S 40 [redacted]

From: S 40 [redacted]
Sent: 31 March 2021 14:03
To: McFarlane, Iain
Cc: S 40 [redacted] Farmer, Cris
Subject: FW: Urgent: QUB Integrated Student Centre

Iain,

Just a reminder as well that we are still waiting on the proformas for the QUB cases. The proformas isn't urgent for today but if you could get them to us sometime this week.

S 40 [redacted]

From: Neeson, Patrick (DoF)
Sent: 31 March 2021 13:16
To: McFarlane, Iain S 40 [redacted]
Cc: Hetherington, Sharon S 40 [redacted] Woods, Colin (DfE) S 40 [redacted] Farmer, Cris S 40 [redacted] S 40 [redacted] Vance, Garey S 40 [redacted] S 40 [redacted]
Subject: Urgent: QUB Integrated Student Centre

Iain

We have a number of points around the business case. I will follow this email up with a later email providing a more comprehensive note setting out our comments and issues for you to consider, including points to bear in mind for future business cases. However, in the meantime I thought it best to set out below the key issues that we would like some assurance around before granting approval.

Budget/Affordability

The documentation suggests that DfE believe the project is currently unaffordable. There is therefore a high risk that the total funding will not be granted. The University have indicated that it is willing to reprioritise other capital projects to ensure that this is completed, should the required funding from DfE not be provided. On the other hand, the additionality assessment suggests the project may not be completed at all in the absence of Govt funding: ", in the absence of external capital funding, it is likely that this programme will be significantly delayed, with the potential that the programme may not be completed at all in the current financial climate". Has the University given any further detail around what projects it would delay or stop if this reprioritisation was needed, particularly given the Management School for which approval has recently been granted? Might the project not proceed as envisaged?

Have DfE considered how they are going to prioritise this along with other priorities such as the QUB Management School Expansion in term of future year's funding?

In terms of project risks, in the casework committee minutes. David Malcolm notes that the risk register appeared to have 4 OS risks that remain red, even after mitigation. Have the concerns identified around these been alleviated?

Need

Has the University ensured that the need for space in the proposed building is consistent with the future space demands post-Covid (working and studying from home/blended approach, etc)? Are DfE still content with the need for the Integrated Student Centre as proposed?

Government Funding

The University is required to commit £10.86m – it is fully committed to the project and will meet these costs from its capital reserves. Should the contribution to government funding be less than 90%?

Regards

Patrick