**Birkbeck’s catering, facilities and cleaning services**

**1) Project scope**

A joint Trades Union and Birkbeck management project group has been established to explore options and develop cost neutral proposals for bringing in-house catering, cleaning and night security services. This will include proposals for transferring staff currently working at the College for the companies that provide these services onto Birkbeck’s payroll and terms and conditions.

The proposals will also:

* address contractual and terms and conditions issues
* include plans for the future of the services and their affordability
* address operational, managerial capacity and resilience issues.

**2) Why are options to bring these services and staff in-house being developed?**

The College recognises that cleaning, catering and security services are vital to it. Many of the staff who provide these services have worked with and alongside Birkbeck for many years and it wishes to demonstrate its long-term commitment to them.

Unison has campaigned for its members to be transferred onto the College’s payroll to improve their terms and conditions.

**3) Which services and staff are discussions being held about?**

The discussions cover Birkbeck’s catering, cleaning and night security staff who are based on its sites in and around Bloomsbury. They are about staff who are part of the Birkbeck community, rather than for example, window cleaners, who may work on the College’s buildings occasionally.

**4) Which companies currently provide these services and employ these staff?**

Sodexo provides Birkbeck’s catering; Noonan provides its cleaning services; and CIS its night security.

**5) How many staff could be transferred onto the College’s payroll?**

Together, the three contractors employ around 100 staff, excluding casual staff who are brought in at busy periods.

**6) Why was the project group established?**

The group was established to take forward a discussion between the College Governors, Unison and the College Secretary who together agreed in July 2018 to consider the transfer of staff providing facilities services to Birkbeck onto its payroll and terms and conditions.

**7) What has happened since July 2018?**

Meetings were held during July and August 2018 with managers from the three contractors who provide facilities services to Birkbeck.

During October a joint statement of support for the development of proposals was issued by the College and Unison.

The project group tasked with developing proposals has met regularly since its first meeting in November 2018.

**8) Who is involved in the project group?**

The group comprises members of Birkbeck’s management and the Trades Unions. A number of groups of stakeholders will be consulted as part of the project.

**9) How long will the process take?**

The process is complex and many issues need to be considered. These include:

* the different contract each of the three companies that provides services has with the College
* the investment in specialist equipment that some of the providers have made to fulfil their contract
* the different terms and conditions of staff working for each company
* any specialist training, regulations and quality standards that need to be adhered to
* planning for the peaks and troughs in demand for some of the services provided.

The project group is meeting regularly and is committed to exploring the options and submitting proposals to the College Governors in the summer with the aim that, by the end of the year, positive progress will have been made. Some services are more complex to insource than others and there are contractual terms and statutory consultation periods that will need to be adhered to, so the process will vary between services.

**10) How will the staff involved be consulted and engaged in the process?**

Both Birkbeck and the Trades Unions are committed to informing and communicating and consulting with the staff involved. The current service providers will also be required in law to formally consult with staff who may be affected and the Project Team is engaging with them to facilitate this.

**11) Will there be any interruption in/disruption to services?**

No – the aim is to ensure that all concerns are resolved and risks mitigated before any decisions are taken on how to progress the proposals.