

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Board of Governors City of London School	2 December 2013
Subject: Cleaning standards at the City of London School	Public
Report of: City Surveyor (CS 441/13)	For Information
<p>Summary</p> <p>At the last Board of Governors meeting on Thursday, 3 October 2013 issues were raised concerning the standard of cleaning at the school and the performance of the City's corporate cleaning contractor MITIE Cleaning. This report provides Members with an update on the actions taken by the City Surveyor's Department in collaboration with officers from the school to ensure that the service meets the required standard and that MITIE Cleaning provide a service commensurate with the scope of the contract specification.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Background

1. The cleaning at the City of London School has been provided by MITIE Cleaning since 1 September 2011, under Lot 2 of the corporate cleaning contract. Lot 2 covers the City of London School for Boys and the City of London School for Girls.
2. The contract is based on an output specification whereby success is measured by the needs of the client rather than how the contractor achieves this. This has been successful across the other property covered by the contract; however, at the Boy's school this method has not been achieving the desired results. Issues of absenteeism, weak supervision and lack of training have been identified as causing cleaning levels in some areas which do not meet our specification.
3. Attempts have been made to ensure that the service improves, including reviewing the specification in November 2011 and increasing shift length over summer 2013 and introducing zoned cleaning to identify problem areas. However, continuity of service often is affected by school holidays and at the

start of this autumn term it became clear that standards were again below-par in some areas. Marks on walls and staircases were building up and the fifth floor corridor and laboratories were not being cleaned to specification.

4. There was significant debate at the last Board of Governors meeting surrounding the level of cleaning at the City of London School, which resulted in Members raising concerns about the possible health and safety and reputational implications the drop in service could have for the school. Members asked for immediate action.

Current Position

5. There has been a concerted effort, both by the School officers and the City Surveyor's Department to rectify the situation. The following steps have been taken to ensure that the service is brought back up to the required standard, and a consistent standard is delivered going forward:
 - At MITIE Cleaning's expense a special 'spring clean' was carried out by MITIE Cleaning on the 12/13 October which helped to bring the poorest areas of the cleaning up to better standard, particularly in corridors and specific problem flooring areas.
 - The Operations Group Director and the Corporate Property Director met with the Second Master and the Director of Finance at the School to discuss the cleaning performance concerns in more detail. After discussing the alternatives it was agreed that (i) the current specification was appropriate (ii) current working hours would be retained and (iii) focus would be on MITIE Cleaning improving attendance and performance of the output approach contract.
 - The Operations Group Director met with a senior Director of MITIE Cleaning to address the performance issues. The key issues causing the below-par standard of cleaning, namely a lack of strong supervision and management and a high level of absenteeism were conveyed and an action plan was drawn up to urgently address these issues.
 - The action plan is currently being managed and addresses absenteeism, training and supervision issues. This is having a positive effect and cleaning standards are improving as reported by school officers. This is being monitored on a daily basis and joint reports, from the school officers and City Surveyor's Facilities Management team, are being collated and a weekly senior sign off by the Second Master at the School.
 - The communication lines between the School, MITIE Cleaning and the City Surveyor's have been improved and a logging system has been developed between the School and the City Surveyor's Property Service Desk. The issues highlighted with the current Key Performance Indicator audit system, which suggest that the audit scores do not reflect the actual standards of cleaning at the School, are being addressed by site specific training for school officers and a review of the suitability of the current system.

- In order to reinforce the seriousness of the situation with MITIE Cleaning, and to protect the City of London if standards fall in the future, the City Surveyor has instigated the Dispute Resolution clause in the contract and issued a default notice to MITIE Cleaning. The formal notice cites specific failures and areas of concern, namely failure to employ sufficient personnel; failure to provide adequate supervision and management; failure to provide cover for absence and failure to provide a high quality service with the scope. The notice requires MITIE Cleaning to rectify these contractual failures by 22 November 2013.

Contract Procedures

6. Legal advice from the Comptroller and City Solicitor has been sought. At present it is considered that there is no need to alter the contract or the cleaning specifications. If, however, there are future failures the City will action the next stage of the Dispute Resolution clause in the contract.
7. If MITIE Cleaning have not reached the required standard by 22 November 2013 the next stage of the Dispute Resolution clause will be instigated and a second default letter issued which could lead to a termination of this part of the cleaning contract. The current corporate cleaning contract, however, expires in August 2014 and is, therefore, in any case part of a new tender process.
8. Whilst the retendering process takes place, officers will, subject to the standard of work being satisfactory, continue to work with MITIE Cleaning, to the current specifications and working hours in the current contract. The focus will be on working collaboratively, with both the City Surveyor's and School teams managing the action plan and monitoring standards to ensure that the School is cleaned to the City's satisfaction. This will cause least disruption to the School and ensure that future services are delivered in the most effective way. Officers will feedback regularly to the Board of Governors on the progress.
9. Lessons drawn from the situation above will benefit not only the next corporate cleaning contract but also other corporate contracts approaching renewal in 2014. These include more transparency of the supplier's labour input to deliver the desired output, weighted Key Performance Indicators, the possibility of amended quality/price tender assessment criteria together with a school specific assessment of quality and additional contractual tools to raise concerns with the supplier when under-performing, all of which will strengthen the City's management of these corporate wide contracts.

Conclusion

10. The above actions should ensure that the School is cleaned satisfactorily and is not at risk of closure due to health and safety concerns, as well as addressing the potential reputational issues which could arise from regular below-par cleaning standards.

11. The cleaning at the City of London School has been of great concern to members and officers, but through a joint effort of School officers, City Surveyor's officers and the cleaning provider the service is showing signs of improvement in the areas of concern. To ensure service continuity, close management and communication will continue to deliver a clean school.

Appendices

- None

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