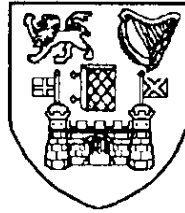


# **Trinity College Dublin**



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## **Provost's Report to Board on the Review of the Director of Building's Area**

**November 2012**

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## 1. Introduction

This report presents the outcome of a quality review of the Director of Buildings Area at Trinity College Dublin. An external peer review visitation was undertaken from the 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012 by Mr Ian Caldwell, Director of Estates, King’s College London; Mr Derry Caleb, Director of Estates and Facilities, University of Surrey and Mr Martin Heffernan, Group Business Development Director, Sammon Group. The internal facilitator was Mr Tony McMahon, Trinity College Dublin.

This report is based on (i) feedback from the External Reviewers received on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012, (ii) a submission from the Director of Buildings received on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and (iii) a submission from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) received on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

The main purpose of the review is (a) to provide a structured opportunity for the area to reflect on its activities and plans for development, while benefiting from a constructive commentary by senior colleagues external to College; (b) to ensure that quality and standards in administration, management and service provision are being maintained and enhanced and that areas of concern in this regard are identified and addressed.

## 2. Overview of the Area

### 2.1 Structure & Function

The Director of Buildings Area is the administrative department with responsibility for strategic planning, capital development, and the operation maintenance and management of the College's buildings, grounds and facilities. The Director of Buildings is the head of the department with overall responsibility for these activities and is supported by the Deputy Director, the Facilities Officers and the Buildings Officer.

### 2.2 Staffing

203 staff are employed in the Director of Buildings area as set out below (as at April 2012): 70 Buildings Office - Operation and Maintenance of plant and Buildings and project management, 31 Security, 42 Attendants, 14 Grounds and Gardens, 14 Other General Services, 8 Management, 4 Capital Projects, 6 Health & Safety (including 2 Hazardous Materials), 6 Telephones Technical Support, 9 Administration & Accounts, including telephones. The breakdown of Director of Buildings staff by grade is as follows:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>No.</b>
Senior Administrative grades	6
Administrative & Executive grades	36.3
Supervisor/Technical/craft/store/ security grades	160.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>203.18</b>

### 2.3 Accommodation and Facilities (Physical Resources)

The offices and units within the department are spread over a number of different locations across the campus as follows:

- West Chapel and House 10 (Director of Buildings Office) 379 sq m.
- Regent House (Facilities / Security) 83 sq m.
- 183 – 186 Pearse Street (rear) (Buildings Office) 1831 sq m.
- 191 Pearse St and 1 railway arch (Storage) 208 sq m.
- 199 Pearse Street (Grounds base) 143 sq m.
- 201 Pearse Street (Security Centre) 452 sq m.

In addition, there is a limited allocation of space for premises management in the Arts Building, Biomedical Sciences Institute and Trinity Technology & Enterprise Campus.

### 3. Reviewers' Recommendations

The Reviewers make the following recommendations:

- **Strategic Planning and Space management.**
  - It is important for Estate operations to reflect the needs of the business and strategic plans of the College. The Development plan was a good document and included a lot of information and detailed development plans. The plan would have benefitted from a more detailed spatial impact assessment of Trinity's Strategic needs, clear objectives, a statement of issues and key issues that needed to be addressed, options for addressing these and include a section on affordability and programming. It is possible that these were available within various documents available to the reviewers, but they were not in the RG pack.
  - Reference to poor space management was shared by most of the interviewees and is a major problem for TCD. Unless the college has a robust space management policy and procedures backed up at the highest level then it is impossible to create a robust estate development based on need.
  - A confined inner city campus such as Trinity need to monitor the status of all of its neighbour's activities and take advantage of changes in tenure when they arise and therefore clear strategy on procurement is required.
  - There was no evidence of any work on life cycle analysis and its inclusion into a sustainable and holistic decision making process within the DOB area. It should be included in the guidance note for capital projects.
  - Lead, with Finance, the development of a three to five year integrated Capital Investment Plan.
- **Space Management**
  - Space management needs to be addressed and should be brought under central control. All teaching space should be centrally booked, albeit there may need to be a priority recognition for teaching space within departmental buildings. In the same vein, this space should be made available to the conference office out of core hours as part of the drive for additional income. The College may wish to consider incentivising Departments by a share in income or investment in upgrading such rooms and providing common

standards in AV. A formal evaluation of all space should be undertaken and some form of value analysis undertaken. The use of the Space Management Group (SMG) papers produced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may be a useful tool.

○ **Name change**

The current name does not represent the activities undertaken by the department and all of its operation and processes. Changing the name to the Estate/Property and Facilities or a similar name will help to drive forward a common goal and purpose and is simple to initiate. We are aware, for example, that in NUI Galway the senior post was re-titled “Director of Physical Resources” and the titles of deputies were given clearer clarity for example “Head of Buildings & Estates” and “Head of Projects”. This should run in parallel with the review of structure.

○ **Review of structure**

- We agree and support changes to bring cleaning into the new department and move telephony to ISS. However a detailed evaluation of where activities are best managed to improve performance and identify benefits should be carried out.
- We recommend restructuring of the Department along functional lines to provide greater clarity. In doing so, we endorse the further expansion of Area Premises Managers which have great potential to bring an integrated service to the academic community. We also suggest that the Department considers allocating a small dedicated flexible resource to residences as the needs of residences are different to the main academic estate.
- We support moves to co-locate the department as much as possible to achieve greater integration and note that there are proposals to do this for the administration as a whole.

○ **Communications and transparency**

- The department should provide more user friendly reports to departments on the activities undertaken. Monthly, quarterly and annual reports are a good way of providing more transparency and bringing the department together. More in-house group meetings would be beneficial, especially at a time of change.

- **Project Management**
  - It is essential that new project management processes and procedures, with guidance and proper support, are implemented. These should be relevant to the different sizes and complexity of projects, identify clear responsibilities and accountabilities, risk management, change management and sign off procedures.
  
- **Balance on outsourcing**
  - This is a key area and the current situation to Ireland is unique and requires local knowledge to drive forward the right sourcing policy based on best value and the complex human resource issues at present. Right sourcing must be always considered.
  - For small jobs the DOB should consider using a Measured Term Contract (MTC) style of contract to improve delivery time and free up staff which will also provide an overall best value and improved delivery mechanism.
  
- **The development of key performance indicators.**
  - These should be tailored for each different activity and necessarily on the same common group of Universities. The basis on which the indicators are developed with partner institutes for security will be different from those for other areas.
  - Obtain copies of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)/Estates Management Statistics (EMS) data base and undertake detailed comparative analysis with relevant institutes on a regular basis and publish within the College.
  - Produce a set of useful KPI's for internal use to demonstrate performance, linked to the investment in IT.
  
- **IT, systems and processes**
  - The current estates management information system (GVA) is beyond its sell by date and is not well supported, and the associated excel spreadsheets are a problem. A full evaluation of all of the DOB systems functionality, and their connectivity to other systems must be undertaken. This should be looked at holistically and considered as a University main system that will benefit more than just the DOB department.
  - Health & Safety, Security, all forms of Projects, maintenance jobs and many other activities within the department would benefit from being

interconnected. Common incident management forms online and shared help desks will provide added benefits.

- A full evaluation of all of the DOB systems functionality and the potential benefits from having an integrated system which has the capabilities to be connected to other corporate systems should be undertaken. The risks that the institute is carrying by not having a fully integrated system that matches the requirements of a modern estate management, financial management (FM) and project delivery operation should be seen as an important issue. The volume and value of the activities carried out could account for 20% of the institute costs.

