



MINUTES OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING

Held At Esher College

Wednesday, 5th October 2016, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

David Lavarack (Chair)	Dan Loughlin
Dan Dean (Principal, ex-officio)	Tim Oliver
Simon D'Arcy	Terry Price (ex-officio)
Emily Jeans	

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

Rebecca De'Ath - Clerk to the Corporation

1. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

Having sent his apologies for absence, Paul Collyer had also sent his comments on the Property Options paper for consideration at the meeting and had previously declared his interest in this matter since he lived adjacent to the College. The meeting noted his conflict of interest.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

In addition to Paul Collyer, apologies were also received from Damian O'Malley.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2016 were agreed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

E3-001. Catering contract: see item 7, below.

E2-003. Combine Environmental Statement of Activity and Environmental Plan Reports: due to time constraints this was not on tonight's agenda. Given that the Environmental Sustainability Group meets later this term, it therefore made more sense to produce a report next term anyway.

E2-004. Advertising along Hampton Court Way: there are two advertising boards situated here at present; it would not make sense to add more, as hedges there are high, and a third board would not be in line of sight of people driving past.

Community Infrastructure Levy Bid: No new information regarding the bid had been received, given the small nature of the bid (£5k) this was parked.

Tim Oliver and Simon D'Arcy arrived at 6.10 pm

5. CATERING CONTRACT RENEWAL OPTIONS

The Director of Finance and Estates explained that the current catering provider had been at the College for 5 years. It was prudent to review this relationship and tender the contract. Options that she had researched were to go to full European tender, or bring the catering in-house. Governors had considered her report, and asked the following questions:

Q: Is the College happy with the current firm? Yes; they are responsive to what students request, the quality of the food is good and introducing a card machine has resolved the issue of students only being able to use cash.

Q: Is the College going to move to cash-less catering? Contact-less is the long-term plan.

Q: Will this be stated in the tender brief? Yes.

Q: When does the new contract need to be in place? Early April 2017.

Governors agreed that the option of in-house catering presented financial risks and would involve disproportionate management time; catering provision was not a core function for Esher College management. They unanimously approved the option of a full European tender and asked that the draft tender brief be reviewed by the Estates Committee Chair (as it would need to be published before the next committee meeting took place).

ACTION: Director of Finance and Estates to seek Committee Chair's comments on the draft brief for the tendering process.

6. PROPERTY OPTIONS STRATEGY PAPER

The Principal was asked to give the strategic perspective to the review of the College's property strategy, in terms of the growth of the college, parents' potential perception of a college that offered no on-site playing fields and the timing of this discussion in financial terms. The Chair stated that it was important for the rationale for any sale of land to be clear. The Principal explained that the greater the student size, the more secure the College would become due to economies of scale. Esher now had an additional 100 students compared to last year and there seemed to be little or no adverse impact on social or working space. To grow in size, the College would however require more space for students and new IT classrooms. The issue was thus to identify how much more space was required for growth and to prepare for this on a planned (not piecemeal) basis.

Options for discussion centred on a possible land sale in order to fund more classroom and private study facilities to accommodate a larger student population.

Q: What would be the reaction in the College to off-site sports facilities? The Principal had spoken to the Head of PE; it is very common for educational establishments to accommodate sports pitches elsewhere. There would be a greater benefit if these facilities were enhanced in the process of relocation. It would be straightforward for students to get on a coach and be taken straight to the venue.

Q: Is it possible that the College could get too big and lose its quality offering? Reigate and Godalming Colleges, both highly successful sixth form colleges, are both larger than Esher and retain their ethos. Our core business will not change – we are a service delivering a high quality education.

Q: There is already some overcrowding on certain trains at peak times. Wouldn't more students make this worse? We would have to look at a Travel Plan for the College to determine what is feasible.

Q: How intensively are the sports pitches used at the moment? Most sport occurs on Wednesday afternoons. BTEC Sport and A level practicals use the facilities during the remainder of the week. Sporadic use is made by the local junior school, and we have one booking on the weekends.

Q: On the Option 2 site plan, why haven't the architects put the two purple areas together (sites A and B)? Director of Finance and Estates will ask them.

