

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 5.50pm on 6 May 2020

Present: S Clarke C Higgins
E D'Souza N Savvas, CEO

In Attendance: M Milburn, Third Party Adviser
S Jones, Chief Financial Officer
R Stevenson, Operations Director
J Bridges, Trust Secretary

1 Declaration of Interests

Trustees confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest to declare in relation to the items of the agenda.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from D Wildridge. In the absence of the Chair, S Clarke chaired the meeting.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising

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 tour of the new Abbeygate build will be organised for the Trustees.

5 Estates Update

The report was taken as read. Items of notable interest are as follows.

Managed Services and Contracts

OSFC will extend their current cleaning and catering contract with Vertas to ensure stability especially as there are TUPE implications. ASFC is to tender this as a desktop exercise with a view to consolidating in the future if advantageous. They have posted an advert on OJEU for the catering provision but there is some concern over caterers deciding to furlough staff including their sales teams. If we do not receive comprehensive bids, then there will be the option for ASFC to ask Servest to provide a catering contract for a year.

OSFC

Vertas are attending site daily to secure the building as we have an agreement in place with West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust to use the sports hall for the purpose of storage, repair and collection of equipment. West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust have had access from Monday 6 April 2020 between 8:00am to 8.00pm daily and this will continue until further notice.

Action

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CBRE are carrying out essential building checks, which include fire alarms, sprinklers and generators etc. Where possible we are still organising contractors to attend site to carry out vital maintenance and contractors are lined up to undertake the summer works schedule.

EE are working and operating the helpdesk remotely and they are conducting a weekly walk of the comms rooms onsite to ensure equipment is fully functional.

ASFC

Weekly update meetings with all key stakeholders during the Covid-19 situation. Particular emphasis is placed on any movement in the expected handover date for phase one of the building as a result of either delayed build works or complications as a result of the 278 junction works. Currently the latter is expected to be resolved via delegated planning consent.

The build itself is now running a few weeks behind schedule. Alternatives are to be considered over the coming weeks in order to avoid a “cold start” if the DfE request assistance in accommodating student numbers at the start of term 20/21. A first action date should be agreed to ensure this planning is commenced in an appropriate timescale, not least as this could have knock-on effects for WSC as the current provider of temporary accommodation.

6 Draft Property Strategy

Updated student growth numbers have been received since the initial presentation meeting. These have been incorporated into the interim strategy document. One of the options for increasing space (options a to d) is to be investigated locally, this is the construction of an admin pod, releasing space in the main building for teaching and learning. An additional option (e) is to be included which is to build a mezzanine to create extra space. More detail on OSFC catchment areas are also to be revisited in the strategy to ensure that all areas are identified.

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Subject to these amendments an updated strategy will be brought back to the Committee to consider again at the meeting to be held on 17 June 2020.

RStevenson

7 Any other business ASFC Break Clause

The ESFA have asked West Suffolk College for an additional month (from 30 April 2020 to 29 May 2020) to extend the lease of the temporary accommodation at the Gateway building. This has been negotiated and will not be extended/amended further and this will be a cash flow benefit to the Trust as the clawback of student income would have been clawed back in September but will be deferred to February 2021.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 4.00pm.

The meeting closed at 6.15pm