

Transparency within First-Year Halls of Residence

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Seconded by DPCS, DPE, DPFS, DPW

Introduction

As previously mentioned in Council Reports, I have had some preliminary discussions with the Vice Provost (Education) and the Chief Financial Officer at College regarding transparency in the Halls of Residence piece.

Amenities Fund

As covered in the separate paper to Council, the Amenities Fund is an additional contribution on top of the Rent that students pay, which is ring-fenced and administered by the Union, and controlled by Hall Committee's (with Union oversight and support).

Breakdown of Rent

The following costs do not include the capital cost of land, and assume that this land is effectively free. A year in Halls of Residence is 39 weeks. "Wardening" is the opportunity cost of not renting wardens' rooms.

Table 1: Breakdown of Rent

Element	Total Annual (39 weeks)	Weekly per bed space
Staff	£442,000	£4.70
Cleaning	£1,182,000	£12.50
Facilities Management	£293,000	£3.10
Utilities	£1,241,000	£13.20
Wardening (opportunity cost)	£795,000	£8.40
Other	£697,000	£7.40
Ongoing Maintenance	£1,490,000	£15.80
Capital Costs	£8,924,659	£94.60
Long-term Maintenance (average)	£1,037,751	£11.00
TOTAL AVG. COST	£16,104,009	£170.70
TOTAL AVG. RENT	£15,660,606	£166.00
<i>(Difference)</i>	<i>-£443,403</i>	<i>-£4.70</i>

Principles

For reference, College applies the following principles to its "First Year Guarantee". College will guarantee to provide comfortable, safe, fairly priced accommodation within reasonable commuting distance of the South Kensington campus for all first year undergraduates. This is known as the "first year guarantee". Colleges "first year guarantee" accommodation does not run for profit, however it also doesn't make losses.

Postgraduate accommodation

Postgraduate accommodation (and in particular GradPad) is not discussed in this report, as College runs GradPad for profit. The Union has already opposed the high expense of GradPad.

Individual Room Rent

As stated above, the costs of land is not included in the rent paid by students for beds in halls. This throws up the question of how to fairly represent the less desirable option/inconvenience of living off-campus, and how to reflect this financially in the price of individual rent. Below is the current average rent per bed:

Garden and Weeks Hall

On 22 February 2013, College Management Board (now Provost Board) made the promise that [before the closure of Garden and Evelyn, a consultation will occur](#). This has not occurred, and Garden Hall has closed. No mention of the ongoing use of Weeks was made in February 2013, but surveys of the building have found it to be unsafe. Renovation to a safe condition will cause significant increase in rent. A current plan is that the new space in North Prince's Gardens will increase the childcare provision.

Table 2: Current average rents per hall

Hall	Average Weekly rent/person	Number of beds	m ² /person	Rent/m ²	Rent/m ² compared Eastside	Travel time to SK
Beit	£169	313	11.9	£14.24	91%	5
Eastside	£191	454	12.3	£15.58	100%	5
Southside	£174	407	11.8	£14.71	94%	5
Weeks	£156	64	14.4	£10.84	70%	5
Pembridge	£127	96	11.5	£11.07	71%	20
Wilson	£153	393	10.3	£14.86	95%	15
Woodward	£158	692	13.2	£11.95	77%	30
Total/Avg.	£166	2419	12.1	£13.72	88%	

Below are proposals to reflect the difference in appeal of Eastside to Woodward, and create more affordable bed spaces, however this will lead to an increase in cost of on-campus accommodation. Note that Woodward Hall is Acton.

Table 4: Proposal 1

Hall	Average Weekly rent/person	Number of beds	m ² /person	Rent/m ²	Rent/m ² compared Eastside	Travel time to SK
Beit	£182	313	11.9	£15.29	87%	5
Eastside	£215	454	12.3	£17.48	100%	5
Southside	£200	407	11.8	£16.95	97%	5
Weeks	£170	64	14.4	£11.81	68%	5
Pembridge	£130	96	11.5	£11.30	65%	20
Wilson	£150	393	10.3	£14.56	83%	15
Woodward	£120	692	13.2	£9.09	52%	30
Total/Avg.	£166	2419	12.1	£13.72	88%	

Below are proposals with Eastside to Woodward at a 2:1 ratio:

Table 3: Proposal 2

Hall	Average Weekly rent/person	Number of beds	m ² /person	Rent/m ²	Rent/m ² compared Eastside	Travel time to SK
Beit	£191	313	11.9	£16.09	91%	5
Eastside	£215	454	12.3	£17.59	100%	5
Southside	£196	407	11.8	£16.56	94%	5
Weeks	£176	64	14.4	£12.25	70%	5
Pembridge	£113	96	11.5	£9.80	56%	20
Wilson	£157	393	10.3	£15.21	86%	15
Woodward	£118	692	13.2	£8.88	50%	30
Total/Avg.	£166	2419	12.1	£13.72	78%	

Resolves

As this paper contains a large number of points on a range of subjects within the Accommodation piece, the following resolves are proposed for approval:

1. The Union supports the College's "first year guarantee" to undergraduate students and the principles behind it
2. The Union supports the College's approach of pricing to ensure that rental income covers the college's maintenance, capital and running costs for accommodation, but does not generate a surplus from student rents
3. The Union welcomes the College's intention to maintain Eastside, Southside, Beit, Wilson and Woodward as central parts of the accommodation provision.
4. Either:
 - a. The Union accepts the need to close Weeks hall and to convert this space for non-accommodation use to improve the provision of both academic and non-academic spaceOr:
 - b. The Union does not accept the need to close Weeks hall and to convert this space for non-accommodation useOr:
 - c. The Union does not accept the need to close Weeks hall and to convert this space for non-accommodation use and mandates the President to lobby College to renovate this Hall to condition where it is a safe part of the portfolio
5. Either:
 - a. The Union accepts the concerns around the viability of Pembridge GardensOr:
 - b. The Union does not accept any move to remove Pembridge Gardens from the First Year portfolioOr:
 - c. The Union does not accept any move to remove Pembridge Gardens from the First Year portfolio and mandates the President to lobby College to maintain this Hall as a part of the portfolio
6. The Union notes the challenges related to Evelyn Gardens and supports the College's efforts in exploring ways in which this could remain as part of the College's accommodation portfolio
7. The Union either:
 - a. Welcomes the College's efforts to rebalance the rent profiles to ensure that students are able to access affordable accommodation. To this end the Union supports Proposal 1Or:
 - b. Welcomes the College's efforts to rebalance the rent profiles to ensure that students are able to access affordable accommodation. To this end the Union supports Proposal 2Or:
 - c. Wishes for the cost of accommodation close to South Kensington campus to be as affordable as possible and as such supports the current approach to rent profile.Or:
 - d. Rejects the premise of the question and believes accommodation should make a loss and therefore does not accept any of these proposals.