/11.

The Governing Body noted the enrolments and funding report.

The Governing Body considered a report from the Head of Marketing relating to the summer enrolment campaign, and considered that planning and execution had been very well executed on a reduced budget in comparison with previous years.

The Governing Body asked whether 225,000 leaflets represented good value for money, to which the Principal replied that it was always difficult to prove which marketing expenditure was the most effective – however, the leaflets were very cheap, and played a major role in promoting the College's brand to the local community.

Noting the Government's declared intention to allow colleges greater freedom of activity, the Governing Body asked whether it would be possible to set out for students' information the offerings for the next year rather earlier than had previously been the case. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that the College intended to segment its markets more effectively than previously: this should make it possible, for example, to produce a guide to the College's longer qualification courses for 2011/12 early in 2011.

The Governing Body welcomed the report on the summer enrolment campaign.

7. CAPITAL PROJECT

Noting that, before the meeting, many Governors had seen the evidence of the 2009/10 expenditure on the roofs and windows of the main building; the CTC; the boilers, the south perimeter wall and the car park, the Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) reported that the outstanding items (the perimeter fence and the car park charging system) both required planning consent, and would be implemented during the Autumn term. This had also allowed the College to make a considered response to the stakeholder consultations.

Noting that the overall spend was expected to be under budget by c. £50K, the Governing Body also noted that the overrun on the roofs and windows item was mainly a result of the window refurbishment being more extensive than had been originally thought – it had been possible to arrive at accurate costings for this work only once all the scaffolding was in position.

The Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) reported that the College had now received the £225K renewal grant from the SFA.

The Governing Body noted that the College had not been successful in its application for an enhanced renewal grant: 20 out of 92 applicants had been successful, and it was considered unlikely that the opportunity to apply for such grants would recur in the near future.

The Governing Body noted the Capital Project update report.

8. IT INVESTMENT

The Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) reported that the project was at an early stage of progress. The supplier was undertaking a lot of work off site (which was being inspected by the College ITS team). The expectation was that migration from Novell to Microsoft would take place over half term, with the new desktops being installed over the Christmas break.

The Governing Body noted the IT investment progress report.

9. BUSINESS PLAN 2010 11

The Principal reminded the Governing Body that the Strategic Plan 2009/12 contained sixteen strategic objectives. The College proposed to rationalise this number for the 2010/11 business plan: the challenge for the College was to manage change on a much smaller infrastructure towards a fee-driven adult leisure learning and e-learning curriculum whilst maintaining quality on a reducing but complex highly regulated FE operation.

The Governing Body noted the College's plan to address the high cost base for accredited FE delivery (possibly including the use of blended e-learning provision), to segment its Adult Education offer, and to increase general activity at the College, including activities designed to increase the College's contribution to the local community. The Governing Body noted that volunteering played a role as a training strategy for learners as well as a component of the College staffing strategy.

The Principal tabled for information a draft of the Business Plan that would be considered by the SMT on 27th September 2010. The Governing Body suggested that an additional objective should be added, concerned with developing customer insight into the target learner groups.

Principal

Subject to the above, the Governing Body approved the simplified objectives for the Strategic Plan 2009/12, and the proposal to circulate the business plan 2010 2011 to Committees for monitoring oversight.

10. CLERK'S REPORT 2009/10

The Governing Body noted the Clerk's report for 2009/10.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair reported that, following an invitation given at the College's Ofsted celebration event with local partners, he and the Vice Chairs had met informally with the Chair and Vice Chair of RuTC, and that he had attended RuTC's recent awards ceremony. It was expected that there would be further informal meetings. The Principal added that she and the RuTC principal would be meeting the RuTC Head of Children's Services on 11th October 2010.

This part of the meeting ended at 8:30 pm

The following items were considered in Part 2 of the meeting.

12. GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

The Governing Body considered the advice of the Search & Governance Committee following its three recent meetings.

The Governing Body appointed Mr Naren Ramachandran as an Independent Governor for a four year term expiring on 31st July 2014, and also as a member of the Finance & Resources Committee.

The Governing Body appointed Mr Alberto Esguevillas Lete as an Independent Governor for a four year term expiring on 31st July 2014, and also as a member of the Quality & Curriculum Committee.

The Governing Body appointed Mr Phil Cutts as a non-Governor member of the

Audit Committee for a one year term expiring on 31st July 2011.

The Governing Body appointed Ms Annette Ferguson as a non-Governor member of the Finance & Resources Committee for a one year term expiring on 31st July 2011.

The Governing Body noted that there were other candidates whom the Search & Governance Committee considered appointable at some time.

13. GOVERNORS' ATTENDANCE 2009 2010

The Governing Body noted that overall attendance at 84% (compared with 82% in 2009/09) was not a matter for concern.

14. STANDING ORDERS 2010 2011

The Governing Body approved the Standing Orders for 2010 2011.

15. GOVERNORS' HANDBOOK 2010 2011

The Governing Body approved the Governors' Handbook for 2010 2011.

CHAIR