○ **Training**

- Introduce a staff development programme across all of the various disciplines, including management development.
- Training is essential for all activities to ensure that staff develops as the campus develops. A matrix of health and safety training across all of the various disciplines is required, and management development.



#### **4. Provost's Recommendations to Board**

In light of the Review Report and the responses from the Director of Buildings and the Chief Operating Officer (COO), it is recommended that:

- (1) The Director of Buildings working closely with the Chief Operating Officer and other relevant College Officers, should consider the detailed recommendations of the Review Report and draw up an Implementation Plan<sup>1</sup> for Board approval.
- (2) A capital investment plan for the College is developed in conjunction with the Treasurer's Office.
- (3) Restructuring of the Director of Building's Office is carried out in alignment with the START proposal for the creation and articulation of a Campus Infrastructure unit.
- (4) Project management deficits should be addressed as soon as possible based on the outcomes of an external review of processes.

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<sup>1</sup> See Procedures and Protocol for Quality Review of Administration and Support Services 2011/12 at [http://www.tcd.ie/vpcao/quality/assets/pdf/Procedures\\_and\\_Protocol\\_for\\_Quality\\_Reviews\\_of\\_Administrative\\_and\\_Service\\_Areas.pdf](http://www.tcd.ie/vpcao/quality/assets/pdf/Procedures_and_Protocol_for_Quality_Reviews_of_Administrative_and_Service_Areas.pdf)

## **5. Reviewers' Report**

### **Introduction**

We are pleased to present to Trinity College our report on the College's Director of Buildings Area. In accordance with the College's Quality Review process, we were appointed as External Reviewers, and conducted our Review in Trinity on 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

### **1. Overview**

The Director of Buildings' Area is responsible for Property/Estate Management services to the College, whose total estate occupies a total of 303,000sq.m. The buildings are situated on some 101 Acres / 41 Ha over 7 different sites around the city, including affiliated Teaching Hospitals. The College's main campus occupies a historic site on College Green, the development of which can be traced back to 1166, long before the establishment of the University in 1592. Accordingly, the College possesses a collection of buildings, both historic and modern, of the highest architectural quality. While this is an important asset in maintaining the profile and reputation of the university, locally and internationally, this rich architectural heritage sets high standards for the designers responsible for any architectural interventions, whether this involves new buildings or a remodelling of existing buildings, and a diverse range of challenges in maintaining a fit for purpose infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **2. Executive Summary**

- Overall, feedback on the operations covered by the Director of Buildings area was positive, at a time of reducing resources.
- The College needs to determine how the area sits within the new administrative structure and it would seem sensible that some services such as cleaning come within it, while telecoms moves to ISS.
- Minor restructuring would give greater clarity and accountability to the organisation and we would support the further extension of Areas Premises Managers.
- Investment in a good computer-aided facilities management (CAFM) system should be a priority to further improve the operations of the department and provide transparency on its performance.
- The Department should lead, along with Finance, in preparing a three to five year Capital Investment Plan that supports the academic and estates strategies and brings together all streams of capital investment so that resources and procurement can be efficiently planned and prioritised.

- The College should consider how to enhance space management to ensure efficient use of the physical asset, in particular teaching rooms, perhaps in parallel with a small investment programme of upgrades to support the ambition to increase overseas students and commercial income.
- The College should establish a robust project management methodology, appropriate to the different level of projects, with clear responsibilities, accountabilities, risk management, change control and sign offs.
- The College should consider changing the name of the department to reflect the activities carried out within it and what it is responsible for. It will also have the impact of helping to bring the department together.

### **3. The Review Process**

The Review was conducted in accordance with the College's Procedures and Protocol for Quality Reviews of Administration and Support Services 2011/12. We were appointed as External Reviewers, and bring professional and technical expertise combining Irish and International, and University, Public Bodies and industry experience.

The composition of the Review Group (RG) for TCD was as follows:

- Mr. Derry Caleb, University of Surrey,
- Mr. Ian Caldwell, Kings College London
- Mr. Martin Hefferman Sammon Group

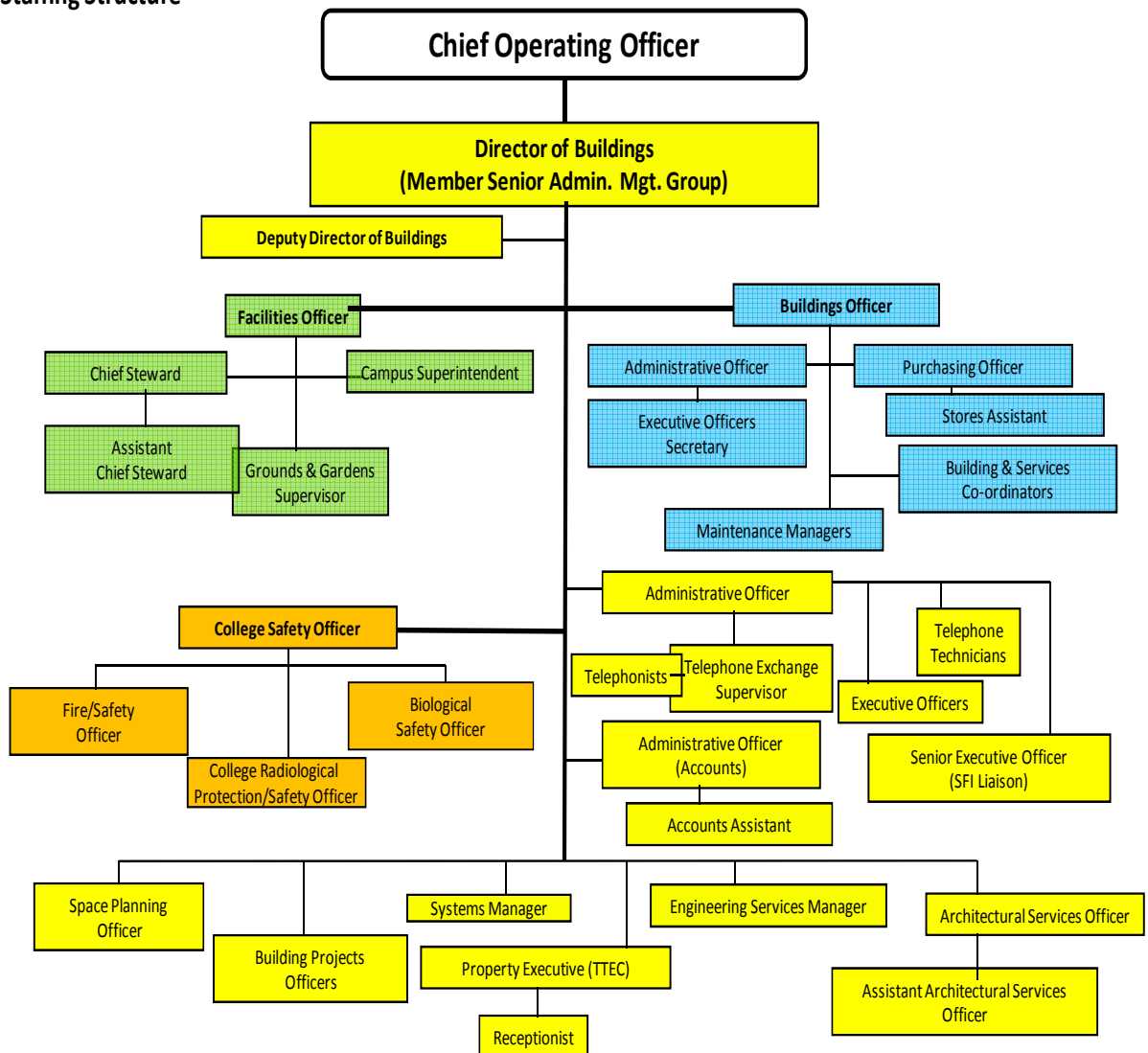
The review process was based predominantly around our review visit to Trinity from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April, where we engaged in a schedule of 20 arranged meetings and a site visit. In advance of our meeting we received a detailed self assessment document through the Quality Office, and this provided a good foundation for us to engage with the multiple stakeholders whom we met over the 3 days of the review visit. In addition, in relation to documentation, in the course of review we sought and reviewed further documentation and systems which assisted us in understanding the management and governance practices in relation to Estates.

