



## **The Council, 12 February 2017**

### **Report of the Estates Committee**

**Date:** 12 January 2018

**Chair:** Dr Simon Eden

**Secretary:** Mrs Kay Green

#### **1 Review of Estates & Capital Governance – Strike Report**

The Committee was informed of the report and felt positive that it commended several areas of operation including the management of capital budgets through successful project delivery. Areas requiring improvement were noted, the method of convening Project Executive Groups and the Terms of Reference for those would be reviewed by EFM. The role of the Estates Committee was recognised as adding value and in providing advice and guidance through the expertise of its membership. This was welcomed by the Committee who agreed that they would look to incorporate the recommendations of the Report within its Terms of Reference.

#### **2 Membership of the Committee**

The Committee was informed that Mr Roger Hawkins had stepped down from the Committee due to other commitments and that there were now two vacancies for the group, one with Architectural expertise and one with expertise in Construction. Several names had been put forward and these would be followed up in due course. The Committee was reminded that any proposed new members would need to be approved by Council.

#### **3 Capital Borrowing**

The Committee received a report detailing the process the University had undertaken with regard to its position on Capital borrowing recognising the constraints and the impact of Capital on borrowing due to the amount of uncertainty within the sector. It was understood that the University did not have an appetite for borrowing under the current climate and therefore profiling of the Capital spend had been undertaken. This had resulted in the capital pause that would affect all major capital developments under the current estate strategy. The Committee was informed that the pause would not undermine the business cases for the projects and the delay would be used as an opportunity to de-risk the projects.

#### **4 Public Realm Development - Concourse**

The Committee was informed that phase one of the Masterplan works were now successfully complete and in use. Phase 2 would be the development of the Concourse area. This area receives the highest footfall on campus and would need to be completed in a phased manner to minimise disruption to on-going activities where possible. Works were planned to start on site week commencing 2 February 2018 with a 22 week programme. This was expected to be

complete prior to Summer Graduation. It was reported that stakeholder engagement had been good and the communication process was being managed in order to mitigate any concerns. Wayfinding during the period of works was being developed alongside colleagues in the Students Union. The Committee recognised the complexity of coordinating the extensive works and commended the project which had already been transformational for the look and feel of the Campus.

## **5 Maintenance Update**

The Committee received a report detailing the review and re-organisation of how all aspects of Maintenance at the University were managed. It was noted that the University had invested in Planon, a maintenance management system which was allowing maintenance staff to log and report on jobs via electronic hand held devices. The maintenance teams had been re-organised and were now split into East and West teams reducing travel time between jobs. The Committee understood that working practices had been challenged and managing the change process had been difficult and was ongoing. The aim of the changes was to increase productivity and reduce costs. It was noted that EFM were looking to achieve a 10.5% overall budget reduction whilst maintaining legislative compliance across all areas.

## **6 Mini Energy Network**

The Committee received a presentation detailing a proposal to introduce a mini-energy network at the west of the campus to serve the new Social Sciences development, sports facilities and potentially the Psychology building. Due to the significant risks that continue to persist with the district energy network, the University was investigating an alternative solution in order to de-risk both the Social Science development and provide a stable solution for buildings that lay at the end of the network. It was proposed that a Combined Heat & Power solution be progressed through the installation of Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) under the existing Hockey Pitch which was nearing its end of life and would be replaced as part of the scheme.

It was understood that the planned Social Sciences building was aiming to be a low carbon sustainable building and was expected to achieve a BREEAM outstanding award. The installation of GSHP would significantly contribute to this as well as reducing the University's carbon emissions. It was noted that the technology in GSHP was progressing at a pace and it was expected that the engines currently had a life span of c.15years at which point it would be replaced with new technology. The pipes in the ground had a life expectancy of c.50years. The opportunity to use the system for both heating and cooling would be included in the scheme to benefit the buildings and the sports facilities.

The coaxial system being investigated offered a more efficient method for delivery requiring fewer but deeper bore holes to be installed. This minimised the ground space used as the holes would be angled requiring less surface area. A mini-network would then be installed across Northumberland Road between the new development and sports facilities/Psychology.

The University was looking at a performance based contract for the provision with ERDA who have 14 similar installations across the country. This was to ensure that performance improved over time, the asset would be transferred to the University after a period of time. This had the potential to significantly reduce both carbon and costs. The technology was already working elsewhere; the main risk would be that the system failed to work on our site in which case there would be no cost to the University as the risk would sit with ERDA.

The Committee was supportive of the proposal and looked forward to seeing how the development progressed.

## **7 Summary**

Council are asked to note the content of this report.