



Minutes of the Meeting of the Estates Committee of the Corporation

28th January 2010

Held in the Boardroom in the South Building

Present: Councillor Kevin Maton (Chair)
Mr Bob Hall
Mr Paul Taylor (Principal)
Mr Bill Woolhead

In Attendance: Mr Jim Edwards, Director of Estates & Deputy Clerk to the Corporation
Mrs Gill Manthorpe, Vice-Principal Communications, People &
Development
Ms Claire McDonald, Marketing Manager

E1/10 **Apologies for Absence** were received from Mr Warwick Hall and Ms Kollette Super.

E2/10 **Disclosure of Interest**

Councillor Kevin Maton declared an interest in the item on Marketing Strategy, in that a member of his family was currently working within the Marketing Department.

E3/10 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of 21st October 2009 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

E4/10 **Management Action Items**

The Director of Estates, in his capacity as Deputy Clerk to the Corporation, presented the schedule of action points arising from previous Estates Committee meetings. It was noted that most actions had been undertaken and that the remaining actions were ongoing.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

E5/10 **Maxwell Centre Update**

The Director of Estates presented a report updating members on the dispute over whether or not the planning permission for the development of the Maxwell Centre by the site developer contained an onerous condition.

It was confirmed that an Expert would be determining this issue and members were informed of the timetable in respect of legal submissions and expert witness reports from the developer as well as the counter-submissions from the College. It was noted that final submissions and comments would be lodged with the Expert by 20th March 2010.

It was confirmed that, should the Expert support the developer's contention that the planning permission contained an onerous condition, then the developer be entitled to walk away from the sale contract or re-negotiate the sale price. Otherwise, the original sale price would stand, the College would be entitled to payment from the developer accordingly and would also be able to sue the developer for costs if it wished.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.

- (b) That members should continue to be kept informed by email of any developments.

E6/10 Studio Acoustics

The Director of Estates presented a report informing members that the College had continued to challenge the acoustics engineers for the North Building in respect of the appropriateness of their design specification for the music studios and practice rooms, as well as the acoustic solution proposed for the achievement of their performance specification.

It was reported that after significant delays, the acoustics engineers, at Director level, had agreed to meet the College on 4th February 2010 in an attempt to resolve the outstanding problems. Should this meeting fail to progress matters satisfactorily, then the College would propose to take the matter forward formally through the route of claiming professional negligence initially, and then potentially legally.

In the meantime, it was stated that the College was proceeding with the purchase and installation of bespoke acoustic doors, which would go some way to addressing some of the outstanding issues.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

E7/10 Marketing Strategy

The Vice-Principal Communications, People & Development and the Marketing Manager presented members with the first draft of the Marketing Strategy 2010-2013, along with the strategic planning process and the indicative staffing structure required to enable the implementation of such a strategy.

It was confirmed that the Vice-Principal Communications, People & Development was now responsible for marketing within the College and had worked closely with the Marketing Manager to develop the draft strategy. However, it was noted that the newly-appointed Vice-Principal Commercial Development would be heavily involved strategically through Employer Services in further developing the sections regarding the business development of the Schools.

It was stated that the strategy had been drawn up following full engagement with Heads of School, and a considerable focus on the linkage between the College's Corporate Objectives and the proposed marketing objectives had been made.

The current staffing structure was considered and it was noted that it was deficient both in numbers as well as specialist marketing expertise. A new structure was being proposed accordingly and a new post of Marketing Officer would enable the College to engage with young people specifically to run a media production unit and to be a catalyst for a vibrant approach to marketing the College.

It was further noted that plans to cover the Marketing Manager's forthcoming maternity leave were now in place.

Discussion turned to the style of the marketing approach and it was suggested that the College might wish to consider involving students in producing a modern, punchy video, utilising the walkthrough of the building already in production. It was agreed, however, that a different approach would be more appropriate for employers, although it was noted that in a recent survey a significant number of employers were unaware of what Colleges could deliver as well as being unsure of their own training needs.

The changing face of employers in Coventry and the region was noted and the notion of 'market making' was raised. It was stressed that Schools, some of whom were already undertaking Apprentice Open Evenings, needed to do more of the same. It was suggested that Schools, amongst other things, also needed to plan longer-term and to work with the Marketing Department to plan publicity and promotions more coherently.

Consideration was then given to the budget-setting process for the Marketing Department and whether the budgets were allocated based on a percentage of turnover or a percentage of overheads or some other method. In response, it was stated that the budget was often set based on historical expenditure but that as part of the cross-College benchmarking exercise to be undertaken in February and March 2010, this particular aspect would be reviewed.

