

GOVERNING BODY

QUALITY AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Minutes of the non-confidential part of the meeting held on Thursday, 5th November 2009 at 6:15 pm at the Richmond Business School, Richmond

Present:	Ms Sally Field (Chair) Ms Christina Conroy OBE, Principal and Chief Executive Ms Rohini Bhattacharya Ms Lesley Kirby Mr Sylvester Olutayo (<i>items 1 to 7</i>) Mr Sebastian Scotney Dr Mike Sevitt
In attendance:	Ms Gabrielle Flint, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) Ms Anna Labedzka, Executive Officer (Policy & Research) ¹
Apologies:	Ms Judith Potter, Vice Principal (Finance & Corporate Services) Ms Louise Ellis, Head of Quality Mr Paul Coveney, Clerk to the Governing Body & College Secretary

Part I: Non-Confidential Items

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Committee meeting of 3rd June 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- Matters arising were covered elsewhere on the agenda, with the exception of:
- Item 2: progress towards establishing Governors' shared access to information. The Chair advised the Committee that the Clerk expected to complete this task by the end of November 2009. A brief overview of how the information would be stored and accessed was also provided.
- Item 6: the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) noted that she had dealt with issues relating to the employer responsive provision and that a further report would be provided under item 7 of this meeting's agenda.
- Item 8: The Chair reminded the Committee that the Clerk had distributed the Framework for Excellence survey questions via e-mail on 4th June 2009.
- The Principal advised the Committee that Nicola Herbertson, Director of Business Services will be coming to the next Committee meeting. The Chair noted that her contribution will be useful for the Committee. The Chair requested Ms Herbertson's job description to be distributed to members of the Committee.

Clerk

3. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed Lesley Kirby to the Committee, and all participants in the meeting introduced themselves briefly.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee reviewed and discussed its Terms of Reference. The Committee asked for clarification regarding the overview of CPD, which had formerly been included in the terms of reference of the Quality & Standards Committee.

¹ The Committee appointed Anna Labedzka as acting clerk to take minutes for the meeting.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised the Committee that the new Employment & Organisational Development Committee had now been given responsibility of monitoring this area but the Quality & Curriculum Committee would receive information regarding the quality implications of CPD for information purposes.

The Committee agreed that the revised Terms of Reference were well structured and clearer than in the past.

The Chair advised the Committee that the Clerk would organise a meeting of the Chair, Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) and himself to develop a programme of Committee business for 2009/2010. The Chair assured the Committee that the calendar would be aligned with the Terms of Reference.

Clerk

The Committee discussed a suggestion that the wording of the Terms of Reference might be amended to address the quality of student/learner experience. The Chair expressed her desire not to seek an amendment to the Terms of Reference at this stage. The Committee agreed to the Chair's proposal but asked the Clerk to make a note of the proposal: 'to include 'learner/student experience' in the Committee's Terms of Reference' and to consider it during the Governing Body Terms of Reference review in July 2010.

Clerk

The Committee received its Terms of Reference for 2009/10.

6. RACC OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Principal advised the Committee that the Plan had been distributed to the Committee for information purposes. The Chair noted that the Committee had a monitoring role. The Principal advised the Committee that the Business Plan turned the Strategic Objectives into actions and key performance indicators.

The Committee discussed the risks associated with reaching out to new client groups and the need for more sophisticated market research, better tracking of learner voice, and better planning of progression routes. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) added that the structure of the curriculum needed to be planned better to address learner needs. The Committee noted personalisation and enrichment as the key elements enabling the College to address the needs of particular learner groups. The Principal and Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised the Committee that the College's offer must better address the needs of the learner, and should respond effectively to the changes of market demands. This would help to reduce course closures and also increase retention. The Principal advised the Committee that course closures had been under close review by the SMT, to identify ways of making the College operations more effective.

The Chair enquired why a large number of the strategic themes had been based around learning & enterprise. The Principal explained the aspects of enterprise activities that would enable the College to build up a broad spectrum of enrichment activities and respond effectively to adults progressing to employment outcomes. The Principal also spoke of a positive outcome from the College's close co-operation with Enterprise UK, and the potential for RACC to become a satellite centre of the National Enterprise Academy.

The Principal described the need for thorough data analysis that would enable the College to address particular learner needs. The Principal provided the Committee with a summary of the results of the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) analysis of the BME success rate. The Principal reported that the EDC had used a mapping report and had noted that BME learners have to make bigger effort to get to the College as they live much further away than white learners. The Committee was pleased with the EDC's plans to carry out further research on the reasons for the BME underperformance.

The Committee enquired why the performance indicators set out in the Operational Plan lacked actual % values. The Principal advised the Committee that in some cases it had been difficult to agree the % value at the beginning of the process, and, since there had been no measures in place for 2008/2009, there was currently nothing for these values to be measured against. 2009/10 therefore became a benchmarking year.

The Chair summarised the discussion by highlighting that seven out of total of sixteen operational areas will be monitored by the Committee. The Committee noted the importance of its role in the review process.

The Chair stressed the role of the Clerk who will be asked to make sure that the issues will be brought back to the Committee at the right time.

The Principal thanked the Committee for its support and advised it that the Strategic Plan

combined with the operational plan and KPI's would enable the Committee to monitor progress better.

The Committee noted the update on the Operational Plan. It was agreed that the Committee would receive termly KPI reports. GF

7. CURRICULUM STRATEGY

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) provided a summary of progress, and stressed that the Curriculum Strategy and QIP had been drafted to be compatible with the Strategic Plan. She reported good progress in centralising management systems, and good improvement in the area of Employer Responsive provision. The new method of NVQ delivery, including assessment through workshops, had proved to be quicker and more profitable. Learners' satisfaction had increased significantly. The screening system for the accredited qualification had been less successful, as its rigorous process had been time consuming but not really effective.

