Estates Strategy

Introduction

This Estates Strategy sets out our vision for the University Library’s estate through to 2015. It supports, and is aligned with, our 2011-2015 Strategic Plan *Library Everywhere*, and with the University’s Estates Strategy for 2010-2015. However, the broad principles it sets out will guide estates planning beyond this timeframe, and will contribute to University capital planning through to 2020 and beyond.

Since 2005, many aspects of the University Library’s approach to estates planning and the development of new facilities have been sector-leading. This Estates Strategy aims to ensure that our leadership position is maintained, and that we continue to play a full part in the success of the University’s key academic business areas. It also reflects the transformational changes occurring sector-wide in university libraries, and the continuing increase in usage of physical resources alongside the rapid growth of our digital services and resources.

We outline below the broad themes of the strategy, and their implications for estates planning. Following commissioning of additional Information Commons space in 2015/16 as part of New Engineering Building, and the associated decommissioning of St George’s Library, we do not expect the number of physical premises within the Library estate to change.

Theme 1

Outstanding study environments for students

Provision of high quality study space for students and researchers is the top priority for this Estates Strategy. Our investment in study space, including the Information Commons (IC) has been a significant factor in the transformation of student satisfaction with library services since 2005. However, the planning period is seeing many Russell Group and other competitors investing heavily in new library and learning spaces.

At its opening in 2007, the IC gave the University a significant competitive advantage in terms of library and learning spaces. The experience and knowledge we have gained from its success over the last 6 years represent a significant asset for our future planning. The key design principles of the IC will be incorporated in new and refurbished space for students, emphasising:

- Integrated access to digital and print collections
- Study space variety
- Accessibility
- Facilitation of collaborative working
- Sector-leading approaches to study space density and ergonomics that enhance student learning
- Careful attention to acoustic and lighting design
- Design for 24/7 operation

In terms of quantity of study spaces for independent study, we regularly benchmark provision against that of other universities.

As well as managing dedicated library space and planning new capacity, we will explore ways of giving access to additional study space capacity at times of peak demand, notably during pre-assessment and assessment periods.

Our five staffed service points are located to provide good coverage of the campus, and we will as far as possible locate services and resources to reflect the developing shape of the campus.

**Theme 2**

**Active print collection management**

The University Library has been a leader in the active management of its print collections to optimise access by students and researchers. Stock is moved between the high demand collections in the IC and the primary and secondary collections in our other sites in response to demand; and within the Western Bank Library, which holds some 80% of our print collections, we manage space to ensure that the most frequently used materials are most accessible. Our Content Strategy sets out the scope and management of our collections.

A significant feature of active print collection management is our well-established zero net collection growth policy, which ensures that the size of our physical collection does not expand beyond the current capacity of some 1.5 million volumes. This is underpinned by our participation in the UK Research Reserve, which helps us prioritise stock for retention as part of the national collection, as well as assuring access to low-use material which we de-accession.

We will continue to invest in technology to assist in active print collection management, including collection analytics, RFID for physical item circulation and control, and electronic compact storage solutions for effective space utilisation.

Active print collection management means that, in the planning periods through to 2020, we will not require additional space for print collection storage.

**Theme 3**

**Support for researchers**

Our study spaces and collections are important components of the University’s research infrastructure. We will provide high quality spaces for researchers as well as for students, and during the planning period to 2020 we will aim to provide new spaces that facilitate collaborative working and interdisciplinary activities among researchers using our facilities. This will include access to space for events, poster space for PGRs to showcase their work and raise awareness amongst their peers, and...
informal space where research students from different subject areas can meet. Working with Professional Services colleagues we will also look to provide a drop-in facility where professional services staff are available to provide support across a range of areas from research data management and planning to advice on publication and open access. Staff in the Library, CiCS, Research & Innovation Services and Student Services already provide many facilities for PGRs, and we will aim to build on this provision to facilitate coordinated delivery and seamless access. This has potential to improve both the student experience and satisfaction levels.

**Theme 4**

**Great places to work**

Provision of a high quality working environment for our staff is a high priority. As well as ensuring that our workplaces are comfortable and conducive to productivity, their design and layout need to reflect changing models for service delivery, as emphasis moves from transactional workflows to learner support and customer relations. Most staff workplaces will be open-plan, with access to space for confidential discussions and meetings, and to social spaces for breaks. Workplace provision will include hot-desk facilities for part-time, roving or peripatetic staff, and capacity to house project workers.

**Theme 5**

**Collaborating for success**

Partnership with other Professional Services is essential to the delivery of effective and efficient University Library estate. We will work closely with EFM to keep our requirements under review, in the operation of our existing estate, and the planning of maintenance and new capital projects, as well as contributing to wider estates strategy. We already work in partnership with CiCS in the operation of the IC and the planning of new IC facilities in the New Engineering Building; and in the provision of IT infrastructure, including desktop and wireless computing, in our existing buildings. This partnership will need to develop to ensure that maximum advantage is gained from the provision of new learning technologies, including new display technologies.

During the planning period we will work more closely with Research & Innovation Services in the development of a strategic approach to study space for PGR students and researchers across the campus.

**Theme 6**

**Sustainable estate**

All our service points are heavily used, and regular investment is needed to maintain and improve the customer experience of them. This is particularly true of the IC, and will apply also to IC spaces in the New Engineering Building. In both cases planned upgrades with significant investment will be brought forward as part of the capital projects pipeline, in addition to regular and routine maintenance and decorative upgrading.
University Library buildings generate significant traffic flows on the campus, and we will work with EFM to ensure that these flows are understood and incorporated into campus masterplanning.

We will contribute to the University’s objective of minimising our impact on the environment and in particular to reduce our CO₂ emissions, while recognising that 24/7 operation of some facilities will affect unit space energy consumption.

**Estates development priorities 2014-2017**

The strategic themes outlined above have enabled us to identify the following priorities for 2013-14 (and onward to 2016-17) in the Professional Services planning round 2012-13:

- Completion of design work for IC space within the New Engineering Building, including determination of future use of St George’s Library
- Completion of Western Bank Library compact mobile shelving project
- Business planning of projects for the post 2015 capital pipeline, including
  - IC first mid-life upgrade 2017,
  - completion of remaining elements of Western Bank Library refurbishment.