

**Governing Body**  
**PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 17 March 2021 at 5.05pm**

**Present:** C Higgins, Chair  
D Wildridge, co-opted  
E D'Souza  
N Savvas, CEO  
S Clarke

**In Attendance:** A Swift, Group Director of Estates, WSC (part)  
R Stevenson, Group Operations Director  
S Gales, Board Secretary  
S Jones, Vice Principal Finance and Resources  
T Elkin, Clerk

**Apologies:** M Peachey, WSC Project Manager

CHiggins, DWildridge, ED'Souza and NSavvas declared their role as Trustees of Suffolk Academies Trust.

1. **Apologies for Absence**  
Apologies were received by MPeachey.
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
3. **Matters Arising from the meeting held on 7 October 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.

*A Swift left the meeting at 5.20pm*

4. **Property Update Report**  
WSC reopened to all students on 8 March 2021, prior to which the sites were open only for required on-site activities, adhering to lockdown guidance, with a 'booking in' procedure to enable track-and-trace protocols. RStevenson summarised the preparation works, and mitigation measures implemented prior to reopening.

Lateral Flow Testing centres have been established at the University StudiesCentre (in partnership with the Council) for students and staff.. Adhering to latest guidance, home-testing kits are now being distributed to students and staff.

Works continue utilising the FE Capital Fund, and tender and planning permission for the replacement of Australia House's roof are pending. If there are funds available after the repairs to the Built Environment rooves and the replacement of Australia House's roof, and time to undertake further works, a number of other items will also utilise the fund, including remedial works to fire doors across all campuses. If not, these items will be consolidated as part of the estates operational plan for 2021/22.

RStevenson stated that planning permission has been granted for new signage in the Copse to warn the public not to enter during high winds.

**Action**

The installation of an HE Learning Resource Centre in the University Studies Centre has been completed; and the estates team are making progress on works to address ongoing problems with the HVAC compressor units.

RStevenson updated that the Ipswich learning centre has a few compliance issues which we have raised with the landlord; and meetings continue with West Suffolk Council to identify more suitable site for our Haverhill learning centre.

RStevenson confirmed that the College did not secure funding through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The Committee asked if we knew why we were unsuccessful / why others were successful? RStevenson noted that those who were successful had pre-existing costed plans in place and were able to provide detailed plans to submit; for the future we are looking to develop similar costed plans. NSavvas also observed that the good maintained state of the College's property disadvantaged us, compared with other applicants with estates in more urgent need of development.

**5. Property Strategy**

RStevenson noted that given the significant changes to the operational environment as a result of Covid-19 the College is reviewing its' strategic position and aims; and once completed and approved, the property strategy will then be further developed.

RStevenson noted that, in discussions with Pick Everard it transpires that The Gateway was built with the connectivity for solar panels to be installed; so this could be a possible option for development which was being explored.

NSavvas noted that the team are currently re-evaluating the use of our learning centres.

^The Committee noted that section 9 is out of date and needs to be updated; and asked for the Pick Everard to be hyperlinked rather than appended to the report.

\*The Committee asked the report to be updated to include the main capital works planned and their cost, and for this list to be this linked to the Financial Strategy.

RStevenson

The Committee **approved** the Property Strategy subject to inclusion of \* and amendment of ^ [above]. The Committee recognised that, as the lockdowns have forced us to work differently and in doing so utilise our property differently, the Property Strategy is being reconsidered by the Executive (to align to our IT and Curriculum Strategies) and may change next academic year. Clerk to check if the Property Strategy needs to be recommended to the Corporation for approval.

Clerk

**6. Capital Projects Update**

RStevenson provided a detailed report on progress to utilise the FE Capital Fund which must be spent by end of September 2021.

*T Elkin left the meeting at 5.50pm.*

**7. Committee Meeting Times**

The Committee to continue meetings in 2021/22 as 1-hour meetings starting at 5.05pm.

**8 Any Other Busines**

• **T Level and FE Transformation funds**

RStevenson informed of the College's plans to submit applications for a T Level fund (2x 50% match funded; 2x 25% match funded) to support T-Levels in:

- Automotive – in Automotive area
- Construction – at the Built Environment Campus
- Digital – in what is currently the Library
- Health Sciences – in The Gateway

And to submit applications for FE Transformation funding (0% match funded) to:

- refurbish the main roof at the Built Environment campus
- refurbish the empty University Studies hangers

RStevenson reported that, due to time constraints associated with applying for these funds, through Chair's action the Corporation has appointed Pick Everard (as suppliers with existing knowledge about these buildings and able in the timescales) to produce RIBA II drawings to support these applications. NSavvas noted that these RIBA II drawings will be useful even if we are unsuccessful as we will then be prepared to respond to future funding opportunities.

SJones agreed to bring a detailed report on potential commitments of matched funding to the next Finance Committee.

SJones

The Committee asked that, if we are not successful, we try to understand why so we can learn what to do better in the future.

Date of next meeting:

- Wednesday 5 May 2021 at 5.05pm

The meeting closed at 5.58pm