We must acknowledge the positive and constructive manner in which all stakeholders engaged with us. In the course of our meetings we met with a diverse cross section of the College community covering the Director, management and staff of the Director of Buildings Area, Senior College Officers, Student representative, and a cross section of stakeholders from the academic and administrative areas.

#### 4. Organisational structure and reporting lines

The Director of Buildings Area is the administrative department with responsibility for strategic planning, capital development, and the operation maintenance and management of the College's buildings, grounds and facilities. The Director of Buildings is the head of the department with overall responsibility for these activities.

##### DoB Area Staffing Structure



The Area is a significant management unit within the College, employing over 200 staff, in the following service activities;

- Operation and Maintenance of plant and Buildings and project management.
- Security
- Building Attendants

- Grounds and Gardens
- Health and Safety
- Telephones and Technical Support
- Management, General Administration and Projects

### **General Comments**

The Buildings and Services Department is a complex unit with a diverse range of activities which, if managed holistically, will provide added value to the organisation. The College is going through a period of change which will influence the comments on how this unit fits into the overall structure of Trinity. The College needs to determine the value of the strategic and operational knowledge of the department and the activities undertaken by it in the delivery of the services it provides. The department is at the hub of major change within the organisation and can provide the catalyst for further change. We have identified a number of issues that we believe need to be addressed and these will be contained within the recommendations section, while recognising that there is much for the department to be commended on.

Overall the general planning of works is carried out professionally and delivered in line with the requirements of the stakeholders according to the interviewees with the exception of one large project, where there are issues for the College to address. There is clear responsibility and structure for individual projects however it would have been useful to see a more formal representation of the project management procedures and guidance within the support documentation. The functional and organisational charts within the SAR were confusing and needed further clarification. It was not apparent from these charts the line of responsibility for services, delivery of breakdown, planned preventative maintenance (PPM) and small works and where the management roles were located. The lack of clarity in organisational structure will affect planning and execution of complex projects. The majority of the stakeholders interviewed had positive comments to make about the planning and execution of the works within the department and all spoke very highly of the attitude of the staff and their willingness to help but there appeared to be a lack of common process. This has been understood by the department and it is reviewing its project management processes.

As mentioned above, it was not clear from the organisational structure what the responsibilities were for some groups and who had control of key activities. The information in the SAR could be reproduced to provide more clarity. The review group were unsure about relationships between different sections and activities. Within the department and the college there appeared to be a strong dividing line between the capital, operations and facilities. The organisation chart above needed some explanation and did not show clearly the roll of the deputy director and clear responsibility for projects rested. It would also have

been helpful if there was a coordinated function and activities chart to assess how the department functioned and who was responsible for which activity. The relationship between capital, minor works, operational and facility management was mentioned by various staff during interviews and they were considered as very separate sections and not as one whole department.

What was clear is that the staff within DOB knew how to make the processes and systems work. In discussions with stakeholders there did appear an over reliance on personal relationships rather than strong organisational lines and procedures. The department had a very strong “can do” attitude where staff supported each other and projects were delivered mostly to the satisfaction of the clients. Unfortunately one large project dominated some of the discussions about performance and there was a clear lack of information regarding process, decision making, control and a lack of risk management and change management processes. There were some comments relating to different methods being applied by different project managers. Having a constant well-understood approach helps reporting and enables units to provide common guidance. The Director has clear control of twelve reports to him according to the structure chart. There is a strong culture of support and working for Trinity, which is important and commendable, and the staff project a loyalty to the College.

There are very strong external drivers such as the changes in funding, the demanding role of the College as a visitor attraction, the maintenance and development of state of the art research facilities, the role as custodian of heritage buildings and the stage for political events. In addition there is a need to provide excellent student facilities to keep pace with student expectations in a competitive student environment. These needs should be harnessed and used to drive improvements and not be allowed to divert operational needs in important areas.

The strong identity and reputation of the department and the loyalty of staff to the department and Trinity came across very strongly. It is clear that the department has been very successful in maintaining its identity while at the same time delivering a challenging development program.

The activities and operating units managed by the Building and Facilities Units are diverse and each section requires a different style of management and the amount of time devoted to them would be different. It is clear from the discussions that we had that the staff feel that they have confidence in the management of the units and at no time did we hear any detrimental comments about the management from staff within the unit or the external stakeholders.

There is evidence that the department does provide a capital planning unit that appears to deliver on time and within budget for the majority of projects. Some thought has gone into the Development planning and there is a program of development that has emerged however this may have been challenged due to the financial conditions and is due for an update. The Estate Development plan is informative, contained excellent information about the estate and future developments, access and options, and in isolation will deliver what is required of it. It is clear that a substantial amount of work has been carried out to produce the document; however the Plan would be enhanced with a section that links the impact of the College's strategic plan with a more in-depth analysis of space needs. The plan would also benefit from a section on a summary of backlog elements and those that would be resolved as a result of the proposed new works. The Development Plan is one element of an Estate Strategy. However clear objectives from the College's Academic and Business Plans needed to be more prominent to set the direction of the document or create a separate Estate Strategy document that referred to the Development plan as a working document on elements of the design and development of the estate. An Estate Strategy document would normally contain the summary of key items such as condition appraisal, compliance with legislation, affordability and the fit for purpose statements. There are no documents on implementation or prioritisation of projects.

Given that the College is undergoing a period of financial change which will impact on the delivery of the Plan; it would be beneficial to develop a three to five year rolling Capital Investment Plan that integrates all streams of Capital Investment, while acknowledging that funding for particular projects may only be agreed on a year-by-year basis. This plan could usefully also include new investment areas linked to strategic targets such as sustainability, income generation and improving the student experience to support increased overseas student recruitment.

On investigation, it was discovered that the department has substantially more information on the workings, operations and space use than is publicised and better use of this information could be made by investment in appropriate IT systems.

The campus facilities were typical of its age with some areas of high quality and some very tired buildings. The first impressions provided by the landscaping demonstrated a good quality of maintenance. The security team's approach was excellent, given the difficult job that they do balancing the needs of a national historic centre and an academic business.

All of those who were interviewed were generally supportive of the department and told us of good execution of work of a high quality with the exception of the new Biosciences building which was generally seen as an unsuccessful project.

The director and his staff realised that there was a need to develop KPI's that were meaningful which would help them improve and demonstrate performance.

