MINUTES OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE

30 October 2012

Present
Professor David Latchman (Chair), Professor Philip Dewe, Professor Hilary Fraser, Professor Nicholas Keep, Professor Philip Powell, Professor Miriam Zukas, Mr Peter Zinkin

In attendance
Mrs Katharine Bock (Head of Governance and Corporate Support), Mr Richard Evemy (Partnerships and Project Manager, University Square Stratford), Mr Keith Harrison (College Secretary and Clerk to the Governors), Ms Roisin Lynch (Corporate Support Officer), Mr Tom McCartney (Health and Safety Officer), Mr David McGhie (Director of Planning and Estates), Mr Malcolm Pearson (Estates Project Manager), Ms Megan Reeves (Deputy Secretary), Mr Andreas Schmidt (BEI School Manager), Ms Caroline Smith (Estates Project Manager), Mr Jeremy Tanner (Conference and Space Planning Manager), Mr Peter Westley (Director of Finance), Mr Terry Andrews (Income Accountant), Ms Elizabeth Whitehead (Facilities Manger)

By invitation
Stephanie Chesters (Environmental Manager), Ms Jacqueline Pattison (Observer)

Apologies
Mr Alan Fisher, Mr Rob Park, Mr Mark Pimm, Mr Pierre Smith Khanna, Professor Patricia Tuitt

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF MEMBERSHIP
Approved
1.1 The Committee’s terms of reference and scheme of membership for 2012-13 (E 2012 01)

2 MINUTES
Confirmed
2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2012.

3 REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Noted
3.1 F&GPC’s receipt of the Estates Committee’s Report following its last meeting (E 2012 02)

4 ACTION SHEET AND MATTERS ARISING
Received
4.1 The action sheet (E 2012 03)
Noted

4.2 The independent governor had asked for further consideration of the environmental implications of using outdoor heaters in the catering facility. He was satisfied with the detailed response which outlined how the environmental impact of the project would be minimised.

4.3 The Prayer Room steering group had been set up and representatives of different faiths had been found to contribute their opinions to the group.

5 ESTATES PROJECT UPDATE

Received

5.1 A note on progress in the Estates project programme (E 2012 04)

5.2 A draft report on the capital projects budget (E 2012 05)

Noted

School of Science

5.2 The work to Laboratories 320/321 had gone over the original budget allocation made three years ago, as the scope of the project grew to include the refurbishment of rooms 302, 313 and 358 to accommodate additional research staff. An additional allowance to purchase new equipment for use in the laboratories was approved by Chair’s action in June.

School of Arts

5.3 The Committee heard that the project for the refurbishment of the Reception, catering and theatre studies teaching space at 43 Gordon Square was now largely complete. The original budget had been agreed at £340K, but due to the increased scope of the project the total spend with fees, VAT and fit out costs was estimated to be £527K. Supplementary funds were requested from the HEIF fund and the estates Catering Fund to fully fund the work.

5.4 It was noted that private donations accounted for £77K of the revised budget, and members asked if a formal opening event was planned to which these donors could be invited. They heard that a launch was planned for 4th December.

5.5 The Executive Dean of the School of Arts thanked the College for their investment in the renovation of 43 Gordon Square, which would be an important rejuvenation to arts and humanities during a difficult time. There were exciting plans in place for events in the new space that would be a positive contribution to the life of the College. The Dean also thanked the Estates Department for completing the work over the summer vacation period. The Master noted that the renovation had been possible because the School had undertaken fundraising to contribute to the project.

School of Business, Economics and Informatics

5.5 No further planning had been undertaken to relocate BEI research staff based at the Emerald Street building to Malet Street. Some room was available in Malet Street for these staff, but other space would also need to be made available. The decision had
therefore been taken to leave these staff in Emerald Street until after the REF had finished.

5.6 It was noted that Birkbeck had sold their share of Emerald Street to the IoE, and entered into a leaseback agreement to continue to accommodate the staff there in the short term. When it came to renegotiating the lease, it was College policy that long leaseholds should be dealt with directly by F&GPC, while short leaseholds of two years or more were dealt with at the discretion of senior management.

**Action**

5.7 *(DMcG/Estates team)* Produce a feasibility study on how all of the Emerald Street based staff could be moved as soon as possible once the REF had taken place, in light of the possibility that the Institute of Education might ask Birkbeck to leave the building depending on the outcome of their discussions about working more closely with University College London.

**Centrally managed space**

5.8 A feasibility study had been undertaken over the summer into the scope for reorganising the library’s space. A range of possible measures had been identified to improve the quality of the environment in the library space. Consultation with the Library would take place to draw up a proposal for the next meeting of the Estates Committee.

5.9 The Committee heard that the Librarian was considering the likelihood that the resources in the Library would increasingly be electronic in the future, and that this would be taking into account when formulating the proposal.

**Action**

5.10 *(DMcG)* Circulate the full report of the Library Feasibility study to the Estates Committee.

