

GOVERNING BODY

QUALITY AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8th November 2011 at 6:15 pm at Parkshot, Richmond

Present:	Ms Sally Field (Chair) Mr David Sidonio (Vice Chair) Ms Christina Conroy OBE, Principal and Chief Executive Professor Andrew George Ms Jera May Ms Helen Szyra
In attendance:	Ms Gabrielle Flint, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) Ms Judith Potter, Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) Ms Louise Ellis, Director of Quality & Assessment Mr Paul Coveney, Clerk to the Governing Body & College Secretary
Apologies:	Ms Lesley Kirby, non-Governor member

Part I: Non-Confidential Items

Before opening the meeting, the Chair welcomed Andrew George and Jera May as new Governors and David Sidonio and Helen Szyra as new members of the Committee. All presented introduced themselves briefly.

1. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting on 28th June 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. **MATTERS ARISING**

Item 4: The Chair noted that those Governors who had attended class visits had found it a helpful and worthwhile experience. It had been decided to include such class visits as a part of the induction process for new Governors, and as such they would now come under the terms of reference of the Search & Governance Committee.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

4. **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee noted that the terms of reference, which were unchanged from the previous year, had been approved by the Governing Body on 22nd September 2011. The Chair said that it was important for the Committee to focus its attention at the right level for Governance, and to avoid becoming involved in a level of detail more appropriate to management. To this end, papers submitted to the Committee should be set at the right level to inform governance, and to avoid the temptation of being led into areas which were a management concern. The Principal added that the terms of reference of all the Committees were to be reviewed for 2012/13.

Clerk

The Committee received its terms of reference for 2011/12.

5. **LEARNER RECRUITMENT 2011/12**

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reminded the Committee that the College received different types of government funding for its courses. Learner responsive funding (whether for 16-18 year olds or 19+ adults) was available only for courses delivering accredited qualifications, while safeguarded funding related to courses which did not lead to a formal qualification (although they might represent a first step towards an initial qualification). The courses fell into fifteen Sector Subject Areas (SSA's). The previously distributed paper showed the level of funding by funding type and SSA for 2011/12 to date, and a comparison for the full year 2010/11. The Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) informed the Committee that it was possible to obtain funding for "units", which represented part qualifications, but the qualifications in question still had to be accredited. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) drew the Committee's attention to the fact that,

although learner and enrolment numbers to date compared favourably with 2010/11, the amount of funding generated was appreciably lower, owing to the reduced levels of government funding per course, and other changes in funding regulations.

The Committee asked whether the level of funding also depended on success rates, to which the Principal replied that it did: success was measured as the product of retention and achievement. The Committee asked what was being done in the short term to address the funding issue, to which the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that the College was developing relatively short qualification courses: these were comparatively cheap to run, and generally achieved high retention rates. The Principal added that there was considerable appetite for lifelong learning: the need was to find a way to deliver what people wanted at a price they could afford to pay. This was likely to involve differentiation between markets and their associated pricing structures: it could result in different curriculum strategies for different markets. The Committee noted that this approach was now being used in several sectors: there was a need to develop "mini businesses" within the overall business in order to harness the unique nature of the particular area.

The Committee noted the report on learner recruitment for 2011/12 to date.

6. QUALITY STRATEGY REVIEW

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised the Committee that the previously distributed papers included the quality strategy as approved by the Governing Body on 23rd September 2009 as part of the Strategic Plan for 2009/12. This was for information, as it was recognised that the overall College strategy required review.

The revised quality strategy would need to take into account the proposed changes (currently under consultation) to the Ofsted common inspection framework (CIF). While the detailed changes would not be finalised until May 2012, the proposal was to reduce the number of judgement areas from 24 to four, and at the same time to provide a stronger focus on teaching and learning: the previous "grade limiting" aspects (Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity) would no longer be grade limiting, but the College would not be reducing its focus on those areas.

The Committee noted that outstanding Colleges such as RACC would be exempt from Ofsted inspection, and asked what would have to happen to mean that the College was subject to inspection. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that Ofsted would still do an annual risk assessment, based on success rates, and learner feedback obtained by Ofsted independently of the College.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reported that the new approach to the assessment of leadership and management implied greater accountability for managers (and Governors where appropriate) for the outcomes they achieved for their learners. There was a challenge for the College, in that it employed a large part-time sessional workforce: this led to complications in terms of delivering cost effective leadership and other training. The College needed to undertake enough training to maintain quality standards. The Committee asked whether the College used distance or blended learning for its own staff training, to which the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that it had used such an approach successfully in the areas of Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity training: it would look to expand the use of such techniques.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) referred the Committee to the College's Framework for Excellence (FfE) report. This compared the College with other general further education colleges. The Committee noted that much of the information was derived from very old data, and the Director of Quality & Assessment reported that the FfE data was being published later every year.