The Committee was advised that the additional learning support issues in the LLDD area had been resolved, and an interim manager had been appointed.

The Vice Principal raised staffing issues and their effect on performance. The Committee noted that staff shortages in CIS had been causing problems with data management for the past eighteen months. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reported that, despite the staffing shortages, recruitment of a Director of Finance and Information Services had been identified as a priority need.

The Committee expressed its concern that the CIS staffing issues had been impairing the efficiency of data management for some time and agreed that the matter must be addressed as a priority Principal

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) stressed that, despite the issues of concern, the quality of completion of returns had improved, thanks to the dedication of CIS team members. Despite these efforts, collating and analysing data were identified as area of improvement. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) asked the Committee to note that the late start of the Director of Business Services (September 2009) also had an impact on progress made to date. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) reported that the area of Skills for Life would be audited in the week commencing 9th November, and the outcome of the exercise would be used to improve delivery of this provision.

The Committee noted key funding considerations, with new measures introduced by new governmental bodies, including the Skills Funding Agency; as well as the Framework for Excellence requirements. It was noted that the use of the value for money pattern could affect the overall grade. The Principal advised that despite these constraints the College will look at 'whole' need of learners to make sure that they make the right choices. In the light of this, provision for 14-19 year old learners, and the situation in the Borough were discussed. The Principal stated that RACC aims to develop Level 1 courses. The Committee noted that the size and culture of the College may play a vital role in addressing the needs of young BME learners, as well as those of young people coming from disadvantaged areas.

The Committee enquired about the future distribution of 14-19 resources. The Principal reported that the Borough will be responsible for the allocation of resources. The Committee noted the forecast provided by the Principal that next year's allocation would be the same as in 2009/10, and her advice that a shakeup would come in 2010/11.

The Committee noted a lack of entries in the operational plan against the following areas of the QIP: 3.1.3, 3.1.8 and 5.1.2. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) agreed to correct this. GF

The Committee thanked the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) for her extensive work on the Curriculum Strategy development.

8. COLLEGE SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT 2008/2009

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised that the process of data collection was in its initial stage. The Committee noted difficulties with measuring how RACC students had

performed, and also how RACC performed as a provider. The latter was noted as particularly difficult bearing in mind the difficulties with Employer Responsive provision. Poor performance of partners like Creative Minds and ICTL would have an impact on the overall RACC results. The Committee noted that the LSC was aware of the reasons and constraints affecting RACC's performance in the Employer Responsive area.

The Principal stated that by January 2009 RACC had started to understand and control better the processes of partner delivery; however the recovery process had required time to implement. Resolving issues associated with CREM learners recruited in the wrong way had had a demoralising impact on staff, especially in CIS, delivery and recruitment.

The Committee asked the Principal to pass words of encouragement to members of staff involved in Employer Responsive provision.

The Principal thanked the Committee for its support, and assured the Committee of her confidence in the current delivery model and dedication of members of staff. Recent results in Employer Responsive delivery, including implementation of the new NVQ delivery model, were proving to be encouraging and successful.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) added that there had been a positive outcome from the recovery process, as delivery staff had learnt a lot about learners and their needs. Listening to learner needs had been embedded in other curriculum areas, to make sure that the learner's voice was heard and understood. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) stressed that methods of support required by particular client groups had been under review.

The Committee noted the report. The Chair reassured the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) of the Committee's support in her role. The Committee would review the SAR in detail at its next meeting in January 2010.

Clerk

9. **FRAMEWORK FOR EXCELLENCE**

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) presented the assessment framework stressing the importance of fulfilling all indicators. The Committee noted that the College should be using Framework for Excellence scores in its Self Assessment Report 2008/09. The Committee also noted the College's plans to maximise the scores achieved.

The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) brought to the Committee's attention difficulties with collecting views of learners who require additional support. The importance of students' understanding of the surveys was noted as crucial. The Principal added that further personalisation remains vital to the new inspection framework, as an unsatisfactory result in one single area would adversely affect the overall result.

The Committee noted the report.

10. **COLLEGE PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS**

The Principal provided an overview of performance, and advised the Committee that the College had been meeting its targets, including 98% achievement in the area of Employer Responsive provision (measured on a monthly basis). The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) stressed the challenge facing the College in hitting targets and maintaining quality of provision. The Committee was also advised that it was very probable that funding would run out before the end of the current academic year. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) assured the Committee that the management of the College had thought in advance of robust plans to address any shortcomings. The Committee discussed the constraints of changes in funding, including a reflection on the situation in 2005.

The Committee noted the enrolments update and complimented the College on its performance to date.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A draft of the College's events calendar for 2009/10 was distributed at the meeting for information. The Committee noted the complexity of the mapping exercise that had been required to produce such a document. The Committee suggested the College might consider

uploading the calendar to the LBRuT website and intranet.

The Principal advised the Committee that a further review of the calendar should be conducted at the next Committee meeting, when Nikki Herbertson, the Director of Business Services and author of the document, would be present. The Chair once more requested that Ms Herbertson's job description to be circulated to the members of the Committee to enable them to learn about her areas of responsibility prior to the next meeting.

NH

Clerk

The Committee noted the calendar document and asked that when the matter is brought to the next meeting the purpose of bringing the calendar to the attention of the Committee is clearly stated in the context of the ToR of the Committee.

GF

This part of the meeting ended at 8.10 pm

CHAIR