

Operations Manager Report
A report by Robin Pitt

Phase 3 – Beit Masterplan

Since the last meeting of the Trustee Board the core elements of Phase 3 of the Beit Masterplan have been completed, including Metric nightclub, FiveSixEight, core services re-instatement and minor works to the Union Bar. As the emphasis of contractor effort was focused on opening Metric in late November, other periphery works are still to be completed over the next month, alongside a snagging list in the key areas.

Since it's opening, Metric has proved to be a huge success, with the opening night a complete sell out, with hundreds of students hoping to buy tickets on the door.

Commercial Services

The trading outlets in Beit Quad have continued to suffer in November, owing to the late running of the building work. This has had a particular impact on the Entertainments and Beit Conference cost centres. With Metric opening in late November, a higher than budgeted cost on performers was incurred in order to ensure that the first major events provided an excellent experience for the attendees, to establish Metric as the destination venue for student social activity. It is anticipated that for the coming term, costs will be very much under control and the impact of those first events realised in increased ticket revenue.

The Beit Conference facility has suffered as many of the larger spaces available for rent have had to be used as decant spaces while the nightclub was being completed. Despite these setbacks the South Kensington Bar cost centre has performed reasonably well during this period, while operating at a 2 thirds of capacity the year to date position is less than £4,000 behind budget, as with the Entertainments cost centre it is anticipated that with all areas open that this shortfall can be made up in the coming months.

The real star outlet during this period has been Retail, again out performing both budget and last year significantly. This area is now proving to be an extremely important element of the financial success of the Union and congratulations should be awarded to the Retail Manager and her staff.

Finance – referred to in closes session

Strategy 2011 – 2016

As the current Union Strategy has expired and much of what was set out achieved, it is now time for the Union, with the assistance of the Trustee Board to work on a Strategy for the next 5 years. While the previous document was compiled with wide ranging student input, it was felt that not enough specific were attached to the aims and as such it became rather redundant as useful day to day document.

As with the previous document, we firmly believe that a robust survey and high levels of student engagement with the process are essential. Other Students' Unions, in particular Leeds have achieved this incredibly well. Those Unions that have got useful and informed strategic documents have enlisted the help of a market research company called Red Brick. The President and I met with their Managing Director prior to Christmas and he has generated a proposal, which is very much in its infant stages to assist us in the Strategic Review. The outlined elements are attached to this report. While this looks like an excellent proposal, it comes at a cost of circa £30,000 for the full proposal.

It is key that we get this process right, however it would be extremely useful to get some feedback from the Board about how we wish to move forward. Clearly for a piece of work this large we will be entering into a tender process during January and February, with a view to having a published strategic document by the end of the Easter vacation.