

Minutes of the Board meeting held at the Barnfield Campus at 1700hrs on 8 May 2019

Present	Guy Ainsley	Phil Berry	Richard Lewis
	Matt Luheshi	Mathew Messenger	Ben Stapleton
	Phil Thompson (Chair)	Paul Thompson	Joan Viall (Vice-Chair)
	Graham Wood	Gill Worgan (Principal)	
In Attendance	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Gary Dixon (Interim DPQ)	Cath Gunn (Principal, Barnfield)
	Sarah Knowles (DP (P&D))	Richard Mallinson (RM) (The IBI Group)	Eamonn McCarrol (DoF)
	Nigel Palmer (NP) (Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH))	Chris Pearson (Dir (SCA))	
Apologies	Lavinia Chelaru	Chris Nicholls	Richard Patmore
	David York		

PART ONE

86/18 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM, DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The apologies were accepted. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate, there had been no general interests declared but Paul T standing declaration of LEP membership was noted.

87/18 OPENING

- a. Chair. The Chair thanked all for coming to the meeting, which would specifically consider business related to the redevelopment of the Barnfield College (BC) at the New Bedford Road (NBR) site, accordingly the usual opening items would be deferred to the next meeting (12.06.19). He then welcomed Richard Mallinson from the IBI Group and Nigel Palmer from Lambert Smith Hampton.
- b. Principal. The Principal reminded all of the background to the present situation. The Corporation had considered and discussed the issue at the meeting held on 13 February 2019 (Minute 50/18 refers), when the way forward had been discussed and the BC Strategic Plan, "Foundations for Growth", had been approved; that plan had informed the development of the "Masterplan" for the estate development presented at this meeting. Guiding the development of that plan was the requirement that it had to be both affordable and deliverable and embrace all associated aspects of delivering a new college for Luton; it had become clear that optimum way forward was to develop the NBR site and dispose of the Bute Street Car Park and the Kings Langley (KL) campus. The redevelopment of the NBR site would provide the solution, specifically it would:
 - (i) meet the short, medium and long term expectations;
 - (ii) be financially affordable without borrowing or falling below minimum cash holdings; and
 - (iii) satisfy local planning requirements.

The plan included options for delivery in three stages and the first, providing for FE delivery for present and planned growth students, was estimated to cost, including all fees and VAT, c£22m. Necessary funding would be achieved from sale of the Bute St Car Park, the KL Campus and surplus land at NBR, indicative and prudent returns for the necessary funding were tabulated and noted. Additional funding would be sought from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other local sources to enable delivery of the future development of Stages two and three. Indicative timescales were also tabulated and discussed leading to operational capacity in January 2022. The meeting would specifically consider:

- (iv) approval of the plan;
- (v) enabling funding for the progression of the project to RIBA Stage 3 Planning, limited to £650k; and
- (vi) in principle, disposal of the KL and Bute Street sites.

The meeting would not consider further financial outlay beyond (v) above, in due course and after the following had been obtained, the Corporation would consider further or full commitment:

- (vii) planning consent;
- (viii) confirmation of the overall project cost; and
- (ix) associated funding firmly in place.

That was agreed. **(Action 1)**

The information was received and noted.

88/18 PRESENTATIONS

The IBI Group explained the considerable activity involved with the progression to the electronically presented overall plan for the NBR site. The reasons for rejection of a previous (pre-merger) planning application in 2012 and preliminary scoping meetings with the planning authority had informed the suggested way forward with the current scheme. Issues had emerged since circulation of the plan and these would become clear throughout the presentation. During preparation of the recommendations the need for a closely considered, successful and speedy outcome to the planning application had been to the fore. The major constraint was that the construction work had to be completed with no interruptions to existing provision and it had been decided that the main existing car park presented the best option to meet that requirement. There were excellent options for the NBR site both for the proposed college and residential opportunities; these were fully explained and considered.

- a. College. The opportunities, constraints and ecological issues and clear tabulated risks and associated mitigation strategies were detailed. Imaginative design issues included the breaking of the site with evolutionary green elements and trees, and an accessible linear park. Three Design Options had been determined for consideration, all were similar in that they provided for a three phase development to the completed college:
 - (i) Phase one. Accommodation of 7000sqm to provide for general FE provision sufficient to accommodate the existing student roll and cater for future expansion as detailed in the strategic plan – it includes a refectory for students and staff capable of serving a full range of hot and cold meals, but a training restaurant is not included due to very low numbers currently enrolled on catering courses and the level of other local provision.
 - (ii) Phase two. Accommodation of 5900sqm to provide for construction and engineering provision; and
 - (iii) Phase three. Accommodation of 1800sqm to provide sports provision.

