

GOVERNING BODY

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Governing Body of Richmond Adult and Community College held at 6:15 pm on Thursday, 17th December 2009 in the Richmond Business School, Parkshot, Richmond TW9 2RE

Present	Mr Geoff Varrall, Chair Ms Sally Field, Vice Chair Dr Tim Woolmer, Vice Chair Ms Rohini Bhattacharya Ms Christina Conroy OBE, Principal & Chief Executive Mr Kevin Finnigan Ms Louise Fluker Mr Robin Jowit OBE Mr Manoj Nanda Mr Sylvester Olutayo <i>[items 4 to 12]</i> Mr Sebastian Scotney Mr David Sidonio Ms Helen Szyra Mr Chris Williams
Apologies	Ms Siân Bates MBE Councillor Sally Cole Mr T. C. Lim Ms Cindy Rampersaud Dr Michael Sevitt Ms Judith Potter, Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services)
In attendance	Ms Gabrielle Flint, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) Ms Anna Brekkeflat, Director of Finance and Information Services Ms Judith Spencer-Gregson, Interim Director of Finance & Information Services Mr Paul Coveney, Clerk to the Governing Body and College Secretary

Part 1 Non Confidential

Before opening the meeting, the Chair welcomed Judith Spencer-Gregson, and all present introduced themselves.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 23rd September 2009 were, with a minor amendment (including clarification that the Clifden roof repairs were not limited to the flat roofs), approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The minutes of the meeting on 28th November 2009 were, with a minor amendment, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. MATTERS ARISING

From the minutes of 23rd September:

- Item 10: the Governing Body noted that the proposed schematic of the planned changes at Clifden would be produced once the College had re-considered its proposals for the Capital Project, which would be discussed in Part 2 of the meeting. Principal

From the minutes of 28th November:

- Item 3: the Principal reported that the staff Christmas payment had been well received, and that the final cost had been £40K, rather than £60K. Staff morale was good, as was evidenced by the fact that the College had sold all 150 tickets for the Christmas party, with all proceeds going to St Mungo's, London's largest charity for homeless people.
- Item 5: the Governing Body noted that the governance and management arrangements for the Capital Project would be considered in Part 2. The Principal advised the Governing

Body that there was currently little management capacity available for the RBS project (especially in the light of the urgency of determining the ITS investment needed to support and develop the curriculum offer), and the Governing Body agreed that this should be postponed until April 2010. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) said that the College needed to establish what were the real strengths of the RBS and its offer: this was still under review, but should be better understood in time for April 2010. As Chair of the Quality & Curriculum Committee, Sally Field advised the Governing Body that the 2008/09 SAR would need to take account of the issues in that year of which the Governing Body was already aware. The Governing Body also noted that the urgency of the RBS project was reduced in the light of the proposed revisions to the Capital Project and its demand on the College's capital.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2008/09 AND MANAGEMENT LETTER

As Chairman of the Audit Committee, Robin Jowit reported that the cost of the staff Christmas payment had been included in the 2008/09 financial statements: the financial statements auditors considered this not to be a material item.

At the request of the Chair, the Principal explained that the College's performance against its financial objectives had been very pleasing, and this was confirmed by an LSC letter dated 14th December (copies of which were distributed) which rated the College's Financial Health for 2008 to 2012 as Outstanding.

The Governing Body noted that the growth in the LGPS deficit was out of the College's control (being notified by LBRuT), and was based on an actuarial valuation in March 2009, when investment values had been particularly low.

The Governing Body noted that the Finance & Resources Committee had on 10th December 2009 recommended the financial statements for approval.

The Governing Body approved the financial statements 2008/09, which were duly signed by the Chair and the Principal.

In considering the Key Issues Memorandum, the Governing Body noted Grant Thornton's view that the inclusion of the staff Christmas payment in the 2008/09 accounts was not material to the overall presentation of the financial statements.

The Governing Body asked what was the latest position on the bad debts, to which the Director of Finance and Information Services replied that solicitors' letters had been sent to ITCL and Kiara. The amounts had been written off, and any payments received would be treated as income for 2009/10.

The Governing Body noted the Key Issues Memorandum 2008/09.

In considering the letter of representation, the Governing Body noted that this contained only standard items: there were no special inclusions, and the accounts were unqualified.

The Governing Body approved the letter of representation for the year ended 31st July 2009, which was duly signed by the Chair.

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CONTROL EVALUATION (FMCE)

In considering the Improvement Plan, the Governing Body noted that risks (as reviewed in item 8 on the agenda) were now clearly mapped against the College's strategic and operating objectives, that a rolling 12-month cash flow forecast would be included in the management accounts as reported to the Finance & Resources Committee, and that the FMCE should show a "n/a" answer to question 3.2.4.

The Governing Body approved the FMCE 2008/09

6. **ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2008/09**

As Chairman of the Audit Committee, Robin Jowit drew the attention of the Governing Body to the fact that there 10 audit recommendations currently in progress: this was an acceptable position (as opposed to that of two or three years ago, when a number nearer to 25 had applied). The outstanding recommendations largely related to IT and disaster recovery, and there were plans in place to address these areas.

The Governing Body noted the internal audit report for 2008/09.

The Governing Body noted that the Audit Committee on 1st December had recommended the reappointment of the internal auditors and the financial statements and regularity auditors.

The Governing Body reappointed Tenon as the internal auditors.

The Governing Body reappointed Grant Thornton as the financial statements and regularity auditors.

7. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31ST OCTOBER 2009**

The Director of Finance and Information Services advised the Governing Body that it was normal for the College not to achieve its budgeted surplus in the first quarter: this was largely due to timing differences between income and expenditure. She had reported to the Finance & Resources Committee on 10th December 2009 that the main area of concern was the College's target of £1m of contestable funding (included in Other Income). The Governing Body recognised that competition for such funding had intensified, with non-College organisations entering the market, and with increased complexity and costs associated with bidding for different funding streams, each with its own bureaucracy. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) added that funding was increasingly dependent on outcomes, rather than simple provision. The Principal reported that the priority was to bid for funds that reflected the College's strengths, and gave as an example the College's success with young people, which had led to a bid for c£150K.

The Governing Body noted the management accounts for the three months to 31st October 2009.

8. **RISK REGISTER**

The Governing Body considered the risk management policy, and requested that the College re-draft section 7: it was not always clear how 7 (a) in particular was implemented.

The Governing Body reviewed the College's appetite for risk, recognising that some risks were inherent in the College's operation within the Further Education sector. It recognised that the risk spread chart showed a balanced approach to risk, and that the College, while not risk-averse, would re-evaluate projects if the risk appeared too great. This would be evident in the consideration of the Capital Project in Part 2.

The Governing Body noted that the revised risk register clearly mapped risks against the College's strategic and operating objectives, and provided a much improved framework of governance oversight through the Standing Committees.

The Governing Body noted the risk register.

Principal

9. **COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Principal advised the Governing Body that the Employment & Organisational Development Committee had met twice during the Autumn term, and had provided detailed scrutiny of all the proposed policies and procedures, with the exception of Child Protection, which had been subject to amendment following input from LBRuT.

As Chair of the Employment & Organisational Development Committee, Louise Fluker reported that the Committee was satisfied that the proposed policies and procedures complied with the law, and with the regulatory requirements for FE colleges: there remained much work to be done, and the Committee had requested that policies and procedures be regularly reviewed to ensure that they

were still fit for purpose.

In considering the Health & Safety policy, the Governing Body asked whether this represented a major change from the previous policy, to which the Principal replied that it did: the policy now set out clear and explicit responsibilities throughout the College. This included the nomination of the Chair of the Employment & Organisational Development Committee as the nominated Governor responsible for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.

The Principal advised the Governing Body that the means of measuring staff members' success in the context of the Health & Safety policy would be presented to the Employment & Organisational Development Committee in the Spring Term.

Principal

The Governing Body approved the Health & Safety policy, which was duly signed by the Chair and the Principal.

Referring to the Equality & Diversity policy, the Principal reported that the College was required to develop schemes, action plans and impact analyses for Gender, Sex and Race Equality: these would be submitted for approval by the Governing Body at its meeting on 20th January 2010.

Principal

The Governing Body approved the Equality & Diversity policy.

The Governing Body approved the Adult Safeguarding policy and procedure.

The Governing Body approved the Child Protection policy and procedure.

The Governing Body approved the Anti Harassment & Bullying policy and procedure.

In considering the employment policies and procedures, the Governing Body asked when student-related policies would be presented for approval, to which the Principal replied that the College intended to prioritise the staff-related areas first, but would move on to student matters at the next stage: the intention was to review all policies and procedures by the end of the academic year. She reported that the revised employment policies and procedures reflected a College culture that was both supportive and demanding.

The Governing Body approved the Employee Disciplinary policy and procedure.

The Governing Body approved the Employee Grievance policy and procedure.

The Governing Body approved the Redundancy policy and procedure.

The Governing Body approved the Performance Capability policy and procedure.

The Governing Body approved the Probationary policy and procedure.

The Governing Body approved the Sickness Absence Management policy and procedure.

The Principal reported that the College planned to undertake management training in the new policies and procedures in January 2010, and also planned to hold a workshop for Governors relating to their possible involvement with some of the procedures.

Clerk

10. **COLLEGE HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGY**

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) presented a paper which summarised the College's HE history and current provision, as well as the key elements of the proposed HE strategy. The College had certain advantages in HE provision, including the fact that it could offer courses on a flexible cycle, not being tied in to the UCAS application system for universities, and its strengths in aspects of e-business. The Governing Body asked what was the scale of the College's HE provision, to which the Principal replied that it was of the order of 45-50 learners, which was the level the College would seek to maintain.

The Governing Body noted that the key elements of the HE strategy were that the College should:

- Maintain and consolidate its current position,
- Increase learner numbers over time,
- Combine Access with HE in its marketing,
- Strengthen its HE quality systems,
- Develop its HE learner support systems,
- Deploy cost effective management, and
- Keep all the above under review.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised the Governing Body that the details remained to be documented, and that the HE strategy needed Governing Body approval before being delivered to the Higher Education Funding Council for England by 11th January 2010.

The Board decided that the Chair should take Chair's Action to approve the strategy, which would reflect the key elements set out above, and report to the Governing Body at its meeting on 20th January 2010.

11. REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEES

The Governing Body received the reports from the Standing Committees.

The Governing Body noted that the Employment & Organisational Development Committee had a very full programme of work for the year 2009/10, and would be considering the College staff terms and conditions of employment, in addition to the major exercise of rationalising policies and procedures. The Governing Body also noted that the Quality & Curriculum Committee would be giving detailed consideration to the College Self Assessment Report on 14th January 2010, for recommendation to the Governing Body on 20th January 2010.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

This part of the meeting ended at 7:55 pm

CHAIR