



MINUTES OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING

Held At Esher College

Wednesday, 27th April 2017, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

David Lavarack (Chair)

Paul Collyer

Simon D'Arcy

Dan Dean

Daniel Loughlin

Damian O'Malley

Fran Stewart

Stephanie Wiles - Director of Finance and Estates (Advising Officer)

Rebecca De'Ath - Clerk to the Corporation

1. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

No business interests were declared.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received (and accepted) from Tim Oliver, Emily Jeans and Terry Price.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2017 were agreed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

E2-001. Catering contract: Action completed (the financial delegations and Terms of Reference had been examined in relation to this contract.)

E2-002. Property Options: See item 6, below.

E2-003. Revise Estates Committee TORs: action on hold pending the outcome of the academy conversion process.

E2-004. Insurance Broker: action to inform the College's insurance broker about every accident and about the College's Accident Register was subsequently decided to be unnecessary since the Director of Finance and Estates does in any case inform them of accidents that might have insurance ramifications.

E2-005. Appointment of Business Development Manager: on hold while the SMT focussed on the process of academy conversion. This appointment will be re-visited in the future.

5. SUMMER MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

The College was successful in one of its bids for Condition Improvement Funding - £198k for re-working most of the College's electrics (with a College contribution of £10,800). Governors congratulated the Director of Finance and Estates on her achievement, noting that only 9 out of 90 colleges had been successful in bids this year.

The meeting reviewed the spreadsheet of summer capital works, which had been prepared before the outcome of the CIF bid was known. Out of a budget of £113k, £42k had been spent on last summer's work, leaving £70k left. The meeting discussed the works for repairing roofs, electrics and IT. It was noted that this would lead to an overspend of £6k, which could be accommodated within the existing Income and Expenditure budget.

The meeting was informed that the Director of Finance and Estates had little time to prepare for a full tender process for these works to be carried out, as there was a tight deadline to get the repairs completed during the summer holidays. She had therefore sought approval from the Chairs of the Corporation and of the Finance and Estates Committees to obtain three quotes for roofing works, and three for electrical works. Esher's financial procedures stated that expenditure over £50k had to be put out to full European tender (which she felt was too low a figure to be practical and should be reviewed in the future). She had sought the views of the College's maintenance contractors (MEA). They had yet to reply, but they had recommended the chosen electrical contractor originally.

Governors sought assurance that the conditions of receiving the CIF monies were being met. They also discussed the mechanism for increasing the £50k threshold in the light of the academy conversion process (academies have different procedures). It was agreed therefore that an addendum be drafted to the College's procedures.

The meeting noted that the work was straightforward, that three quotes for the electrical work had been received and passed to MEA. Three roofing quotes were in progress. It was therefore agreed that a tender process was not required in this instance and that the cheapest quote be accepted.

ACTION: Director of Finance and Estates to draft an addendum to the Financial Procedures for the Committee to review.

6. UPDATE ON PROPERTY STRATEGY

The Director of Finance and Estates had met with the CB Swift Ltd and Loxton Associates to discuss the College's property strategy for the future. These firms had been recommended by Simon D'Arcy as being able to provide the College with professional surveying advice to determine how the estate might best support an increase in student numbers. She detailed their fees for CAD drawings and a GWD survey; a feasibility study to look at options for the estate and quantity surveyor costs. The College's current architect had been asked for the existing CAD drawings from previous reviews, which may reduce the fees.

In terms of the second part of the exercise – the long term maintenance plan – the surveyors would need to carry out a condition survey, then a maintenance survey and the Director of Finance and Estates detailed these costs. Governors sought the following information from her:

Q: Hasn't the College already got a stock condition survey? We had one done in 2013, which informed the Campus Development Plan.

Q: Can the existing survey be updated, to save having to pay for a complete new set of work? Surveys like this should be carried out every 5 years in any case, and the new Surveyors would want to base

their plans on their own survey, not someone else's.

Q: Will the costs of the work come out of next year's budget and how will it be funded? It will come out of next year's budget, funded from the reserves, as agreed by the Corporation.

Q: Are we sure that the proposed surveyors know what our requirements are, before they commit to the feasibility study? I carried out the modelling and informed them of our space requirements, based on a roll of 2,000 students. The company will meet with us again, to ensure that they have clear information from the SMT as to our requirements for the estate.

