



## MINUTES OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING

Held At Esher College

Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017, at 6.00 pm.

### Present:

David Lavarack (Chair)	Tim Oliver
Emily Jeans	Terry Price (ex-officio)
Daniel Loughlin	Fran Stewart
Damian O'Malley	Paul Collyer

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

Rebecca De'Ath - Clerk to the Corporation

### 1. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

Paul Collyer repeated his previously-declared interest in item 7, since he lives adjacent to the College. The meeting noted his conflict of interest.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received (and accepted) from Dan Dean and Simon D'Arcy.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 were agreed as a true record.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

**E1-001. Catering contract:** see update below.

**E1-002. Property Options:**

- A brief on the space and facilities required to grow student numbers is provided at item 7, below.
- The feasibility of joining Site A with Site B near the playing fields was deemed to be straightforward.
- The date of Estates meetings had been reviewed.
- The action for Simon D'Arcy to provide the names of suitable consultants had not been progressed to date.
- Advice from EFA as to the implications of proposals for the estate on the academy application was that any potential disposal of land should be tied up within the application (should we go down this route).
- The proportion of the Reserves that might be set aside for estate growth had been determined by the Finance committee (some £1.5m to £2m, leaving £1m in the Reserve).

**E1-003.** The Corporation Chair had been informed of the date for the next Environmental Sustainability meeting.

### **CATERING CONTRACT UPDATE**

The Director of Finance and Estates explained that she had commissioned a tendering company to run the full European tender for a new catering contract, which they developed with her input. This included a tender for the cleaning contract. Six companies had been shortlisted for each. The deadline for the final tender for those selected was 13<sup>th</sup> January, and the finalists will give their presentations on 1<sup>st</sup> February. The catering contract was for an initial 3-year period with an option to extend for a further 3 years. Governors asked her the following questions:

Q: Do you have a sufficient spread of contractors for both services? Yes – there was a mix of smaller and large companies for the catering contract, for example.

Q: Are students being involved in the selection process for the catering company? Yes, a representative from the Student Union will sit in on the presentations.

Q: I strongly recommend that you take up references from all the companies involved in the final tender. I will do so.

Q: Does the tender brief cover all costs? I have asked for the service to be provided at zero cost to the College, and specified that the College will require detailed financial information from the successful company.

Q: Will the option of providing another catering outlet elsewhere in the College be part of this new contract? All companies are aware of this plan, but there is no commitment placed on either side as the actual requirement has not been determined yet.

Q: Have any companies offered a profit-share with the College? We have asked if they will be prepared to consider this with no commitment placed on either side.

Q: What is the process for taking the final decision, and will the recommendation be brought to this committee for approval? A selection panel will be convened for each contract. We felt that it was an executive role to make these decisions.

Q: Given the scale and value of the contract, it is important that the appropriate governance is exercised around the approval of the contractors. This will be checked.

**ACTION: Director of Finance and Estates** to examine the financial delegations and Terms of Reference. (Done 24.1.17)

### **5. ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT OF PLANNED AND PRIOR ACTIVITY**

The meeting agreed that this was a good comprehensive report, and the content was noted.

### **6. CONDITION IMPROVEMENT FUND (CIF) 2017/18**

The Director of Finance and Estates had chosen to obtain specialist quotes from potential suppliers for the following bids:

Bid 1 - re-working of most of the College's electrics to the tune of £198k, with the College

contributing £11k.

Bid 2 - repairs to leaks on the Tower, Y block and B block roof to the tune of £500k, with the College paying £26k for the Y Block bid.

In the light of this year's tight deadline for submitting bids, next year the Director of Finance and Estates would research over the quiet summer months what works and repairs were required, in order to be prepared to bid once CIF details were announced in the autumn.

The meeting thanked her for her work on this.

## **7. UPDATE ON PROPERTY STRATEGY**

The Director of Finance and Estates explained that this matter was a moveable feast as student numbers did not behave as predicted; however, ultimately the future of funding looked flat, and costs were increasing, therefore in the longer term there would be financial benefit in adding to student numbers incrementally: a target figure of 1870 students next year, and 1900 the year after. Achieving 2000 students on roll would ensure that the College was viable for at least the medium term. The Director of Finance and Estates stated that the College required expert advice as to whether the property strategy outlined in her paper was feasible.