5.11 The rooftop chiller project had gone over budget, at an estimated £570K compared to the £480K original allocation. Negotiations were currently taking place on a contra-charge to the contractor which might reduce the final account. The overspend had been in part due to the expanding scope of the project in some areas.

5.12 Work was nearing completion on the Catering project involving an awning and weatherproof screens on the terrace, to create more covered seating spaces to cope with demand. This project was delayed due to the Olympics and was now experiencing further slight delays due to the weather, but it was expected that the project would be completed within three weeks.

5.13 It was noted that there had been some negative comments from staff about the new IT room on the 4th Floor of the Main Building, due to noise from the bar and the layout of the room. The Estates department were looking at possibilities for changing rooms around on this floor to make them more suitable.

**6 SPACE MANAGEMENT**

Received
6.1 A report on work to manage and improve teaching accommodation and facilities (E 2012 06)

Noted

Start of term
6.2 The start of term process went very well, with the online timetable system embedded into the process and far fewer complaints and questions than in previous years. A significant number of queries this year were simply affirmations of what the students already knew, or requests for directions.

6.3 There were some courses on which students were often not enrolled on modules by the start of term, such as Computer Science in which module choices were not required until later in the term; in these cases online timetables were not available.

6.4 Far more staff seemed to be making use of the online staff timetable function, and this was helpful.

6.5 The Conference and Space Planning Manager thanked all the staff who helped out with the start of term as their support was really useful.

Venues
6.6 User surveys on teaching venues were conducted in terms 2 and 3 of 2011-12. Based on feedback, Shakespeare College would no longer be used, and had been replaced by MIC, a hotel near Euston Road.

6.7 Members noted that there had been some complaints about the facilities in Westminster Kingsway; it was planned that another user survey would be conducted shortly. It was agreed that as more surveys were carried out comparative data would be presented so that the Committee would be able to monitor improvement. It was also noted that the opening of the Stratford building would inevitably involve some teething problems, and surveys of student opinion would then be very useful.

6.8 It would be useful to circulate the survey data among the Assistant Deans and Assistant School Managers, or to publish it on the intranet, to present objective information about how the students experienced the buildings as well as the staff.

Action
6.9 (JT) Refine the results of the survey for publication.

6.10 According to the survey, both the expectations and experience of catering were very low. It was noted that some facilities used by the College simply didn’t have any catering provision, although the survey results would be useful to present to venues which did have catering which was however not living up to student expectations. Although catering was made more complicated by the large variety of different accommodation that was in use by the College, an improved student experience of catering facilities should still be a goal.
6.11 A disability satisfaction survey had been carried out. The School of Pharmacy had received the lowest ratings, and this feedback would be discussed with them. It was noted that Room Bookings did try to allocate classes containing students with known disabilities to rooms in College rather than external venues, but that information on students’ disabilities was not always available.

6.12 It was also noted that several booked rooms had been found to be empty over the course of one week. Further investigation of these rooms had allowed some long term bookings to be released as it became known that occurrences of modules had been cancelled. It was noted that it was important that Room Bookings were kept aware when rooms would no longer be needed, as the more accurate data on room usage that was available, the more teaching would be able to be accommodated on the main site.

Space Management
6.13 It was now possible to report on the college Estate by square meterage by department and by school. It would be desirable to be able to report by staff as well, but this was a bigger task that would take a longer period of time.

Digital Signage Project
6.14 The four main basement lecture theatres in Malet Street now had digital signage installed, and six more would be installed in the most prominent rooms over the coming weeks.

6.15 These signs helped to make things clearer for students in the event of timetable changes etc.

6.16 Having implemented this project placed the College in a strong position to move forward with similar projects in Stratford, and also possibly in Friends House to allow collaborative premises to have Birkbeck signage when appropriate.

6.17 It was agreed that the Vice Master and the Conference and Space Planning Manager would hold further discussions on how the space in the new building in Stratford would be used.

7  ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE
Received
7.1 A note on the development of the Estates strategy (E 2012 07)

Noted
7.2 A team of consultants had been engaged in producing a feasibility study and master planning exercise for the development of an estates strategy for the Bloomsbury campus. A report of their finding and recommendations was being drafted, and would be circulated to the members of the Estates Committee.

7.3 The feasibility study identified some sites with potential for development, and set out a range of alternative scenarios for the development of each of these sites. Once the full report had been issued, if the College decided to proceed with one or more
projects, then further consultation with Senate House, Camden planning department and local conservation bodies would be necessary.

7.4 A full Condition Survey of the College’s buildings and services was being commissioned, to inform planning for the long term maintenance and refurbishment of the estate.

7.5 Members heard that the Master planning exercise was a longer term plan, and would not supersede improvements to other parts of the estate in the short and medium term.

7.6 It was noted that Schools considering improvement projects should be thinking about how they could work with the fundraising team to raise money to contribute to the costs.