ACTION: Principal/Director of Finance and Estates to invite a member of the Estates Committee to sit in on this meeting.

Q: What is the timeframe for the studies and will payment be staged? The work will be done after 31 July and payment is expected to be on completion of the projects.

Q: Have you factored in the capability of the existing infrastructure of the site and the local area in terms of gas, electricity etc., which could constrain student capacity? Yes, we might need a second electricity sub-station, for example.

Governors discussed whether the option to sell off peripheral land with no potential use should be included in the brief and were informed that the surveyors would be able to advise about this. They discussed the implications of the academy conversion process and whether it would be prudent to delay the start of this work until after the Corporation meeting in September, by which time it was hoped that approval will have been received from the Head Teacher Board.

It was felt sensible to raise the number of students on roll incrementally each year, in order to determine the impact on the estate after each increase. The scaling of numbers would need to be clear in discussions with the surveyors.

The Committee Chair sought assurance from the Principal that the SMT were content to pursue this feasibility work; the Committee did not wish to push the SMT in a direction that they were not completely happy with. The Principal confirmed that the SMT supported a feasibility study.

Governors agreed that improvements to the College's facilities would attract students to apply for a place and would be of benefit to all. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Finance Committee that they approve the use of funds for these projects from next year's budget in the context of possible academy conversion.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The meeting had reviewed this policy and felt that this was a thorough, well-written document. They had no suggestions for improvement, and it was approved.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

The meeting was given a verbal update by the Director of Finance and Estates:

- The annual Fire Risk Assessment was "Tolerable" – the best outcome available.
- The College Theatre and Y Block partition walls had been serviced.
- The kitchen had received an interim deep clean.
- There had been 4 accidents this term (10 this time last year), making 14 accidents to date (23 last year).

The Director of Finance and Estates responded to the following questions:

Q: Are there any actions arising from the Fire Risk Assessment? No.

Q: Is there anything significant to report in relation to the pattern of accidents, or is there anything involving the estate that is causing accidents? No. They were generally sporting injuries or occurred in classes where sharp implements are used, such as Design Technology.

Q: What health and safety risks are presented by local people driving through the College as a shortcut? It is more a safeguarding risk. Closing the gates recently for three weeks has deterred a lot of the residents from doing so. We will make a point of repeating this exercise periodically in the future.

9. MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GROUP MEETING (8th February 2017)

The Director of Finance and Estates reported that Green Week had been very successful, with fantastic displays put up in the Reception area. Leave Your Car at Home Day had also taken place recently. The meeting noted the contents of the minutes and thanked her for her feedback.

10. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WORK

The meeting was informed that the gutters and downpipes had been cleared as per the annual schedule of works. The catering kiosk had been painted white and will re-launch in September. The automatic doors had been serviced. The servery area in the café had received a mini-refurbishment. There were no questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors asked about the new catering team and were informed that, although it was early days, they were bedding in well and were responsive to feedback from their customers.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, 4th October 2017 tbc

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.

(Attendance was 75%)

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

E3-001	Item 5 (Summer Maintenance Programme): Director of Finance and Estates to draft an addendum to the Financial Procedures for the Committee to review.
E3-002	Item 6 (Property Strategy): Principal/Director of Finance and Estates to invite a member of the Estates Committee to sit in on the meeting with the new surveyors prior to a feasibility study in order to clarify the requirements of the College.

SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR CHALLENGE [C] /SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	5	Summer Maintenance programme: Governors asked questions to ensure that the process of obtaining quotes for roofing and electrical works was robust and met the CIF criteria of value for money.
C	6	Property Strategy: Suggestions from Governors as to how the College might reduce costs in terms of commissioning feasibility studies, and to ensure that the fees quoted by the surveyors were reasonable and were planned for in the budget.
S		Support for the College shown by emphasising that the surveyors must be clear about the College's requirements. The Chair ensured that the SMT were happy with the way forward. Governors were mindful of the impact of the academy conversion process on the project and its timing.
C	8	Health and Safety Report: Governors sought assurance that the estate itself was not negatively impacting on the health and safety of the students, and that there were no actions for the College arising from the Fire Risk Assessment.
S		Governors were concerned about the impact of drivers taking short-cuts through the estate and explored what risks to students this might present.
C/S	11	AOB – Catering Contract: Governors were interested in how the new catering firm was settling in and how it was performing.