## **5. Recommendations from the Self Assessment Review (SAR)**

The Department's own self assessment review is an excellent document which includes a series of recommendations across all activities including all processes. Many of the recommendations included investment and improvements in management processes, integrated systems, training and development of information database on the estate and are all laudable and should be supported. The schedule however needs to be prioritised, costed and some form of risk and impact assessment carried out that evaluates the benefits to the business. We have included key recommendations in the relevant sections below.

## **6. Resources**

### **a. Staff composition;**

Staff composition is directed by the activities and specialties delivered by the unit. The review could not comment on the quantity of staff within the unit or their performance and effectiveness since this would require a much more in depth analysis. There appeared to be shortfall of professionally qualified staff in key positions which may need to be reviewed. Based on the scale of the recommendations identified within the SAR additional support would be required to deliver the change program suggested.

### **b. Staff training & development;**

The lack of personal development plans was criticised at the staff meeting, however it became clear that this was both a College and a department issue. Due to the nature of the work within a complex academic estate, there is a need to continually update skills. Changes in Health and Safety, the introduction of new guidance for working in hazardous environments, the installation of new equipment and processes means that improvement through organised training or continuing professional development (CPD) is essential. The reviewers suggest that introducing an initiative within the department supported by the centre which supports self improvement through personal development plans would be welcome. There was a general level of support to introduce self-improvement across the group.

The DOB must be seen as the most professional team within the College on Project Management, Engineering, Construction and the general management of assets from maintenance, cleaning and service delivery. In



order to maintain this position it is essential that a staff development program is in place.

**c. Physical facilities/ Infrastructure**

It was impossible for the review group (RG) to assess the condition of the physical facilities. The review group can only evaluate the systems and processes that the DOB has in place to manage the physical resource. The RG can only comment on the areas visited which varied from excellent through to, failing buildings and infrastructure. It was clear that significant maintenance and planned capital maintenance works was required with significant backlog maintenance evident. This is in line with the DOB reference to €100m backlog of work. The following documents that the DOB had in place were;

- Estate Development plan,
- Estate Terrier
- Schedule of backlog,
- Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) systems and service statements,
- A method of managing work within the department.

Although within this document we have referred to the lack of communications and the transparency of activities involved in project management and cost control it may be a surprise to say that the elderly estates management information system (GVA) currently provides a platform of resource management for repairs, minor works and all forms of projects and other activities within the department and is used to provide information for committee reports.

The department has a backlog maintenance schedule of projects which would benefit from a more standard approach where each element of each building was evaluated to form an overall view on specific buildings. The RG was not able to review the system in use and how it informs senior management of the total backlog, the risks and impact of potential failure or non compliance.

It would be beneficial to undertake a full overview of each element for each building to determine the overall condition of all buildings and the estate as a whole which would inform the creation of a comprehensive schedule of planned capital works over the next 10 years. The quantity of items that are

condition C5<sup>2</sup> may in the future be significant. Therefore an investment in ensuring that a full audit is carried out would better inform the institute on the overall condition of the physical facilities and infrastructure. Coupling the condition review with a risk assessment, and an impact on energy/carbon may provide additional strategic management information. This in turn will feed into the strategic planning of the institute. The complex nature of the estate built, bought amended and changed over the last 500 years requires a holistic view of the estate in a form that is reportable and can be interrogated. The information is within the department.

**d. Asset management.**

In order to manage an estate, it is important to maintain a robust a single asset register. An asset system has a hierarchical structure; campus, buildings, levels, rooms after which the more notable elements are the smaller assets upon which planned program of works are carried out and repairs undertaken. There is evidence that all of these exist in various forms and the GVA system carries significant information on space. This was contrary to the comments made by many staff outside of the department that a space database was not available. The space data base is held in an excel spreadsheet and down loaded periodically into GVA. Planned maintenance programs, repairs of assets and all costs associated with the maintenance of assets is contained with GVA. Unfortunately it is not user friendly, nor supported and must be replaced before it fails. These systems are underestimated outside of many estate departments however they manage tens of thousands of jobs, provide performance information and are used to ensure that key life saving plant is maintained and records kept. They also inform where to make future building maintenance investments.

**e. Financial resources, budget, including self financing activities**

The Department is responsible for a substantial budget, which amounted to €27.1m in 2009/10 including recoupments and for the College's substantial capital programme which has averaged €42m per annum over the last six years. Financial Management (FM) systems within an Estate organization would also be responsible for providing life cycle expenditure information on asset and buildings and over time help to provide a more robust budget forecasting system. It is essential that these systems have seamless integration with the finance systems so that capital and operational figures

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<sup>2</sup> HESA definition of C5 buildings are those that are operational but major repair or replacement needed in the short to medium-term.

are the same. The GVA system already provides the commitment figures and all accounting for the DOB. The comments on transparency and information on expenditure is more about reporting from a failing or unsupported system rather than not having the information. During our discussions with staff external to the DOB office we were quoted five different budgets on one project and within the documentation provided there were also discrepancies.

There was no evidence that the department was regularly over budget or that there were any significant budgetary issues across the revenue operation. The unique HR system within Ireland will put pressure on improving performance and to provide best value.

The funds for backlog are an important part of any estate operation and in order to be efficiently managed and spent appropriately there needs to be some funding certainty over a 3 to 5 year rolling program. Uncertainty about annual budgets may result in very inefficient expenditure within the area. Many of the Backlog maintenance works and planned maintenance capital works are intrusive and some require more than 12 months lead in time or even longer. From the figures provided the budgets for the College looked insufficient to stop further degradation, deal with the historical building burden, start eating into the backlog, creating sufficient funds to upgrade to modern acceptable standards and to support the general ongoing churn and remodelling required within a large institution.

The recharging mechanism operated by Trinity came in for considerable criticism from all quarters and should be reviewed. The process generated negative comments on the cost of works. This is a common problem across all institutes where DOB clients compare the costs they are charged at work with those that they pay at home! Improved systems and more transparency with some training for faculty staff about costs would improve this.

**f. Self financing initiatives**

There are significant opportunities for undertaken self financing activities surrounding residences, conference income and energy. The DOB office is aware of these types of initiatives and specific projects could be created to evaluate the benefits of closer partnerships with external organizations could have on delivering new initiatives. Some of these initiatives are purely refinancing and other are much more about risk sharing and providing funding for those projects that may not be considered core. These are

complex areas where impact and risk assessments over long term arrangements (some in excess of 40 years) are essential. The RG group cannot comment on these types of initiatives since they are complex and seen differently across the sector.

## **7. Systems and Processes**

### **a. Evaluation of existing business processes;**

The recommendations within the SAR focused on the operation of the department and overall management of the College resources. It is difficult to disassociate, the management of resources without discussing value for money and performance. The RG cannot make a judgment on value for money (VFM) issues and performance, all we can do is comment on the processes and systems and suggest improvements that could help in the overall management of the estate. These in turn will support VFM initiatives. Good systems and processes can help to pull a department together, create a focus and remove continual challenge to the way things are done. Lack of common processes and transparency will create the perception of no control and personalize performance. The key processes that came under criticism were;

- Project Management
- Prioritisation of all work ( operational and small works)
- Cost of small works
- Financial reports
- Space management.
- Communications

The DOB recognised that the systems and processes supporting these activities need to be updated and transformed and to do this some form of support funding and additional expertise will be required.

