

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Open Minutes of the Meeting of the Building Committee held on 21 October 2014

Present: Mr G Howells (Chair), Mr R Ankcorn (Democracy and Development Officer, Students' Union), Mr P Dunne, Mr K Sloan (Registrar and Chief Operating Officer), Ms C Turhan (President, Students' Union), Professor L Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

Apologies: Ms P Egan, Professor D Elmes.

In Attendance: Mr J Breckon (Director of Estates), Mr C Carrington (Interim Director of Estates and Secretary), Ms R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director), Mr K Edwards (Head of Finance, Resources and Administration, Estates Office), Dr J Gardner (Senior Assistant Registrar, Space Management and Timetabling), Mr W Heynes (Head of Campus Infrastructure, Estates Office), Ms L Pride (Development Plan Architect), Mr H Rowles (Assistant Registrar, Space Management and Timetabling and Assistant Secretary), Mr R Wilson (Director (Business Development), Campus and Commercial Services Group).

Note: Some items are noted as "Exempt information not included" as they contain information that would be withheld from release to the public because an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies.

1/14-15 Membership and Terms of Reference

CONSIDERED:

The Membership and Terms of Reference of the University Estate Committee (formerly the Building Committee) and its Sub-Committees for the Academic Year 2014/15, as set out in paper BC.1/14-15.

REPORTED: (by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (a) That, at its meeting on 9 October 2014 the Council had resolved that the changes to the membership and terms of reference be implemented;
- (b) That the Committee was not being asked formally to adopt the terms of reference for this meeting, but that the new governance structures would be implemented in January 2015 and were being presented for comment;
- (c) That under its new remit, the University Estate Committee (UEC) would take on strategic responsibility for the overall development of the University's estate on all sites;
- (d) That the Environment and Amenities Committee would merge with the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group to become the Capital, Space and Amenities Group (CSAG), with strategic oversight of the environment passing to the UEC.
- (e) That CSAG would report through Steering Committee to UEC, ensuring more holistic consideration of the academic, financial and commercial interests and closer alignment between capital projects;

- (f) That the new Quality and Design Sub-Group (QDSG) would be responsible for ensuring the overall high quality and design of capital developments of the University;
- (g) That the QDSG would not have a fixed membership, but would be able to draw on expertise as required;

(by the Director of Estates)

- (h) That it would be good to use one of the current projects working with CABE as a pilot, noting that he was working with the Chair to identify a pilot project;

(by the Chair)

- (i) That it would be important to ensure the appropriate membership of QDSG and that sufficient time was given to review projects to ensure that the overall schedules were not affected.

2/14-15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Building Committee held on 2 June 2014 be approved.

3/14-15 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

That, should any members or attendees of the Building Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK.

NOTE: No declarations were made.

4/14-15 Matters Arising

- (a) Carbon Challenge (minute 54/13-14 referred)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Interim Director of Estates providing an update on the University's Carbon Management Plan.

REPORTED (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (i) That the targets needed to be revised as the size of the University's Estate increased;
- (ii) That there was the potential for taxes on carbon emissions in the future, making this issue financially, as well as environmentally, important;

- (iii) That only 40% of overall energy consumption could be directly controlled by the Estates Office, noting that two members of staff were in the process of being appointed to work with departments across the University to reduce overall energy consumption;
- (iv) That Estates had a priority list of carbon reduction activities that were implemented as the budget allowed and funding became available;

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (v) That there needed to be a discussion with the funding councils about the appropriateness of sector-wide carbon targets, noting the need to minimise emissions as much as possible;
- (vi) That modelling needed to be undertaken to understand the benefits and opportunity costs of investing in carbon reduction as part of the planning process;

(by the Chair)

- (vii) That it was possible significantly to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions given enough investment, and that this could save money in the longer term;

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (viii) That it was important to integrate carbon awareness into all projects;
- (ix) That the University had engaged consultants from Aston University to investigate the use of bioenergy, noting that no decision had yet been taken.

- (b) Membership of Project Progressing Groups (minute 57(c)/13-14 referred)

REPORTED

That the oversight arrangements and memberships of PPGs for major projects were currently under review, noting that a proposal would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

5/14-15 Priorities for 2014/15

RECEIVED:

A presentation from the Interim Director of Estates on the Committee's priorities for 2014/15 and significant developments in the near future.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (a) That all of the reported activities were included in the University's Capital Plan;

- (b) That there would be heavy demands on all areas of campus and the surrounding area's infrastructure, with up to four projects accessing campus from one direction at any one time;

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (c) That the Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory had been delayed, noting that although it was still included in the capital plan, the project was on hold;
- (d) That this created an opportunity to bring forward the extension to the Zeeman Building for the Mathematical Sciences, provided the infrastructure would be able to support additional work in that area of campus;

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (e) That the significant plan of works for the next five years highlighted the importance of the change of governance structures, enabling the Committee to have oversight of the entire plan of works, not just individual buildings;
- (f) That there was a need to look at alternatives to bringing all of the construction traffic on to campus, including off-site compounding where possible;

(by the Director of Estates)

- (g) That it was important to ensure that the current campus infrastructure and services were sufficient to cope with the scale of works planned;

(by the Chair)

- (h) That it was important to consider the impact of the works on staff and students to minimise the impact of the works as much as possible, noting that this might lead to less optimal conditions for construction;

(by the Director (Business Development), Campus and Commercial Services Group)

- (i) That construction of HS2 would begin during 2017/18, adding significantly to the construction traffic in the surrounding area, particularly the Kenilworth Road.