The way in which the results of the benchmarking exercise would be used was discussed and it was suggested that the College might want to compare itself with successful Colleges rather than with those that spent the least on marketing.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) That the activities within the proposed strategic planning process should continue.
- (c) To endorse the proposed arrangements for covering the Marketing Manager's maternity leave.
- (d) That updates on the implementation of the Marketing Strategy be provided to the Committee at regular intervals.
- (e) That an abridged version of the draft Marketing Strategy should be taken to the Governors' Strategy Conference on 26th and 27th February 2010.

E8/10**Progress against Facilities & Environment Strategy**

The Director of Estates presented a report on the achievement of the aims of the three-year Facilities & Environment Strategy which had been approved by the Corporation in July 2009.

It was reported that progress was generally very good against each of the stated aims, although there had been little movement forward in respect of the next stage of the College's redevelopment, particularly in terms of the disposal of Charterhouse and the procurement of a recreational facility for students. However, it was noted that there were well-understood reasons for this, in that LSC capital funding and the College's overall financial situation had negated the opportunity for moving forward positively and quickly with further redevelopment work.

It was stated that possible new building developments and a reorganisation of accommodation in the College would be an item for discussion and decision at the forthcoming Governors' Strategy Conference on 26th and 27th February 2010.

The Principal reported that the car park had been opened up to members of the local community, given that the facility had been open for a year and that staff usage had now been ascertained, thus leaving about 160 spaces regularly unused. In response to questioning about parking requirements for the temples using Harnall Lane West at weekends, it was reported that the College had offered its car park as a facility, chargeable at current rates.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) To note the generally good progress against the aims of the three-year Facilities & Environment Strategy.
- (c) That the issue of further accommodation and premises development be taken to the Governors' Strategy Conference on 26th and 27th February 2010.
- (d) To note that the car park had been opened to members of the local community.

E9/10**Carbon Reduction Commitment**

The Director of Estates presented a report giving information on the Government's Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme, which was central to the UK's strategy for improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

It was reported that the scheme was designed to improve energy efficiency in firms consuming more than 6,000 megawatt hours of electricity in the calendar year 2008. In April 2011, organisations

would be required to buy allowances equal to their annual emissions from 1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011.

It was noted that all the money raised through the allowances would be recycled back to participants according to how well they performed in an annual performance league table that ranked participants on energy efficiency performance.

It was stated that the College believed that it would have to participate in the scheme. However, this had yet to be confirmed by the Environment Agency or the College's energy suppliers.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

E10/10 Insurance Cover 2010/11

The Director of Estates presented a report setting out with the proposed insurance schedule for 2010/11. For reference, the schedule for 2009/10 was provided and it was noted that no change was being advocated.

It was reported that there had been no claims against the College so far in 2009/10, which was excellent, and it was suggested that the insurance cover in place was robust and appropriate.

Consideration then turned to the contract with the College's insurer, which was due to finish on 31st July 2010. Technically, the College would normally go out to tender through OJEU for a 3-year + 2-year contract commencing 1st August 2010. However, it was reported that the insurer had indicated that it would be prepared to re-rate the College's risk which would result in a 10% reduction in premiums for a new contract with it, on the face of it representing good value for money. Thus, it might be appropriate not to go out to tender in the circumstances.

This scenario was discussed and it was agreed that the College should ascertain from its purchasing consortium whether the insurance market was still 'soft', thus suggesting that competitive deals might be available through a tender process, or whether the market was hardening, thus making the insurer's informal offer obviously attractive. It was also stated that the support and service from the insurer was excellent and that this should be factored into any decision as well.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) To approve the insurance cover for 2010/11.
- (b) To note that the College would seek advice from its purchasing consortium and ensure best value when placing the new insurance contract from 1st August 2010 for 3 years

+ 2 years, by either re-negotiating with the current insurer or by going out to tender.

E11/10 First Impressions' Survey Results – Facilities & Environment

The Director of Estates presented a report giving the results of the First Impressions Student Survey for facilities and environment areas. It was noted that the survey had been undertaken in October 2009 with about 2,500 respondents.

It was reported that the results were generally very good, representing a significant improvement in performance compared to the 2008 survey and also when benchmarked with 140 other Colleges taking part in the same survey for their students, which placed the College in the upper quartile in most respects.

It was noted that the new buildings had obviously affected student perceptions positively but the appointment to a new post specifically looking at facilities and the learner experience, as well as the re-focusing of the College on its facilities, premises and learning environment had contributed to these results.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) To note the positive results of the First Impressions Survey with regard to facilities and environment issues.
- (c) To note that the results of the Mid-Course Survey undertaken in February 2010 would be reported to the Committee at its next meeting, on 12th May 2010.

