



## **Estates Committee**

**4 January 2023**

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Sarah Whitney (Chair), Professor Stephanie Bird, Roger Blundell, Professor Jonathan Butterworth, Phil Clark, Turlogh O'Brien, Professor Michael Pitt, Dr Michael Spence (Provost).

**In attendance:** Helen Bonneville [minutes 17 and 18], Ian Dancy, Charu Gorasia, Chris Shore [minute 18], Andy Smith, Tracy Smith [minute 21], Dr Patrick Ward [minute 20].

Mr Douglas Bertram, Secretary

**Observer:** Mr Deniz Akinci, Union Affairs Officer, Students' Union

**Apologies:** none.

#### **Part I: Preliminary Business**

##### **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

14.1 There were no declarations of interest.

##### **15 MINUTES**

15.1 The minutes of the meeting of 17 October 2022 [Estates Committee Minutes 9-13, 2022-23] were approved.

##### **16 MATTERS ARISING**

16.1 Minute 10.2, bullet point 5: a decision-making map was at Paper 3-01 and details of allocated and committed projects at Paper 3-02.

16.2 Minute 11.3, bullet point 5: matters of Health and Safety had been raised at Council and requests for further information had been made.

16.3 Minute 12.2, bullet point 1: see Paper 3-04.

**Part II: Matters for Discussion**

**17 ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE**

- 17.1 Estates Committee received an oral update on the changes since the last meeting. Work on the Estates Strategy was progressing with a view to presenting this to Council alongside the Finance Strategy on 16 February. An earlier draft had been discussed at the University Management Committee (UMC) on 29 November and a number of suggestions had been made, including the need for a decant strategy. Feedback from the community had been solicited via a Town Hall meeting and a programme of individual departmental sessions. Once approved, the nine principles of the Estates Strategy would be mapped onto the Accommodation Strategy.
- 17.2 The £57m assigned to student and campus experience in the Estates Portfolio model would, if approved, enable investment in the student experience and facilities for extracurricular activity with further potential funds for other priorities to be identified in the future.

**18 CONFIDENTIAL – ESTATES PORTFOLIO MODEL (Paper 3-01)**

- 18.1 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.
- 18.2 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.
- 18.3 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.
- 18.4 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.

**19 CONFIDENTIAL – REVIEW OF ALLOCATED AND COMMITTED PROJECTS (Paper 3-02)**

- 19.1 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.
- 19.2 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.
- 19.3 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.
- 19.4 Exempt from publication. Please see confidential minutes.

**20 WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY GAP ANALYSIS (Paper 3-03)**

- 20.1 Estates Committee received a summary action plan in response to the Turner & Townsend Workplace Health and Safety Gap Analysis. The plan had been endorsed by the Work Health and Safety Committee, UMC and Council.

- 20.2 The Chair welcomed the report but queried the suggestion that Estates Committee exercise oversight of it. The Committee agreed that it would be better that a sub-group of the Council be established in order to monitor Workplace Health and Safety Action Plan progress, with relevant items submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration. The Provost would contact the Chair of Council to progress the matter.

**Action – Provost**

## **21 STUDENT ACCOMMODATION (Paper 3-04)**

- 21.1 The Director of Campus Experience and Commercial Services presented a paper setting out the approvals required for the 2023/24 academic year in the context of UCL's response to the challenges of a growing student population and of the strategic maintenance of the residential estate. The following key points were made:

- a) The Estates Management Committee (EMC) had agreed that the current Accommodation Guarantee should switch to 'accommodation priorities' from 2024/25, as it was not feasible to seek to continue with the Guarantee in its current form. 2023/24 would represent an interim year in which the undergraduate guarantee would continue, and international postgraduate students would be prioritised.
- b) EMC had agreed that student accommodation rents should increase by 11% in 2023/24, along with a review of hardship provision available to support students in difficult circumstances. This had been felt to represent a reasonable balance between affordability for students and covering inflationary costs as well as remaining broadly in line with the market. This would however result in a shortfall of £1.6m against the 13-14% rise that would be required to cover rising costs.
- c) EMC had approved a suite of nomination agreements for onward submission to Finance Committee and Council, as well as the continuation of efforts to progress partnership arrangements in relation to new developments where nomination agreements would become available in the future. It was noted that the Urbanest agreement included a provision that, in event of future public health lockdowns, the cost of voided contracts would be shared 50/50.

- 21.2 During the discussion the following key points were made:

- a) It was suggested that students who have already made fee payments for 2023/24 should be prioritised in the context of the accommodation priorities arrangement.
- b) There was some potential for negative publicity in respect of the changes. UCL's position was that it had taken all reasonable steps to mitigate the situation, including increasing the provision of student accommodation places. Details of rental rates were due to be published in February.
- c) It was suggested that a review of the impact in respect of EDI and widening participation would be useful.

- d) Rental rates had been discussed with Students' Union UCL and additional support for lower income students would be sought. The potential for business funding of bursary support was discussed.
- e) The lockdown provision in the Urbanest contract appeared generous, but it was thought this was unlikely to be required.
- f) The suitability of the geographical location of Trafalgar Way was discussed. This had been carefully considered and was felt to be a competitive offer for students with a good range of facilities.

21.3 The Committee approved the paper for onward submission to Finance Committee and Council.

**Part III: Other Business for information or approval**

22 **CONFIDENTIAL – UCL EAST PHASE 2** (Paper 3-05)

22.1 Noted.

23 **CONFIDENTIAL – CLARE HALL** (Paper 3-06)

23.1 Noted.

24 **CONFIDENTIAL – LEE VALLEY** (Paper 3-07)

24.1 Noted.

25 **CONFIDENTIAL – CAPITAL PROGRAMME FINANCIAL UPDATE** (Paper 3-08)

25.1 Noted.

26 **CONFIDENTIAL – BLOOMSBURY HEAT AND POWER** (Paper 3-09)

26.1 Noted.

27 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

27.1 Monday 13 February 2023 at 15:15-16:45.