6/14-15 Teaching and Learning Building

CONSIDERED:

A report on the concept development for the Teaching and Learning Building and its proposed site as set out in paper BC.2/14-15, noting that approval of the final design might be sought by circulation or delegated authority ahead of the next meeting of the Committee.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (a) That the project had progressed through several design phases, with consultation with different stakeholders as part of the process, noting that the building was intended to be in use by September 2016;
- (b) That a core part of the proposal had been to keep as much green space as possible, leading to the current proposed site at the West end of Tocil Field, leaving the mature trees intact to the East end of the field;
- (c) That the plans included the cost of some landscaping;

(by Mr P Dunne)

- (d) That the overall design of the building was excellent, but that it would be good to understand how the design enhanced the environment;

(by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling))

- (e) That the front of the building was North-facing and the back of the building would open to landscaped outdoor areas which would facilitate outdoor teaching and enhance the environment;

(by the Development Plan Architect)

- (f) That it was important to ensure that the project budget contained sufficient funds for both hard and soft landscaping;

(by the Democracy and Development Officer)

- (g) That too much soft landscaping would limit the possibilities of using the area for ad-hoc sporting activities;

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (h) That the overall campus plan would result in more people being resident on campus, with additional areas being opened up for informal use in the future, as the central focus of campus shifted;

(by the Chair)

- (i) That it would be useful to see the space planning for the building, as the proposed trapezoid shape of the smaller rooms could reduce the useful internal area by up to 15%;
- (j) That the landscaping details should be shared with the Chair and the Development Plan Architect;

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (k) That the circular space on the plan was for the CAVE2, a cutting-edge teaching facility for which a bid for funding had been submitted to HEFCE;

- (l) That there were considerable challenges, including tight timescales, for the development of the new Teaching and Learning Building.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed location for the new Teaching and Learning Building on the West end of Tocil Field be approved;
- (b) That the indicative building layout and concept design be approved to allow submission of a planning application in November 2014.

7/14-15 National Automotive Innovation Centre

CONSIDERED:

A paper regarding design changes to the National Automotive Innovation Centre building as set out in paper BC.3/14-15.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (a) That the design for the National Automotive Innovation Centre initially included a large water feature to the front of the building, near University Road;
- (b) That during the design of the service diversion work the inclusion of the water feature created a significant risk of programme delay;
- (c) That under the new plan the area became a landscaped raised grass area with public seating;
- (d) That the grass area would be easier to maintain and provided more usable space than a water feature;

(by the Development Plan Architect)

- (e) That the grass area was preferable as it removed an artificial barrier between the NAIC and the rest of campus.

RESOLVED:

That the revised design proposals for the landscape design adjacent to the NAIC building be approved.

8/14-15 Sport and Wellness

CONSIDERED:

A report on the concept development for sport and wellness facilities, including proposed sites as set out in paper BC.5/14-15.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

[Exempt information not included]

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the location for the sports and wellness facilities be approved;
- (b) [Exempt information not included]
- (c) [Exempt information not included]

9/14-15 Keeping Campus Moving

RECEIVED:

A progress report on the Keeping Campus Moving project, including road closures and the Central Plaza, as set out in paper BC.4/14-15.

10/14-15 Mechanochemical Cell Biology Building

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Interim Director of Estates, Estates Office, on his meeting with the Chair regarding the Mechanochemical Cell Biology Building.

REPORTED: (by the Group Finance Director)

- (a) That since the current proposal was approximately £1m over budget, it had been referred back to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration;

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (b) That approximately £500k of the proposed overspend was due to infrastructure upgrades, which were required for the existing Mechanochemical Cell Biology Building, not just the proposed extension.

11/14-15 Conference Facility

CONSIDERED:

A paper on the proposal for a new Warwick Conferences facility, including concept and proposed sites, as set out in paper BC.6/14-15.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (a) That the plan was sufficiently developed to be close to submitting a planning application to Warwick District Council;

(by the Group Finance Director)

- (b) That the proposal had not yet been fully approved by the Campus and Commercial Services Group;

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (c) That it would be useful to carry out some competitor analysis on such facilities;

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (d) That this facility was an important part of Warwick Conferences' business plan, noting that there would be a report to Steering about the developments;
- (e) That this facility could have other uses, such as for graduation dinners;

(by the Chair)

- (f) That the proposed design was disappointing given the potential of the site.