E12/10 Health & Safety Autumn Term 2009 Report

The Director of Estates presented the Health & Safety Autumn Term 2009 Report.

It was reported that the accident and incident statistics for both staff and students remained very low in terms of both severity and incidence rates.

Members were informed of an HSE initiative, the Corporate Health & Safety Performance Index (CHaSPI), which the College proposed to join. It was noted that organisations were increasingly being asked to measure, benchmark and report their Health & Safety performance and that the College was no different in this respect. Good Health & Safety was an essential part of providing best value, ensuring quality of service and increasing productivity.

Accordingly, the College was seeking to benchmark its performance against others to help guide the establishment of its own targets, to track performance over time and to provide a catalyst for

improvement. The HSE's benchmarking tool, CHaSPI, would enable the above to be achieved.

It was noted that the Health & Safety Committee had recommended that the proposal should be adopted subject to Governors' endorsement.

Discussion then turned to emergency evacuation procedures at the College and it was noted that, because of the transient nature of the student body in the College, the emergency evacuation procedure did not instruct staff to take registers and rosters during an evacuation; rather, a 'sweep' of the buildings was undertaken to ensure that all persons had left. This issue had been discussed by the Health & Safety Committee, which had endorsed this policy.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) To endorse the proposal that the College subscribe to the Corporate Health & Safety Performance Index (CHaSPI).
- (c) To note that the Health & Safety Committee had agreed that the emergency evacuation procedure should remain unchanged in respect of the requirement not to take registers and rosters during an evacuation.

E13/10 Assurance on Health and Safety Committee Arrangements – Annual Update

The Director of Estates presented a report giving the annual update on assurance on Health & Safety Committee arrangements for 2009/10.

The report provided information on the membership of the Health & Safety Committee, dates of meetings during the year, the Internal Audit assessment of Health & Safety in the College and the inclusion of Health & Safety in the Risk Assessment & Action Plan.

The Committee resolved to receive and note the content of the report.

E14/10 Interim Self-Assessment of the Committee's Performance 2009/10

The Director of Estates, in his capacity as Deputy Clerk to the Corporation, presented a report confirming the process for carrying out the Corporation's annual self-assessment.

It was noted that each Committee was required to carry out an interim self-assessment of its performance after approximately six months of the year, and prior to the Governors' Strategy Conference in February.

The report set out the process for self-assessment and provided a review of the Committee's work to date in 2009/10. The Committee was asked to undertake its self-assessment and to decide a grade for its performance thus far in the year.

In an update to the report, the Deputy Clerk advised that inclusive of the current meeting, attendance at meetings of the Committee in 2009/10 was 64.3% compared to the target of 80%.

The Committee thereupon undertook its interim self-assessment. Members agreed that, notwithstanding the attendance factor, the Committee was proactive, challenging and had taken on a broader scope of work as identified as an area for improvement at its final self-assessment for 2008/09.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) That its key strengths were drawing to the Committee members with relevant strengths and appropriate expertise; its focus on the future; its thorough probing of issues; and its constructive challenge of the Executive.
- (d) That the interim grade for its performance in 2009/10 be Grade 1 (Outstanding).
- (e) To note that the self-assessment undertaken at the meeting would be reviewed by the Committee at its meeting on 12th May 2010 as its final self-assessment for the year.

E15/10 Dates of Meetings and Annual Plan of Business 2010/11

The Director of Estates, in his capacity as Deputy Clerk to the Corporation, reported that normally at this time the Committee would consider and agree the dates of its meetings and annual plan of business for the following academic year.

However, it was reported that a review of the Corporation's Committees and their terms of reference was to be undertaken by the Search Committee. Therefore, until the outcome of this was known, it was proposed that consideration of dates of meetings and the annual plan of business be deferred until the next meeting, on 12th May 2010.

The Committee resolved:

- (a) To receive and note the content of the report.
- (b) To approve the proposal made.

E16/10 Recommendations for the Corporation

The Committee resolved that the Corporation be recommended to note:

- (a) The good progress towards achieving the aims of the Facilities & Environment Strategy.
- (b) That the Insurance Schedule for 2010/11 had been approved.
- (c) The very good results of the First Impressions Survey in respect of facilities and environment issues.
- (d) The assurance with regard to the Health & Safety Committee arrangements.

E17/10 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that its next meeting had been set for 5.00 pm on Thursday 12th May 2010.

E18/10 Publication of Papers

The Committee resolved that, for commercial reasons, Document 3 (Maxwell Centre Update), Document 5 (Marketing Strategy) and Document 8 (Insurance Cover 2010/11) be withheld from publication and that the other papers of the meeting be published.

Meeting Opened: 5.00 pm

Meeting Closed: 6.43 pm

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