In order to demonstrate value for money and overall performance there is a need to record and analyse activities. Because the department does appear to be under-supported by systems specialists the department has not progressed sufficiently to provide information on projects, job costs, KPI's and Service Level Agreements (SLA's) in a timely fashion. The departments own recommendations refer to this and they must be supported in this area to develop and introduce fit for purpose systems and processes. The introduction of new computing programs will not necessarily increase VFM or performance since it is difficult to measure at present and the current systems are old. The College does not have a complete set of accurate plans within a

computer-aided design (CAD) package for all of its space. This results in the current systems having reduced functionality and space plans not being coordinated and linked to CAFM systems, and records on building areas, floor plans, space usage etc. If the department wished to introduce systems to deliver changes recommended it is essential that value judgments reflecting on functional suitability and value for money are undertaken. The FM systems are a valuable resource within an organisation and linked to other programs can be an essential part of a business management system. We would suspect that the risks of this system failing is high. The management of over a €1b of capital and assets, hundreds of buildings and tens of thousands of activities annually requires robust management information and processes.

The following recommendations were based on the discussions with staff and the reports they receive. They reflect on what the typical needs would be from a complex college with highly engineered facilities and a high volume of work tasks. The known tasks would include maintenance and work that was given directly to contractors, all PPM schedules undertaken. Modern system can also be used directly by faculties and departments outside of the DOB / Estate.

**b. Evaluation of IT support and information systems;**

We were pleasantly surprised with the volume of data available on the estate; however it was not all held in the same databases and appeared isolated. Data included condition and functionality assessment, space records and details on activities carried out across the unit.

The systems inability to provide the reports that are expected in a modern facilities and business environment to help demonstrate performance was unfortunate. The lack of providing transparent data and automated progress reports on all forms of activity allow the unsubstantiated and generalised comments to be promulgated. If improvements to the system are not possible within the short term then more effort must be made of producing performance KPI's and reports directly to the faculty and or departments on work and projects. We believe the current system could provide at a department level, schedules by location, department, activity and include costs.

**c. Procedures and policies.**

There are good technical and management procedures and policies within the department. Those for management of capital projects and management of space should however be improved; these involve stakeholders outside the department itself. The DOB has in draft a capital works procedure for running capital projects

and if applied with some strengthening on sign off at each stage will resolve most of the comments raised. Coupling this with more transparent financial reporting and easy access to information will dispel some of the unsubstantiated and anecdotal comments surrounding capital projects which are driving perceptions. Introducing a common process and sign off at key stages will be essential as is the recognition that all projects are a team event and all involved need to take their role seriously and share in the risk strategies.

The development of SLA that incorporated targets would be a major step however it is essential that the measurement process are in place to demonstrate performance.

#### **d. Capital Management**

The College did not appear to have an estate strategy that linked the capital development plan, the College strategic plan and the outstanding works due to backlog and other business initiatives. This may be encapsulated within other documents which the RG did not have. The lack of a space strategy backed up by robust and accurate information on performance suggest that the need factor could be challenged.

If the procedures suggested in the draft Management of Capital Works are implemented then the issues currently faced will be clearer and responsibility for both success and failure will be clear.

Proper resourcing of the capital works is essential with staff who have experience within this area and who can manage professional project managers and design teams. The University project manager must be given the authority to make decisions in a timely fashion. Outside of the delivery team the college needs to have a client PM someone who also can make decisions in a timely fashion and who understands the impact of changes and who the delivery team can call on when required. Projects cannot be managed by committees.

The management of small capital works came in for some criticism on the lead in time to set up new projects, the different methodologies used across the department and some variable costs. This could be rectified by having a multi-year contract with an external contractor who will work on measured elements of work (Measured Term Contract (MTC)). This would allow the cost of the works to be determined quickly by removing the time associated with tendering and obtaining quotations for small works and it would also introduce standard costs. Other savings with this type of contract are the contractor becomes more of a partner, is aware of the site, gains knowledge of the processes (such as permit to works, access etc), the

mechanical and electrical infrastructure, health and safety policies the complexities of the site and how to get things done. The MTC can be tendered every three-four years and therefore a larger number of contractors can be considered and more effort can be afforded on the induction of the successful contractor. It should be noted that quite a lot of criticism for the delay in starting small projects can be down to the approval processes and inadequate briefing. It is essential that there is a well structured and strictly managed process in place so that the reason for delays is clearly noted.

The department has recommended improvements in Project Management on the back of an Audit report in Dec 2011. It is essential that a common process and procedures with guidance and proper support is implemented. The department see this as an improvement and should be supported vigorously and used by senior managers to control project drift, department changes, risk and inappropriate interference in projects without accepting the consequences.

## **8. Alignment to Strategy**

In terms of meeting the mission and objectives of College, DOB supports these on a day to day basis and each section appears to be performing reasonably. There were excellent comments about the security team and their ability to manage events and the quality of the grounds. As noted elsewhere, the Department should take the lead in developing an integrated three year Capital Investment Plan which would make obvious the link between the College's objectives and capital investment.

There were not many performance indicators that could help us determine how the area assessed itself against the college's strategic plan. The DOB had set up a peer group assessment which would need a detailed analysis across all of the activities and parameters including the proportional share of science, arts, social science and engineering students to try and normalise the data.

## **9. Performance**

There is insufficient information to form a view on the department's position across either its peer group or industry standards in Ireland, though comparisons were provided against research-intensive UK universities from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)/Estates Management Statistics (EMS) data against which the expenditure on premises at Trinity appears to be below average, but it must be recognised that different institutions and different locations have different cost-profiles. It is suggested that annual benchmarking should be carried out with relevant institutions both in and outside Ireland. The information received from the interviewed was generally positive about the operational day to day performance of the institute and the helpful nature of the staff. The majority of

criticism was based on the small works and capital projects which have been dealt with in different sections of the report. The lack of processes and system created the criticism and allowed personalised approach to dominate performance and in the eyes of the client prioritisation.

**a. Evaluation of service level agreements;**

Within the Quality Review document appendix 8-10 there were examples of Statement of service provision/sla. The statements explained some of the activities and services carried out by the sections but did not include any target setting and therefore would not normally be considered a SLA.

**b. Relationships with other College areas, academic and administrative;**

There were generally good relations with DOB, very little direct criticism of the department other than what has been already mentioned. The introduction of more transparent systems and the flow of information will improve this relationship. The internal charging systems do not help to improve relationships and although essential more care needs to be taken over the costing of works. The RG could not look into this area.

**c. Value for money and efficient use of resources.**

There was insufficient information to form any VFM comment however within the report are references to the need to improve processes, the collection of information and the management of space and the estate planning.

The DOB team was not very large for the amount of capital works being undertaken and the professional support level within the organisation may need to be reviewed.

There were comments about the cleaning teams forming part of the DOB department. This would make sense; this would provide an opportunity to review information flow, more sharing of activities and jobs. Likewise the telephony would be better placed with ISS. The development of IP telephony across the campus makes this an important change.

**10. Communications and Transparency with users/clients, and others.**

The review document has suggested that communications is a very important part of the overall role of a DOB department or an estates department. There is an expectation that all is organised professionally and sometimes demonstrating this reinforces the messages. The department has many successes and this needs to be shared more with the community. The



developments within Trinity are complex and need careful control without having a serious impact on the operations of the college and the DOB team are aware of this.