The Committee noted the report on the quality strategy review.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR 2010/11

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reported that learner responsive retention and success rates had improved since the previous year, and PCDL success rates were excellent at 92%. The performance across specific learner groups was also strong, although there were issues with learners under 19 years (c. 150 learners), and BME learners in that age group. These success rates varied by SSA, and a large proportion of the College's young learners came through the care system. The College would encourage these learners not to take on too many courses: for instance, IT could provide a good vocational grounding. This would represent something which they had not been offered at school, and could help them to find employment.

The Director of Quality & Assessment reported that, taking into account the survey

response rates, 46% of learners overall reported an improvement in their employability, and 33% reported an enterprise related outcome. Again, the trend from previous years was upward.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reported that 77% of teaching observations were good or better: the Ofsted standard for an outstanding assessment in this area was 80%. The College had during 2010/11 made the observations more challenging and evaluative, and the feedback was designed to celebrate high quality teaching and learning.

The Committee asked whether the College gave awards for excellent teaching, to which the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that the College invited excellent teachers to become advanced practitioners. Most appreciated the offer, but many were not willing to take on extra responsibilities.

The Committee asked whether the College had considered some form of general communication (for example, a termly newsletter) to celebrate what had been done well in terms of teaching quality and learner achievement. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) replied that this would be considered, but value in terms of motivation and good publicity came with a high production cost in terms of resources.

The Committee noted the report on emerging themes for the College SAR 2010/11.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

The College Secretary reported that the risk register had been redesigned, in accordance with recommendations from the internal auditors. The key risks for 2011/12 were categorised into two main groups: “good husbandry” related to achieving the best possible College performance in 2011/12, while “development priorities” related to the development of a new strategic plan for 2012/15. The risk register had been reviewed the previous day by the Senior Management Team, and some further performance indicators had been agreed.

The Committee noted that the revised risk register was much clearer than the version in use for the previous year.

The Committee noted the risk management report.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none

This part of the meeting ended at 7:40 pm

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

10. CURRICULUM REVIEW PROJECT

The Principal reported that, by agreement of all the Principals, RACC and three close neighbours had commissioned research to establish what provision was being offered where in LBRuT and Hounslow, whether there were any progression opportunities available, and whether there were any major areas not being offered (for example, apprenticeships and employer responsive provision). The distributed paper was an update for information: the final report would be available for the Governing Body Development Event in January 2012.

The Committee noted the curriculum review project report.

11. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR 2010/11

The Principal reminded the Committee that the College had recently been through difficult times: now would be a good opportunity to explore and assess how well leadership in the College is achieving the seven objectives set out for leadership and management in the revised Ofsted inspection framework. In previous years, the assessments of management and governance had been undertaken separately.

The proposition for approval by the Committee was that:

1. The new OFSTED revised framework for 2012 will be adopted for 2011 so that we evaluate Leadership and Management in terms of the impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and raising learners' aspirations and achievements.
2. We undertake a joint iterative approach to the assessment by convening a joint management/governor discussion group under the auspices of the Search &

Governance Committee to identify and explore how Leadership and Management will be evaluated under the new 7 areas. This should identify what further information is required and also how both Governors and Managers performance has contributed to each area. This discussion should shape what analytical tools might be used to support this joint approach.

3. A first draft of Leadership and Management should be compiled by the Executive and Clerk when all of the institutional performance information is available to be considered by Board on 15th December 2011. The Management and Board will identify what amendments are needed, appropriate action points to take forward and agree a Grading on the OFSTED Scale of Grades 1- 4.
4. A draft SAR will then be placed on the OFSTED/SFA Portal by 31st December 2011 to meet the prescribed deadline.
5. The Final Self Assessment Report incorporating Leadership and Management should then be approved by the Full Board at Godalming in mid January 2012.

The Committee recognised the importance of the way in which governance leadership and management leadership interact, while continuing to observe and comply with the different responsibilities of each. A degree of separation was needed in order to enable management to say that they had the support of an independent board. This in itself was helpful to management.

Subject to the above, the Committee approved the College proposition for the self assessment of leadership and management 2010/11.

12. **ANY OTHER CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

There was none

The meeting ended at 7:50 pm

CHAIR