The Committee Chair had spoken to the Principal in advance of the meeting, who had felt that 2000 students was sufficient for the College to remain viable, whilst still remaining over-subscribed. This approach would not risk damaging the College ethos by becoming too big and should not require the sale of any land. The Chair and the Principal agreed it was important that the College did not risk getting a reputation for having over-stretched facilities and recognised the capacity constraints that existed in the local transport infrastructure.

Q: Does this 2000 refer to enumeration? Yes.

Q: Where are the push-points on the estate? Potentially the canteen, LRC, exam space and private study space. One problem is that the theatre cannot be used for lectures as it is always in use for dance. Perhaps a storey could be built on top of Y block, to provide a multi-use flexible space for a dance studio, exam space, private study, etc. It was suggested that the College would have to address the space in the canteen before the addition of more students created a pinch point.

Q: The theatre space seems inefficient. Why not keep the dance studio near the front, and take out the seating which is hardly ever used? Why do you need a lecture theatre if lessons are taught in classrooms? Or perhaps the seating could be taken out when required? College Theatre is often used at weekends as it is not available during the week. There are regular issues in gaining access for non-dance/performance curriculum needs.

Q: Do we need Local Authority approval to increase student numbers to 2000? No. We have not submitted student numbers or car-parking figures when applying for planning permission for previous works.

Q: What are the plans for travel to college? The trains are already full. We would have to look at a Travel Plan for the College to determine what is feasible, and think about bus services and perhaps staged starts and finishes to the day.

Q: Is the College's estate in the Green Belt? No. (Governors discussed the fact that the LA had just introduced its local planning review, calling for more land, and that a planning application would be needed to action stage 1b of the Property Strategy).

Q: In terms of accommodation, may I suggest you look at Building Bulletin 103 – this is a government document that sets out space requirements against curriculum requirements for each subject. This is a good starting point to establish how many rooms a particular subject needs. This will be sent to the Director of Finance and Estates, although it may well be within the ABR material.

It was suggested that, by using a computer model to determine how to accommodate 2000 students and the timetabling required, there were areas such as the science lab and other specialist areas which might not cope with extra capacity. The issue was how to move from the current situation to 2000 students in a measured way, and it was suggested that the IT Department could model a way forward and run various scenarios through the model to determine future pinch-points. This would be for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to decide whether and how to do this and work out the details.

Governors suggested it is important to look at the estate and its buildings over the long term, and to determine what works and facilities would be required to accommodate growth. This could be costed and the College would then be able to identify how to meet that cost. Furthermore, professional advice from a specialist surveyor and architect could be advantageous.

The meeting agreed that it was important to plan for future facilities *in advance* of achieving a student increase at stages 1a and 1b.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the meeting was comfortable with the target of 2000 students for the foreseeable future, and that playing fields did not need to be sold to accommodate this. It was suggested that the Senior Leadership Team review the assumptions underpinning the proposed Campus changes for stages 1a and 1b, in terms of reaching the goal of 2,000 students. Once the requirements have been agreed, it was suggested that the Director of Finance and Estates speak with Simon D'Arcy to explore the nature and level of professional support which might be helpful, in order to determine the most effective and cost efficient means of delivering those requirements within the context of the existing Campus and its running and cyclical repair costs over the long-term.

#### **ACTIONS:**

**Director of Finance and Estates** to liaise with the SLT to review the assumptions underpinning stages 1a and 1b; and, if agreed, to liaise with the Director of IT to clarify the space requirements of the College for 2000 students via computer modelling. Following this, to liaise with Simon D'Arcy regarding professional support, as appropriate.

## **8. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Committees' terms of reference are reviewed every two years. The Clerk had researched examples from other colleges, and found some additional ideas that could be included in the current document to enhance it.

**ACTION:** Clerk to email this information to the Principal and SLT for their comments, and, if agreed, amend the existing document with track changes for presentation to the next Estates committee meeting.