Many of the recommendations can be covered by improving communications and being more transparent in the way the department works. Anecdotal and ill informed comments drive perceptions which are impossible to manage. Improving the communications will provide robust data that can be referenced and all staff both within the department and externally will be able to review activity, new initiatives and form part of the picture that supports a performance led culture. The development of systems is essential to achieve good communications, transparency, sharing risks and demonstrating performance. One of the most common areas of criticism was the costing of small works. In this, Trinity is no different to most organisations. It is recommended that a standard list of charges be developed and published for the most common such works. If the systems can be improved then more transparent reporting can be delivered therefore dispelling negative comments. Annual and quarterly reports are essential to help staff be aware of the planned work. We received excellent comments about how the Director of DOB was seen externally as a professional representative of the College.

## **11. Governance compliance**

The current governance is primarily internal and lacks external challenge. Particularly when the College has a large capital project such as the Biosciences Building, there are advantages in having independent reviews either from other areas of the College or from independent external advisors.

## **12. Recommendations**

The following is a summary of the recommendations from the review group. Further details of them are included in the paper. The review group was not able to undertake a detailed assessment of the performance of this multidisciplinary unit and could therefore only comment on the systems and processes being operated and those contained in the review documents.

- **Strategic Planning and Space management.**
  - It is important for Estate operations to reflect the needs of the business and strategic plans of the College. The Development plan was a good document and included a lot of information and detailed development plans. The plan would have benefitted from a more detailed spatial impact assessment of Trinity's Strategic needs, clear objectives, a statement of issues and key issues that needed to be addressed, options for addressing these and include a section on affordability and programming. It is possible that

these were available within various documents available to the reviewers, but they were not in the RG pack.

- Reference to poor space management was shared by most of the interviewees and is a major problem for TCD. Unless the College has a robust space management policy and procedures backed up at the highest level then it is impossible to create a robust estate development based on need.
  - A confined inner city campus such as Trinity needs to monitor the status of all of its neighbour's activities and take advantage of changes in tenure when they arise and therefore clear strategy on procurement is required.
  - There was no evidence of any work on life cycle analysis and its inclusion into a sustainable and holistic decision making process within the DOB area. It should be included in the guidance note for capital projects.
  - Lead, with Finance, the development of a three to five year integrated Capital Investment Plan.
- **Space Management**
- Space management needs to be addressed and should be brought under central control. All teaching space should be centrally booked, albeit there may need to be a priority recognition for teaching space within departmental buildings. In the same vein, this space should be made available to the conference office out of core hours as part of the drive for additional income. The College may wish to consider incentivising Departments by a share in income or investment in upgrading such rooms and providing common standards in AV. A formal evaluation of all space should be undertaken and some form of value analysis undertaken. The use of the Space Management Group (SMG) papers produced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) may be a useful tool.
- **Name change**
- The current name does not represent the activities undertaken by the department and all of its operation and processes. Changing

the name to the Estate/Property and Facilities or a similar name will help to drive forward a common goal and purpose and is simple to initiate. We are aware, for example, that in NUI Galway the senior post was re-titled “Director of Physical Resources” and the titles of deputies were given clearer clarity for example “Head of Buildings & Estates” and “Head of Projects”. This should run in parallel with the review of structure.

○ **Review of structure**

- We agree and support changes to bring cleaning into the new department and move telephony to ISS. However a detailed evaluation of where activities are best managed to improve performance and identify benefits should be carried out.
- We recommend restructuring of the Department along functional lines to provide greater clarity. In doing so, we endorse the further expansion of Area Premises Managers which have great potential to bring an integrated service to the academic community. We also suggest that the Department considers allocating a small dedicated flexible resource to residences as the needs of residences are different to the main academic estate.
- We support moves to co-locate the department as much as possible to achieve greater integration and note that there are proposals to do this for the administration as a whole.

○ **Communications and transparency**

- The department should provide more user friendly reports to departments on the activities undertaken. Monthly, quarterly and annual reports are a good way of providing more transparency and bringing the department together. More in-house group meetings would be beneficial, especially at a time of change.

○ **Project Management**

- It is essential that new project management processes and procedures, with guidance and proper support, are implemented. These should be relevant to the different sizes and complexity of projects, identify clear responsibilities and accountabilities, risk management, change management and sign off procedures.

- **Balance on outsourcing**
  - This is a key area and the current situation to Ireland is unique and requires local knowledge to drive forward the right sourcing policy based on best value and the complex human resource issues at present. Right sourcing must be always considered.
  - For small jobs the DOB should consider using a Measured Term Contract (MTC) style of contract to improve delivery time and free up staff which will also provide an overall best value and improved delivery mechanism.
- **The development of key performance indicators.**
  - These should be tailored for each different activity and necessarily on the same common group of Universities. The basis on which the indicators are developed with partner institutes for security will be different from those for other areas.
  - Obtain copies of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)/Estates Management Statistics (EMS) data base and undertake detailed comparative analysis with relevant institutes on a regular basis and publish within the College.
  - Produce a set of useful KPI's for internal use to demonstrate performance, linked to the investment in IT.
- **IT, systems and processes**
  - The current estates management information system GVA system is beyond its sell by date and is not well supported and the associated excel spreadsheets are a problem. A full evaluation of all of the DOB systems' functionality, their connectivity to other systems must be undertaken. This should be looked at holistically and considered as a University main system that will benefit more than just the DOB department.
  - Health & Safety, Security, all forms of Projects, maintenance jobs and many other activities within the department would benefit from being interconnected. Common incident management forms online and shared help desks will provide added benefits.
  - A full evaluation of all of the DOB systems functionality and the potential benefits from having an integrated system which has the capabilities to be connected to other corporate systems should be

undertaken. The risks that the institute is carrying by not having a fully integrated system that matches the requirements of a modern estate management, financial management (FM) and project delivery operation should be seen as an important issue. The volume and value of the activities carried out could account for 20% of the institute costs.

○ **Training**

- Introduce a staff development programme across all of the various disciplines, including management development
- It is essential for all activities to ensure that staff develops as the campus develops. A matrix of health and safety training across all of the various disciplines is required, and management development

The review group would like to thank all of the staff within the Directorate of Buildings for their helpful and honest comments throughout this review, their organisation of the meetings and events. In addition the review group would also like to thank Tony McMahon and his staff for coordinating events and providing support to the team.

Mr. Derry Caleb, University of Surrey;  
Mr. Ian Caldwell, Kings College London  
Mr. Martin Hefferman, Sammon Group.

September 2012

## Appendix 1: Reviewers' clarifications/elaborations on seven points/issues in their report

### **1. Request for clarification:**

Page 1, section 2, executive summary, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet point: In relation to the Reviewers' recommendations on reorganisation/restructuring of the Director of Building's Office, we would be grateful if the Review Team could elaborate on this area and in particular define/and or provide further clarification on the nature of the 'minor' restructuring that they are recommending here.

#### **Reviewers' response:**

*There were two areas where we were uncertain about the overall structure and in particular the management of projects. There appeared to be a split between capital and minor capital and minor works. This should be investigated to ensure that maximum value was being obtained from the professional project management team and their expertise. A common approach to project management paper work, planning techniques and decision making should be used on all projects.*

*The department did not appear to have a head of projects that had responsibility for all project management activity. Whoever had this role would head up the development and instigation of a robust project management system or program. We felt at present that this role was a shared role between the deputy and the director.*

*It was impossible for the review team to say anything more than a minor review since this would have required a detailed review of all projects (capital, minor works, engineering capital, backlog maintenance, infrastructure, regeneration and improvement types of projects), the processes and the responsibilities across the Institute and the DOB area.*

*The role of the Premises Managers is a well worked model across the sector and can provide benefits to the clients and the service departments. The role prospers when it includes responsibilities within which it can make a difference and also provides a vehicle for communications and can enhance the help desk type of activities.*

### **2. Request for clarification:**

Page 5, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence: *There were some comments relating to different methods being applied by different project managers.* We would be grateful if the Review Team could elaborate on what methods are being referred to here.

