

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

**Minutes of the virtual meeting held at 5.05pm on 7 October 2020**

**Present:** E D'Souza  
C Higgins

S Clarke  
M Milburn

**In Attendance:** N Savvas, CEO  
S Jones, Vice Principal Finance and Resources  
R Stevenson, Operations Director, WSC  
A Swift, Group Director of Estates, WSC (part)  
M Peachey, WSC Project Manager  
T Elkin, Clerk

**Apologies:** D Wildridge

No interests relevant to items on the agenda were declared by members.

For future meetings, Committee Members requested a single pdf of meeting papers sent via email rather than receiving papers attached to the TEAMS invitation.

**1 Appointment of Chair**

DWildridge was appointed as the Chair of the committee.

**2 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were submitted by DWildridge and were accepted. SClarke agreed to Chair the meeting in the absence of the Chair.

**3 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2020**

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

**4 Matters Arising from 17 June 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.

RStevenson advised that HE has moved to another site and the budget has been used to enable the move and refurbish the building. Teams have been busy over the summer break moving HE to the its new location. The move into Suffolk House however, involved a lot of work as Covid-19 mitigation was happening at the same time. RStevenson outlined additional work that was carried out, internally whilst students were off site, some completion is still required, due to furloughing of staff by contractors.

Congratulations were expressed to RStevenson and the teams. SClarke asked if all done was done within budget. Yes, work was matched to the target. SClarke questioned, in regard to the work still to be completed, which financial year will this be allocated to? RStevenson advised that the budget was reviewed with Pam Ewan and divided into capital and revenue, therefore some capital may roll over into the new financial year.

NSavvas proposed that the committee consider the additional grant of £1.1m received as the college may struggle to spend the money effectively in the time constraint applied. The committee agreed to discuss this under agenda item 7 'Any Other Business'.

**Action**

RS advised that turnstiles have been installed at the front of the gateway. Entry is now via a smartcard, so that entry can be controlled. It was agreed to discuss further under agenda item 6 'Property Update'

**5 Committee Terms of Reference**

It was agreed that the committee will try to 'mirror' the Suffolk Academies Trust (SAT) Terms of Reference, to enable consistency. The following items will be included in the revised Terms:

- Finance committee approval for spend
- Sustainability/ green policy
- Property strategy

The committee **agreed** to revise the Terms of Reference of the Property committee.

(Note the amends to the SAT Terms of Reference are detailed in Appendix 1)

**6 Property Update Report**

RStevenson outlined the turnstile entry and will consider whether to have them outside the building rather than inside.

NSavvas highlighted what the Operations Team has done, in managing Covid-19 as well as looking after One Sixth Form College and the Abbeygate Sixth Form College new build too. "There has been an enormous amount of work carried out to put these things in place – it's remarkable"

RStevenson noted, "Andrew Swift came up to speed quickly and I acknowledge his hard work" Stevenson advised colleagues that he is now ensuring that outreach centres are a part of the operational 'conversation'. SClarke asked, what is the situation at Haverhill? RStevenson confirmed that the college was part of a property strategy meeting with Suffolk County Council where the Western Way development and infrastructure development in the county was discussed.

RStevenson noted that a licence document has been received from 'Unity' and would prefer to sign up to provide flexibility before moving to a more suitable property. SClarke questioned when the current license expired? RStevenson confirmed that it expired in May 2020 and WSC is still using the building.

Note at 5.06pm ASwift joined the meeting.

SClarke welcomed ASwift to his first WSC Property Committee meeting.

ED'Souza confirmed that visited the STEM centre and Abbeygate, "There is a real campus feel and its remarkable, it's a fantastic job by everyone."

ED'Souza questioned whether the college was using the NHS app? RStevenson advised that the IT dept have loaded the app to every college owned mobile phone that will accept it. There are a few Apple phones will not enable the app unfortunately and its used when possible. Track and Trace posters are displayed throughout the site.

**7 Any Other Business**

Allocation of grant funding – the paper was circulated prior to the meeting. RStevenson provided an explanation to the background to the stock condition work funding. RStevenson explained that the grant funding has to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and there are some restrictions as to how this can be spent.