## **9. MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GROUP MEETING (30<sup>th</sup> November 2016)**

The meeting noted the minutes and agreed that they gave a good flavour of college activities and they were impressed with the generation of ideas by students.

**10. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

A dust extraction system had been fitted in the DT workshop. The fire risk assessment was scheduled for next week, all fire extinguishers had been checked and replaced where required and the annual guard rail check had been undertaken. There had been 10 accidents reported since the start of the academic year (compared to 13 at this point last year). 9 accidents since the last meeting (7 last year). None required reporting to the HSE.

Q: Was there any pattern to the type of accidents? No – they were a mixture of incidents.

Q: Do you notify the College insurers about accidents? No – I answer their queries each year, and they have never asked about accidents.

The meeting suggested that it might be prudent to check whether the broker required such information.

**ACTION: Director of Finance and Estates** to check the policy requirements and to consider informing the brokers that the College maintains an accident register and determine whether they would like to see it.

**11. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WORK**

The Director of Finance and Estates reported that Dyno-rod had resolved an issue with one of the drains; the water overflow issue in the tower was finally resolved (although the heating and water problems would remain a problem over the longer term, and could be addressed with a CIF bid next year); a number of automatic doors had been refurbished.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A governor enquired as to the status of the proposal to engage a Business Development Manager for the College. He was informed that this idea had been put on hold until after Academisation due to workload. The College is tentatively scheduled to convert to an Academy in September when this will be reconsidered.

**ACTION: Corporation Chair** to raise this with the Principal and report back to the committee.

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

*The meeting closed at 7.12 pm.*

*(Attendance was 75%)*

Signed.....

Date.....

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>E2-001</b>	Item 4 (Matters Arising - Catering Contract): <b>Director of Finance and Estates</b> to examine the financial delegations and Terms of Reference.
<b>E2-002</b>	Item 7 (Property Strategy): <b>Director of Finance and Estates</b> to liaise with the SLT to review the assumptions underpinning stages 1a and 1b; I and, if agreed, to liaise with the Director of IT to clarify the space requirements of the College for 2000 students via computer modelling. Following this, to liaise with Simon D'Arcy regarding professional support, as appropriate.
<b>E2-003</b>	Item 8 (Estates Committee TORs): <b>Clerk</b> to email examples of best practice to the Principal and SLT for their comments, and if agreed, amend the existing document with track changes for presentation to the next Estates Committee meeting.
<b>E2-004</b>	Item 10 (Health and Safety): <b>Director of Finance and Estates</b> to inform the insurance brokers that the College maintains an accident register, and to consider informing the brokers that the College maintains an accident register, and determine whether they would like to see it.
<b>E2-005</b>	Item 12 (AOB – Business Development Manager): <b>Corporation Chair</b> to raise this with the Principal and to report back to the Committee.

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

<b>C/S</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Topic</b>
C	4	Catering contract: Governors challenged the robustness of the tendering exercise by suggesting that the College take up references of the shortlisted companies. They pressed the College to ensure that appropriate sign-off of the selected catering contractor meets defined governance requirements. They sought assurance that students would be involved in the selection process.
S	5 & 9	Support for College environmental activities shown by the meeting's agreement that the Environmental Statement of Activity and the Environmental Sustainability Group's minutes were comprehensive and helpful.
C S	6	Options for the Estate: Probing questions as to whether the proposed strategy to grow student numbers was sound.  Support provided in that the College was guided to liaise with the member with specialist building knowledge to research professional advice to grow the estate. Governors used their expertise to suggest that the College might consider whether the LA would need to be contacted about student numbers; whether there were any local planning considerations; the College was referred to Building Bulletin 103. Finally, Governors were mindful of ensuring that the College's present ethos was not undermined by over-stretched facilities for larger student numbers.
C	8	Committee Terms of Reference: review of TORs indicated that they could be strengthened.

C	10.	Health and Safety: Governors asked if there was any trend to the pattern of accidents, and advised the College to determine whether it needed to notify their insurance brokers of these incidents.
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