

Minutes of the VIRTUAL meeting held at 4.00pm on 17 June 2020

Present: D Wildridge, Chair
S Clarke
N Savvas, CEO
E D'Souza
J Wakelam
C Higgins

In Attendance: S Jones, Vice Principal Finance and Resources
R Stevenson, Operations Director
G Jefferson, Executive Director
J Kirk, Interim Clerk

No member declared an interest in relation to items of this agenda.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from M Milburn.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2020

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3 Matters arising from the meeting held on 6 May 2020

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report and all actions reported had been completed or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

4 Property Update Report

R Stevenson lead on this report. The summer works and move list continues to be revised in response to Covid-19 as is the two phased re-opening plan. The first phase 'events' style is being implemented in line with the results of staff survey in order to best facilitate remote teaching for staff and based on the 25% rule aiming to make the buildings as safe as possible for everyone.

S Clarke asked about contingency for any changes in Social distancing. It was reported that investment is in items that will continue to be used as social distancing is relaxed, for example foot door openings will still be useful. E-learning and distance learning investment will also be beneficial in the longer term.

S Clarke asked if it had been determined if this was how students wanted to learn in the future? Students are regularly surveyed and asked for feedback, though it is not yet clear how the lockdown regulations will be phased out, such as the 2-metre rule. Students will continue to be asked regularly for feedback on developments.

E D'Souza asked about personal care and protection such as hand sanitizer stocks, and the effect on budget? It was confirmed that there is adequate stock but there is likely to be a budget impact, though this is not yet quantifiable as staff requirements are still coming in.

Summer Works plan has further been amended to improve separation of adult provision. This benefits both safeguarding and operational aspects, and it is hoped will deliver a net cost saving.

There was discussion about possible clawback of the historic funding from Suffolk University which has been used for HE provision in Suffolk House. It was agreed that the funds had all been used as originally intended.

Recruitment is generally positive and appears to be bucking the local trend, even though the budget assumption is for a 30% reduction in new apprentices.

Action

The impact of the C19 lockdown has allowed some of the movement work to start ahead of schedule, which will assist with having work completed in time. There are cost implications as much of the work is set against the revenue budget rather than the capital budget. This year's premises budget only allows for some works to be carried out immediately, though it is hoped that there may be a sufficient surplus to allow all work to be completed, though that is still uncertain.

The Committee agreed R Stevenson should continue with works planned this year, with a delegation comprising S Clarke, S Jones & D Wildridge to consider any work carrying additional costs before the October committee meeting.

S Clarke,
S Jones & D
Wildridge

The costs of the dilapidation works at IpCity as identified by the IpServe surveyor are still under discussion with the aim to revise downwards the original £50k + VAT.

Abbeygate Sixth Form College

The Committee was updated on the DfE lease on Abbeygate. A second extension was granted for them to issue the first year break clause notice but the deadline for this has now passed. The Abbeygate building is going ahead but the junction works are not yet. They are no longer looking for any temporary sites so are looking to keep Abbeygate. It is therefore likely the Gateway will be returned by September, but less on what proportion of the £500k 'rent' for the full year will be payable. The first tranche of £120k is committed for IT equipment.

There was much discussion about fencing off the wooded area. The trees in the copse present a low risk but high impact in high winds, and public have traditional access even if there is not thought to be any legal right of way. Branch fall has occurred in the past, thankfully there have been no reports of injury, however the committee was referred to the case of Felbrigg Hall where a schoolboy died from a falling branch and the site owner subsequently sued for negligence. The court ruled there was no negligence but the overall public relations impact from the case was very damaging. The College has legal costs insurance in place but the reputational damage from such an incident would be severe. It is recommended to fence off the area to reduce risk, with proposed vehicle and pedestrian gates which could be closed in the event of a forecast for severe weather. It was noted that an annual tree survey was carried out, in order to meet standards of reasonable care, and that any application for planning permission for fencing may elicit strongly negative publicity. It was agreed to defer this issue to the next meeting to allow for further consideration.

5 Property Strategy

The RIBA Stage 2 document has now been added and the earlier document is to be removed. It was agreed that the Property Strategy be recommended to Corporation for formal approval.

R Stevenson

6 Draft Sustainability and Environmental Strategy Policy

There was widespread support for this strategy, and it was agreed to recommend this Policy to Corporation.

R Stevenson

7 Any other business

G Jefferson asked if his attendance is required at future meetings. He was thanked for his service to date and would be invited only when his specific input is required.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 7 October 2020 at 4.00pm

The meeting closed at 5.27pm