Its proposed to operate with a 'Plan A' and a 'Plan B' running at the same time, either plan can be followed through without major changes. Plan A will look at big capital items, but to spend £1.1m "May be difficult". The college will undertake a big capital project and RStevenson outlined further a planned roofing project. However, work may not be

R  
Stevenson

undertaken before March 2020 therefore the works would have to moved further back in the year.

Plan B: RStevenson has met with curriculum teams to identify where money can be best spent i.e. roofing, air conditioning units, boilers etc.

Implementation of these plans would then enable the college to use its own money to spend on own projects i.e. social space. Some of the DfE fund could be used for re-decoration of this area. Will also look at car park re-surfacing. Could bring some projects forward to be funded by this fund.

SClarke asked, the big-ticket items, were they identified as part of the first 2 years of the stock condition? Yes, work is based on this plan. Planning is going to make the spend happen in the winter at short notice whilst balancing out the actions required to manage Covid-19.

CHiggins questioned whether the DfE may try to clawback any monies if they are not spent, "Its important however, that we spend it on our priorities". RStevenson explained the winter challenges and logistics on replacing heating and pipework, this cannot be done whilst students are in the buildings.

MPeachey added that contractors have advised that from a Health & Safety perspective, they cannot do roof work whilst there is occupation in the building, therefore RStevenson feels that Plan B should be running at the same time. SClarke asked if it's known how long this process will take? MPeachey confirmed that the application has to be submitted on 16<sup>th</sup> October and we will have to advise that we require a deferral. SJones agreed with this approach.

ED'Souza questioned governance, "As the college is trying to spend the grant money and providing the DfE agree, we can get on, but will require some negotiation" What approvals will you need from governors? SClarke noted that as a committee, we need to approve contracts over £100k therefore there will need to be Finance Committee and Property Committee approval, or can this approval be delegated to committee Chairs?

RStevenson agreed with this proposal to ensure right amount of governance and that colleagues can move quickly.

It was proposed to delegated decision making to the Chair of Property Committee and propose that its delegated to the Chair of the Finance Committee. It was agreed that the Clerk would draft a letter from ED'Souza to SClarke to create an audit trail of approvals. SClarke will circulate the proposal to the Finance committee, this was **agreed**.

Procurement: MPeachey outlined the framework for procurement and provided an example. SClarke asked, will there be a framework contract with an 'open amount'? Yes, we can do a fixed price contract for a roof, but we also need a cost-plus contract for minor works. ED'Souza asked for confirmation, this would mean one contract of a significant amount? Yes, the company would manage the whole works on our site.

SClarke advised that the committee has to agree a variation to the financial regulations to adopt this contract. MPeachey confirmed that there are two contractors applying so there will be a competitive tendering process. SClarke questioned, would finance regulations require more than 2 contractors in the bid? SJones advised that the framework will cover this and therefore has no issues. The Property Committee needs to consider the work and the Finance Committee has to approve it, therefore it was proposed that the Finance Committee approve the proposal and it goes to the Chair of the committee, to enable it to be reported to the Corporation board in December.

The committee agreed to vary the standard procurement route and to delegate the decision making to the Chair and then to ED'Souza for presentation to the board. ED'Souza proposed informing everyone of this and will draft an email to inform of the

T Elkin

E D'Souza

objectives, to be able to utilise as much of the grant as the college possibly can and will have to work rapidly in an agile manner. It will be shared with the Trust Board too. ED'Souza welcomed any further questions requiring explanation.

ED'Souza asked that RStevenson keeps the committee updated with progress – this was **agreed**.

The committee agreed to cancel the scheduled November meeting; therefore, the next meeting will be held in February.

The committee expressed thanks to the Operations team for the amount of work completed in challenging circumstances.

Date of next meeting:

- Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 5.05pm

The meeting closed at 5.40pm

#### Appendix I – revised Terms of Reference

8. To agree the award of contracts or sub-contracts for capital projects between the value of £100,000 and £1m and within the overall project budget, as required, **subject to the approval of the Finance Committee;**
9. To consider proposals to develop the estate of the Trust and agree final plans;
10. **To review the college's IT strategy and make recommendations to the Board;**
11. **To receive reports of statutory testing and annual servicing of equipment, to ensure that testing, maintenance and servicing has been undertaken;**