RESOLVED:

That the concept and proposed site for the new Conferences facility be approved in principle, noting that further work was required on the design.

12/14-15 Residential Accommodation

CONSIDERED:

A paper on the design concepts for new Residential Accommodation, as set out in paper BC.7/14-15, noting that approval of the final design might be sought by circulation or delegated authority ahead of the next meeting of the Committee.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (a) That the plans had been designed to increase the sense of community in residential areas, based on a community hub model, with shared services for up to 1,000 students in each area;
- (b) That there was a move from the current style of large blocks of accommodation to a more townhouse style;
- (c) That the Hurst site included a large number of mature trees over a sloping site, giving a more established feel than some of the other new residential developments;
- (d) That this development would keep the University ahead of its long-term target to house approximately 40% of the student population on campus;

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (e) That the overall phasing might change slightly, but that the initial plan was to re-use the Hurst site;
- (f) That smaller blocks of accommodation were inherently more flexible and would allow for use as student or staff housing as required;

(by the Chair)

- (g) That the design and landscaping needed to be considered carefully, including any provision of gardens and shared spaces;
- (h) That it was necessary to consider the number of dwellings per hectare to ensure the plans delivered value for money;
- (i) That the proposal to increase diversity within the design of residences was a good idea.

RESOLVED:

That the concept and sites for the proposed residential development be approved, subject to the comments made at the meeting.

13/14-15 Benefactors Refurbishment

CONSIDERED:

A paper on the progress of the Benefactors refurbishment, including design changes as set out in paper BC.8/14-15.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (a) That the plans included a change of use of the ground floor, removing the commercial and sports spaces and including additional residential units;

(by the Group Finance Director)

- (b) That the new plans reduced the financial risk in the initial proposal;

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (c) That it was important to understand the full running costs of the building post-refurbishment to ensure the viability of the financial case;
- (d) That the Benefactors Refurbishment was being overseen by the same Project Progressing Group as the Plaza development, so the landscaping would be planned together and work as a whole.

RESOLVED:

That the revised proposal for the refurbishment of the Benefactors building be approved.

14/14-15 Capital Projects

CONSIDERED:

The Estates Office Capital Projects report, detailing (i) progress on major capital projects and associated issues with programme delivery and (ii) the status for each Project Progressing Group as set out in paper BC.9/14-15.

REPORTED: (by the Interim Director of Estates)

- (a) That the outstanding issues with the Energy Centre were contractual, noting that the Energy Centre was currently fully operational;
- (b) That due to access issues, the Engineering extension would not be completed until March 2015, noting that the department had been informed and the contractor was liable if there were any further delays;
- (c) That the target for opening Gibbet Hill Road in both directions was the end of October, noting that there would be further disruption during later works;
- (d) That a revised business case for the Zeeman extension had been considered by CPARG and a recommendation made to FGPC that funding be approved to revise the feasibility study in light of the new Teaching and Learning Building, noting that there was a will to bring the work forward in the schedule if possible;
- (e) That the proposed car parking developments were only designed to address short-term needs, noting that it was necessary to plan for the longer term through the Chancellor's Commission;

(by the Group Finance Director)

- (f) That the tenders submitted for NAIC needed further analysis and that as a result it was not yet possible to recommend the appointment of a contractor;

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (g) That the Law School extension had not been fully operational for the start of term, so the report should reflect the actual completion date in October;
- (h) That the Arts Centre 20:20 project should be included under 'future projects' rather than 'current projects' in the report;

(by the Chair)

- (i) That the University needed to consider alternatives to providing additional car parking on campus, including working with local authorities to increase public transport provision and park and ride schemes;
- (j) That underground car parking was not feasible financially;

(by the Head of Finance, Resources and Administration)

- (k) That the Project Progressing Group Risk Register was updated monthly;
- (l) That the main issues identified related to timing rather than to quality or cost;

(by Mr P Dunne)

- (m) The he welcomed the desire to bring forward the extension of the Zeeman Building in the schedule if possible, given the outstanding quality of the academic activity in the Mathematical Sciences;
- (n) That section 3 of the paper highlighted the scale of works currently being undertaken by the University and provided a very useful overview.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the content of the Estates Capital Projects report.

15/14-15 Survey of Students' Views of their Universities Estates

RECEIVED:

A summary report of a survey on students' views of their universities' estates, based on research carried out by LSE Estates Division and the Higher Education Design Quality Forum (HEDQF) as set out in paper BC.10/14-15.

16/14-15 Reports from the Sub-Committees of the Building Committee

- (a) Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group

RECEIVED:

A report summarising the main items of business from the meeting of the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group held on 7 October 2014 as set out in paper BC.11/14-15.

17/14-15 Date of the Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Building Committee would take place on Wednesday 10 December at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Senate House.