The Design Options were then considered individually and in detail, the differences in building footprints and alignments between each option were fully considered informed by

detailed drawings of footprints and building elevations. The design had developed a true collegiate ethos and high quality material would be used throughout to instil a wish to be a part of the establishment in potential students. It was agreed that Design Option 2 was currently favoured. **(Action 2)**

- b. Surplus Land. After allocation of land for the new college there would be 3.7 to 11.5 Acres available for commercial development, proposals for this area were aimed at preservation of open green spaces and development of a linear park as considered above and the continuance and enhancement of positive relationships with the local community. The proposals assumed a measured approach and had been well received during preliminary talks with Luton Borough Council (LBC). Three options had been detailed and were individually considered, the choice dependent on the level of acceptable risk (to local objection induced delay):
- (i) Option one (3.7 Acres, 1.5 Hectares) was the least risky;
 - (ii) Option two (8 Acres 3.2, Hectares) would probably prompt manageable objections and the associated green landscape and accessible element should be local resident attractive; and
 - (iii) Option three was high risk (11.5 Acres, 4.7 Hectares) and could prompt costly and time consuming delays.

The first two were agreed as the most attractive although a final decision would clearly be taken after progression talks with LBC. **(Action 3)** LSH (NP) then explained the commercial influences, which would favour the maximum return and inform the final decision, a balance between risk and reward. It was not possible to set the present indicative price for the available land, but it was in the heart of prime areas of town, indications from LBC were that only detached houses would be permitted and central government were directing local government to build more homes; a truly favourable combination to enhance the plot value. A greater concentration of houses would attract larger building firms interest. The likelihood of existing residents' objection to greater housing density was accepted as possible, however the offer of open green spaces would be seductive and an offer to LBC to make greater use of the existing sports field was another attraction. An early "pre-application" offer of the land could provide an indication of actual market value and Option 3 could be in the region of a c£14m return. Again it was agreed that these decisions would be taken after progression talks. **(Action 4)**

- c. Discussion. There was then a question and answer session, which prompted searching considerations. Suitability and appropriateness of the accommodation and curriculum provision were discussed, all had been considered in the approved BC Strategic Plan and had informed the preparation of the designs. Strong confidence was expressed that they were fit for purpose and the meeting was assured that these proposals were strongly compliant with local requirements. In response to a challenge around the possibility of a greater than expected number of future students, members were reminded that in each of the Design Options the Phase two elements included more classrooms as well as construction and engineering facilities. Clearly a full integrated, comprehensive proposal including all plans and accurate costings, to supplement the indicative numbers considered, earlier in the meeting would be worked up at the appropriate time and brought to the Corporation for consideration. **(Action 5)** The NBF Master Plan should be approved to facilitate the next actions, essentially recommendations sought from this meeting would facilitate the provisional work leading to planning permission. It was then unanimously agreed that:
- (i) the NBR Masterplan was approved; **(Action 6)**
 - (ii) a budget of £650k, to progress development of NBR Phase 1 to RIBA Stage 3 Planning (based on standard recommended percentages of overall estimated projection costs) was approved; **(Action 7)**
 - (iii) disposal of the Bute Street Car Park in line with the established contractual agreement with LBC was approved; **(Action 8)**

- (iv) disposal of the KL Campus, following completion of Hemel Hempstead Phase two development would be initiated and marketed, consequent offers would be brought to the Corporation for consideration and final approval. **(Action 9)**

- a. **The information was received and noted.**
 b. **Actions had been identified. (Table 91/18 below)**

89/18 URGENT BUSINESS.

There had been no urgent business requested.

90/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at the Watford Campus at 1700 on 12 June 2019.

91/18 ACTION TABLE

See referenced minute for full detail.		Resp	Date
Action 1	87/18b. Stage one enabling funding only to be considered.	Chair	wie
Action 2	88/18a. Design Option 2 favoured at present.		
Action 3	88/18b. Either residential Options 2 or 3 currently preferred.		asap
Action 4	88/18b. Residential Options tbd after LBC talks.		
Action 5	88/18c. Full detailed Proposals for full project to Corporation.	GW	wie
Action 6	88/18c(i). NBR Master Plan approved.		
Action 7	88/18c(ii). £650k budget to RIBA Stage 3 approved.		asap
Action 8	88/18c(iii). Disposal of car park approved.		
Action 9	88/18c(iv). Sale of KL to be marketed for Corporation decision		

Ralph Devereux (Clerk) for Phil Thompson (Chair)

Ralph Devereux (Clerk) for Phil Thompson (Chair) (Jun 14, 2019)

7. CorpMins08.05.19RDPTGW

Final Audit Report

2019-06-14

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