Governors discussed the availability of sites suitable for sports facilities and the reactions that parents, students and Sports England may have to any proposal to sell land and move facilities off-site. They also considered the impact of potential academisation on proposals for any change to the College's estate and agreed that their application for conversion should not be delayed. They also agreed that the option of leasing the land to a third party over 25 years was not desirable. Governors decided that the options proposed in the paper needed refining.

Governors suggested that an Asset Management Plan was required to look at the estate and its buildings over the long term, and then determine what works and facilities would be required to accommodate growth. This could then 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 would be advantageous.

ACTIONS:

Director of Finance and Estates to provide a brief on what space and facilities are needed for growth.

Director of Finance and Estates to determine the feasibility of joining Site A with Site B. [*Clerk's note: email with new plan sent to Committee members on 06.10.16*]

Director of Finance and Estates to advise Deputy Clerk if the date of the next Estates meeting should be changed to accommodate the timeline for reviewing the chosen consultant's report.

Simon D'Arcy to provide names of suitable consultants for the college to shortlist 3 to consider.

Principal to seek feedback from EFA adviser as to implications of proposals for the estate during the process of academy conversion.

Committee Chair to seek advice from the Finance Committee as to the proportion of the Reserves that might be set aside for growing the estate.

7. MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GROUP MEETING (8th June 2016)

The meeting noted the minutes.

ACTION: Director of Finance and Estates to inform Corporation Chair of date of next meeting.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

There had been 3 accidents reported since the last Estates Committee meeting (there had been 9 injuries at this point last year) and one occurrence since the start of this term. None was serious enough to report to the Health & Safety Executive. A fire drill had been held on 29th September and the response was very good.

9. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WORK

The Director of Finance and Estates reported that no Condition Improvement Fund bidding round had been announced yet for next year. If this was announced, she would seek funding for roofing repairs and electrical work.

A canopy had been erected in the courtyard to accommodate seating for 40 students; several classrooms and the sports hall toilets had been redecorated; air and water quality had been monitored; the boilers had been serviced; a mechanical plant register had been sourced. The Committee noted this update.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, 18th January 2017

The meeting closed at 7.07 pm.

(Attendance was 63%)

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

E1-001	Item 5 (Catering Contract): Director of Finance and Estates to seek Committee Chair's comments on the draft brief for tender.
E1-002	Item 6 (Property Options): Director of Finance and Estates to provide a brief on what space and facilities are needed for growth. Director of Finance and Estates to determine the feasibility of joining Site A with Site B. [<i>Clerk's note: action completed 06.10.16</i>]. Director of Finance and Estates to advise Deputy Clerk if the date of the next Estates meeting should be changed to accommodate the timeline for reviewing the chosen consultant's report. Simon D'Arcy to provide names of suitable consultants for the college to shortlist 3 to consider. Principal to seek feedback from EFA adviser as to implications of proposals for the estate. Committee Chair to seek advice from the Finance Committee as to the proportion of the Reserves that might be set aside for growing the estate.
E1-003	Item 7 (Environmental Sustainability Group): Director of Finance and Estates to inform Corporation Chair of date of next meeting.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	3	Actions from previous minutes: The Chair requested the outcome from actions in previous minutes that may have been missed.
S C S S	5	Catering contract: The meeting ensured that it sought the views of the student governor as to the quality of the catering and options for change. Governors' question to ensure that the tender brief included mention of contactless payments. Chair offered to view the draft brief, as to wait for the committee to meet would delay proceedings unnecessarily. Governors' recognition of the risks of in-house catering, and confirmation that this was not the College's core business.
C C C C S	6	Options for the Estate: Chair ensured that the meeting heard the strategic, philosophical and financial arguments for the proposals for change to seek assurance that the reasons for any land sale were clear. Consideration of what stakeholders' views might be to proposals for the estate. Probing questions as to whether the proposed strategy to grow student numbers was sound. Governors with specialist building knowledge offered an alternative way forward for the College to adopt in its review of the estate. They also offered their assistance to provide the College with the information and professional help that it would need.