Facilities Directorate

IPE Feedback to staff

The Integrated Planning Exercise (IPE) for Services has now been completed which for the first time saw Estates, Residences, Sport, Catering & Event Management and Campus Support Services come together under the new Facilities Directorate.

The Integrated Planning Exercise was an opportunity for us to present a new, strategic plan for the Facilities Directorate, showing how this is supported by each of the four Services, Residential Accommodation Services, Estate Services, Commercial Services, and Campus Support Services. It is also the time of year when we present our financial plans for next five-year planning period.

All staff will be aware that this is a particularly challenging time for Higher Education with cuts of up to 80% from government teaching funds and over 50% from capital for new projects. It is anticipated that these cuts will be replaced by money from increased tuition fees from 2012/13 onwards but we don’t yet know the level fees will be set at, nor how much extra money we will need to set aside for widening participation and bursaries. We do know, however, that cuts are starting to hit us now and that we will have a very challenging year or two until the new fees regime settles down.

Increased fees will of course mean that the University’s strategy to provide excellent services and facilities, alongside excellent teaching is even more important if we are to attract and retain the best students in the future.

Facilities staff will recall that last year the IPE process (for services) was replaced by the economies exercise and various cost saving options were put forward by each service. In most cases these cost saving actions have now been carried out, however, some actions still remain and these will need to be completed before the end of 2010/11. In Residences, Catering, Conference and Event Management, Sales & Marketing and SPA, it was agreed last year that because of the self-financing nature of these services, a payment of £1.6m p.a. would be made to the University as their contribution to the economies.

The Vice Chancellor and other members of the senior team on the IPE panel acknowledged the outstanding work done by all staff in the Facilities Directorate over the last 18 months, in response to the significant changes taking place at the University and the challenges of the economies exercise. They were also keen to point out that we needed to build on this good work by improving quality, effective teamwork and regular benchmarking of our performance in order to develop a culture of continuous improvement.

In relation to finances, the Facilities Directorate has been asked to absorb new costs which have arisen due to the Carbon Reduction Commitment (Carbon tax) and additional VAT. This amounts to approximately £700k per annum for Estates and approximately £500k for Residences. In addition to these new pressures the Directorate was also asked to absorb the increasing costs of utilities within our existing resources, which amounts to a further £500k in 2011/12.
Whilst these additional costs will put more pressure on the Facilities Directorate in the short term we are anticipating that additional money for capital projects and backlog maintenance will be available from 2012/13 onwards as we plan new investments to improve the student experience.

The IPE was also an opportunity for each Service to identify key issues and challenges over the next five years and present our strategic objectives to meet these challenges. Whilst we cannot reproduce the entire submission here, we will make some of the key IPE submission documents available on the web-site and following the earlier communication to all staff I can confirm that we have set objectives in the following areas:

- Improving space management and utilisation
- Carbon management and the reduction of emissions
- Improving the condition and functional suitability of our estate
- Developing an integrated capital, carbon management and backlog maintenance programme which supports the University’s strategy
- Developing the residential portfolio in line with the University’s developing market position, i.e. by ensuring we can respond to changes in student numbers
- Maximising revenue and profit from commercial activities
- Identifying and delivering further efficiency gains and a culture of continuous improvement throughout the Directorate
- Leading on behavioural change campaign to reduce energy consumption

In addition to our strategic objectives we also confirmed that we will continue to seek efficiencies and that we will look at a number of areas within the Directorate over the coming year to see how we can do things in a more joined-up way. These areas are:

- Finance and Procurement
- HR and People Development
- Clerical/admin support
- Cleaning
- Reception & Helpdesk Services
- Property Management
- IT and communications

As we progress through the year other areas may also be highlighted as potential areas for efficiency but as before, we will talk to staff in these areas before any work begins.

We will continue to share our objectives and plans for the current planning period with staff, however, if you would like to ask me about any aspect of the IPE or our strategic plan please contact me at fdstaff@leeds.ac.uk or in writing.

Dennis Hopper
Director of Facilities Management
Room 13.05, Ziff Building