#### **Reviewers' response:**

*Comments from the various clients we interviewed supported the general points we made about project management and the processes. It was the perception of the clients*

*that the success of a project depended on the project manager involved in the project. They also commented on the group that this person came from. We believed that minor capital and small improvements were delivered by different people who delivered the larger capital works. Different organisations have different descriptions for minor works and it can be difficult to generalise and compare.*

*A clear project management process and staff who are trained to work to a formal process would prevent the possible subjective comments from clients when they are sharing project management experiences on performance, especially when so much of the experience depends on the initial briefing.*

*A transparent tracking system would help to provide the client with professional reports on cost and program.*

**3. Request for clarification:**

Page 6, Section 6 (b) and Page 17, Section 12 (j): In relation to the Reviewers' recommendations on staff training and development, we would be grateful if the Review Team could elaborate on this area, particularly in relation to PMDS and in line with their discussions on the subject during the site visit.

**Reviewers' response:**

*The initial comments on Personal development plans came from the "town hall" meeting with most of the staff from the DOB's area. There was significant support for appraisals for all levels that included personal development plans.*

*The comments within section 6 and 12 both referred to the need for a form of continuous improvement within the department. The complexity and responsibility for items such as legionella, asbestos, pressure vessel regulations, the life protective systems such as fume cupboards and other control and hazardous environments mean that there is a continuous need. We believe that the staff and management see this but there did not appear to be must central support for engaging with the department and providing resources to undertake training in these areas.*

*A simple starting point would be to produce a matrix of training modules required for each trade group and professional staff member. This would help to distil the more formal from the very technical and also identify modules that were cross cutting across the various units.*

*It was evident that there were initiatives in units which could have helped other units and this was not taken advantage of. It is important that we mention that some of the training that may be required can only be organised, paid for and delivered by the institute.*

**4. Request for clarification:**

Page 6, Section 6 Resources (a) Staff composition, 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence: *There appeared to be a shortfall of professionally qualified staff in key positions which may need to be reviewed.* We would be grateful if the Review Team could confirm whether this comment related to the absence of a professionally qualified electrical engineer in the Buildings Office. The Director of Buildings would like to point out that the craft and the supervisory staff working on the College's electrical installations have the appropriate technical qualifications required by law and that a professional qualification of itself does not meet these regulations. For the record, the Deputy Director of Buildings is a qualified electrical engineer.

**Reviewers' response:**

*This was a general point and did relate to roles and responsibilities of posts and not any reflection on personal competencies. Because the activities undertaken by DOB are complex and involve life protection systems there is a need to ensure that the institute have properly qualified staff in key management positions to provide professional guidance and authority to the decision making process. This has become more important in this litigious society.*

*The example of the Electrical engineer is a good one since that profession requires professional and competency training in a specific discipline, demonstrated through examination. If there was an electrocution and a death occurred then the question would be asked where did the control lay, who determined policies and did the organisation resource the activity adequately.*

*It was impossible for the review team to comment on competency, or any individual, or group of workers. We would have assumed that the trade staff employed would be all qualified to carry out their roles and the same would apply to all professional staff.*

*The main point was had the institute considered this type of issue and has it taken appropriate action to protect the staff involved in these activities.*

**5. Request for clarification:**

Page 9, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, last sentence: *During our discussions with staff external to the DOB office, we were quoted five different budgets on one project and within the documentation provided there were also discrepancies.* We would be grateful if the Review Team could elaborate on the context in which the different budgets were quoted and perhaps provide examples to illustrate the point.



**Reviewers' response:**

*It was clear from the various academic staff we talked to that each person had a different figure for the project. This is not unusual and always works against the project managers. The review group could not investigate the various figures from people who were involved to some degree in the project.*

*We believe the inconsistencies arose out of the various phases of the project, the misunderstanding of what a contract price is and the level of fit out within that, the original estimate for the project which was part of a bid to funders and others, the gradual improvement on the brief and articulating the needs of the users after the contract was let (to meet funders timeframes). From what we have seen this was a complex project with a specific timely initial window of opportunity.*

**6. Request for clarification:**

Page 16, Section 12 (e): In relation to the Reviewers' recommendations on communication within the Director of Buildings Area, outlined on, we would be grateful if the Review Team could elaborate on the need for improved communication within and between areas as discussed during the site visit.

**Reviewers' response:**

*The performance of an estate department or any service provider is judged by a mixture of factual performance and perception. The departments' inability through the lack of coordinated systems to provide information in a timely way on projects and all of its activities generates a perception. There were a number of comments from non-estate personnel who complained about the lack of information on space ownership and how it was hampering decision making yet within the DOB they had the information.*

*There were comments on the lack of information on the cost of jobs; this too was available within estates.*

*It is essential that the DOB markets its successes and performance.*

*There were other comments at the town hall meeting on communications between sections and how more communications between the groups would benefit the whole department.*

**7. Request for clarification:**

In relation to the Reviewers' discussions in the draft report on the Biosciences project, we would be grateful if the Review Team could elaborate on the discussions which took place during the site visit concerning the management of the project, the timing of the

project, the engagement with users, benchmarking of the project, opinion of external consultants, and the level of expertise at the design and implementation stage.

**Reviewers' response:**

*It would not be possible for the review team to answer these questions since the comments made in passing about such a large project would provide an unbalanced comment. It is obvious that there are strong views held about performance of the client, the contractor and the project managers. I am sure that the role of the funders and senior managers would also need to be taken into consideration.*

*The review team felt that the project could overshadow the review that we were undertaking and were also conscious of the fact that the college had employed a team to review the project and it would have been counterproductive to try and extract information on that project out of context. All of the review team have been involved in projects of this size and aware of the inertia behind such projects and the need to get the brief right before you start on site and the need to properly resource such a project.*

*The review team has made many recommendations relating to project management which hopefully you will find useful in your discussion.*

**Request for further clarification re whether the Biosciences project represents value for money:**

**Reviewers' response:**

*The Biosciences project was obviously a very complex project in a very difficult location adjacent to railway activities and infrastructure with a challenging timeline. The construction of a building on this site was an achievement in its own right. The project would have had significant abnormal costs. The review group were given no substantive evidence to suggest that the project did not represent best value.*

## **6. Response from the Director of Buildings**

### **Introduction**

The Review was carried out on site from 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2012. A first draft of the Review was issued in mid June and comments were made on it. A further version of the Review, complete with the reviewers' comments and clarifications was issued by the TCD Quality Office on 13 September 2012. The final version, with the Reviewers' clarifications attached as an Appendix was issued by the TCD Quality Office on 16 October.

I am grateful to the Reviewers who gave generously of their time and brought their extensive experience and expertise to the task for their work in preparing this review. Independent peer review and assessment is very beneficial. I welcome the comments and advice of the Reviewers and confirm that I will work with Colleagues and College Management to implement the recommendations as quickly as possible.

### **Overview**

I am pleased to note many positive comments in the review, and note in particular that the overall feedback on the operations covered by the Director of Buildings area was positive. The complimentary remarks on the Department's core activities of Property, Maintenance and Operation, Security, and the delivery of projects are acknowledged.

The reviewers noted many positive aspects relating to the staff including

- (i) a very strong "can do" attitude where staff supported each other;
- (ii) the loyalty of staff to the department and Trinity;
- (iii) that the staff feel that they have confidence in the management of the units and;
- (iv) that there were generally good relations across the College with the Director of Buildings Office;
- (v) very little direct criticism of the department and
- (vi) the very positive perception externally of senior staff as professional representatives of the College.

### **Key areas arising from the report**

I am pleased to note that to a very large extent the Reviewers have validated and supported the findings and recommendations in the Self Assessment Report. This will make the task of implementation considerably easier.

The Reviewers have made helpful comments regarding the organisational structure of the department and this will be developed along with the proposal to physically consolidate and rename the Department (this aligns with START proposal).

The Reviewers reported user comments on the different procedures applying to the management of minor maintenance and improvement projects than to major capital projects. It is noted that users see this as an issue related to individuals rather than the complexity of the projects. The Department recognises the need to implement revised processes for management of Capital projects, and to develop and tailor consistent approaches reflecting the needs of projects of varying complexity and scale.

The Reviewers noted that proposals had been drafted and commented “If the procedures suggested in the draft Management of Capital Works are implemented then the issues currently faced will be clearer and responsibility for both success and failure will be clear.” The proposals outlined to the Reviewers were not adopted and the College has sought external advice on such procedures. The new procedures will be implemented as soon as possible. The Department welcomes the endorsement of the suggestion made by the Director in discussions with the Reviewers that a new post of Head of Capital Projects be established.

We also acknowledge the need to address concerns relating to internal charging for small works. For as long as College maintains such a policy it will be necessary to demonstrate the issues that impact on the cost of such works.

The Department supports the recommendation to develop a spatial strategy for the College to reflect the overall strategy of the Estate Development Plan but addressing the immediate strategic, spatial and business needs of the College. The Director of Buildings Office will work with the Treasurer’s Office and Executive Officers to develop a matching and prioritised funding strategy for the next 5 years and beyond. This period reflects the current economic situation and the time taken to advance projects through the internal and external planning processes.

The completion of a detailed Space Audit, including a study of space utilisation, condition and suitability should be prioritised.

We support the development of KPIs, ideally in consultation with similar Irish institutions for ease of Benchmarking. We are committed to developing and expanding the range of KPIs and metrics used to inform the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations. Given adequate resources we will develop a set of KPIs in maintenances in accordance with BS EN 15341 (British maintenance standard) and relevant comparators in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Estate Management Statistics together with a series of relevant metrics across the other services such as project management, mail services and telephony.

We recognise the need for improvements to communication internally and externally, and greater transparency regarding space allocation /utilisation, capital project reporting. We agree with the Reviewers that it is essential that we market our successes and performance. It is important that there should be clarity and a shared understanding of project costs and budgets and it is evident that the current procedures of reporting to relevant committees do not achieve sufficient penetration. The Reviewers, in their clarifications have identified the factors that can lead to unsubstantiated and anecdotal comments surrounding capital projects which can drive adverse perceptions of project management. It is noted that the reviewers own comments in relation to the Biosciences project were positive.

We welcome the Reviewers' recommendations regarding investment in IT systems and processes for all aspects of our services and their incorporation into new College wide Management Information Systems. This will improve data management and allow for more timely and detailed reporting, and improved service tracking and information flow for customers.

Consistent with its policy of ensuring that key staff possess appropriate qualifications, skills and training, the Department recognises the critical importance of continuous staff development. It accepts that the approach must be targeted strategically in order to cope effectively with the increasingly challenging and complex environment faced by the Department. We are committed to working with HR to draw up a training matrix in order to enhance training and staff development opportunities.

The Department will continue to expand and develop proposals for flexible working to provide integrated services across all areas. The support of the Reviewers for the expansion of the Premises Managers initiative is welcomed.

We will work with College to identify resource requirements to implement the various proposals.

**Conclusions:**

The reviewers Comments and Recommendations, together with their very helpful clarifications, will be addressed in detail by the Management Team in the Director of Buildings Area, working with the Chief Operating Officer.

Appropriate actions to address these comments and recommendations are being developed and will be set out in a detailed Implementation Plan with an accompanying timescale and resource requirements. Already, some action is in hand arising from the Self Assessment Report that was largely validated by the Review.

Paul Mangan,  
Director of Buildings  
17 October 2012

## **7. Response from the Chief Operating Officer (COO)**

### **Introduction/overview**

I would like to thank the Review Team for their time and effort in conducting this review. I welcome the report including the Reviewers' comments on areas they identified as performing well and providing a good service, and their recommendations for improvement.

### **Response to recommendations**

The Reviewers commented on positive feedback they received on the Operations covered by the Director of Buildings at a time of reducing resources. They found that the Department has a "can do" attitude and that staff supported each other. The feedback from the interviewees was that the general planning of works is carried out professionally and delivered in line with the expectations of the stakeholders with the exception of one large project. The first impressions provided by the landscaping demonstrated a good quality of maintenance and they commented on the security team's approach as being excellent.

The issues identified by the Reviewers regarding strategic planning and strategic space management are identified in the START report and the combination of the creation of the SPPU (Strategic Planning and Project Unit), restructuring the Department, and the re-profiled Finance organisation should address a number of these issues. The development of a spatial plan is crucial and there should be clear linkages between this Spatial Plan, the College Strategic plan and the Capital Investment plan. I concur with the Reviewers' observations that space allocation practices and methodologies are inadequate and require review. Benchmarking is a critical component of driving cost competitiveness and best practices, and I would encourage the Area to engage in benchmarking as a practice.

The clear definition of roles, responsibilities and ownership, with the addition of the development of business plans and multi annual budgets will assist in improving Strategic Planning and Space Management. The START implementation plans will take account of these inputs and be reviewed and monitored by Planning Group, and Executive officers.

I accept the Reviewers' recommendations regarding a name change for the Department and a clearer articulation of the roles/responsibilities, accountabilities and KPIs. The START report also identified these issues as requiring action and I note that it is an important prerequisite to any benchmarking activity that will be undertaken in the future. The review of the scope/functions of the department is part of the START programme and these suggestions will be considered as part of the plan. This should address the lack of clarity regarding the structure, roles and accountability.

The issues raised by the Reviewers in relation to communication, information provision and transparency are consistent with the findings of the START team and the plan includes addressing many of these issues such as cross charging, value for money reviews and some re-organisation. The provision of clear and factual reports/information and measurement of performance is critical. I agree that internal communications within and external to the department need to improve.

I agree with the Reviewers' recommendations with regard to project management processes and procedures. A comprehensive external review of existing practices is currently taking place.

I note the inputs of the Reviewers in relation to the development of professionally qualified staff and this will require a review of the core value add activities of this organisation.

The Reviewers comment that clients compare the costs they are charged at work versus what they pay outside College – these comparisons reflect the need to conduct "Value For Money" reviews as per the START recommendations.

The Reviewers' recommendation in relation to KPIs is also a START recommendation and should include Financial KPIs.

I concur with the observations regarding IT systems and processes and we are currently addressing some of these issues as part of the START programme.

It is critical that that the staff within the department have the required skills and professional competencies. The Reviewers commented on expertise throughout the report. It is not expected that training programmes alone will close the gap, so this future skill requirement needs to be considered in more depth.

**Conclusions:**

The Reviewers' recommendations are welcomed and many are consistent with those of START. The key findings/recommendations will be addressed as part of the START implementation plan.