Action
7.7 (Executive Deans) Bring proposals for short and medium terms Estates projects to the next Estates Committee meeting.

8 UNIVERSITY SQUARE STRATFORD
Received
8.1 A report on the University Square Stratford project (E 2012 08)

Noted
8.2 An Operational Management Group had now been set up, with the Chairs of each sub group meeting monthly to facilitate decision making in areas of cross correlation.

8.3 Good progress continued to be made with the construction of the building, which was in week 59 of the 85 week programme. A seven day delay was currently reported to the overall programme, which was not expected to pose a significant threat to the anticipated handover in May.

8.4 The concrete frame was now 95% complete, and a ‘topping out’ ceremony had been held to mark the completion of the substructure. Work was now underway on making each floor watertight, and internal installation of mechanical and electrical services.

8.5 A policy for the sum of £165K had been taken out to address the issue of insurance protection against potential claims for breach of Rights of Light.

8.6 A total of £276K of design changes were being considered through the Change Control process, including the provision of digital signage to teaching rooms, cubicles in the Male toilets to allow for possible future conversion to future use, lighting infrastructure for the UEL IPAD studios, a Mac Comms room for use by UEL and the installation of IT infrastructure in room 1.16 to allow for future use as a PC teaching room. Funds were currently retained within the construction budget to meet these costs if the changes were approved.
8.7 It was suggested that the Harvard-style (semi-circular) lecture room should be relocated to the First Floor, and an additional 20-person meeting room be provided on the Ground Floor. This would increase the flexibility of room use by Birkbeck, and the cost was currently being assessed by the contractor.

8.8 Work had now begun to plan the procurement of the Furniture, Fit-out and Equipment elements of the project (FF&E), and the requirements for staffing the new building. A Space Management Consultant had been appointed to look at the best methods of integrating staff from the two institutions in the same area.

8.9 UEL would lead on the provision of external FM contractors for Cleaning, Catering and Security by inviting FM contractors working for UEL to submit proposals for extending their services to the USS building.

8.10 Birkbeck's fundraising team were working to secure funding for the USS project through philanthropy and private support, and had held a reception at Mansion House to showcase Birkbeck's vision for the new site. The evening was attended by donors, potential donors, key influencers and other networks.

8.11 Donations totalling £28,000 had been received from alumni and friends since the last report; Man Group plc had confirmed a two-year commitment to fund 50 £1000 bursaries for Birkbeck students in Stratford.

9 ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

9.1 An environmental update by the Environmental Manager (E 2012 09)

Noted

9.2 In September 2012, the College achieved the BS8555 Environmental Management System certification, exceeding our own target of achieving the certification by July 2013.

9.3 The College had been short-listed for a Green Gown Award in recognition of our achievements over the last two years. These awards recognised environmental excellence in Higher Education.

9.4 An assessment of sustainability at Birkbeck by Carbon Credentials indicated that the Carbon Management Plan was being implemented across the estate. There had been changes to the use of the college estate that had resulted in a difference between performance and targets, and these changes would be factored in to target setting moving forward.

9.5 The Environmental Manager was due to leave the College in November 2012, and the Director of Planning and Estates was currently finalising the job description for the new Environmental Manager post on behalf of all of the Bloomsbury Colleges.
9.6 The Committee thanked Stephanie Chesters for all her work in Birkbeck during her time as Environmental Manager.

Green Champions

9.7 It was felt that the College was at an appropriate stage to increase staff involvement in environmental activities. It was proposed that 11 Green Champions be appointed, to act as representatives for their Schools or Teams, and provide advice and encouragement on making environmentally responsible decisions in the course of daily activities.

9.8 In order for this scheme to be successful it would be necessary for the College to support the programme and recognise its importance to the College, and for line managers to support staff in time spent on Green Champion activities.

9.9 Members raised issues with some details of the proposal as outlined. For example, the number and proposed distribution of the Green Champions might need to be reconsidered, as the Schools were not the only operational units within the College, and it was possible that they were not the units that used the most energy. It would also be necessary to think carefully about the brief that the Green Champions were given: they should encourage their colleagues rather than have any regulatory capacity.

Approved

9.10 The proposal to appoint Green Champions at Birkbeck in principle, subject to the details being developed by the College Secretary.

Confirmed

9.11 The Terms of Reference and Scheme of Membership of the Environmental Management Group, updated in response to feedback from the last meeting (E 2012 10)

Noted

9.12 The group would develop and monitor the implementation of policies which underpinned the Environmental Policy, including where these policies were the responsibility of other Committees, by checking that plans were in place and being carried out, and monitoring the data to ensure that policies were working.

9.13 Members discussed whether the membership of the Environmental Management Group would be linked with the Green Champions initiative. The Committee heard that the Environmental Management Group would have a higher strategic level function, so the School representatives could but did not necessarily have to be Green Champions.

10 OPERATIONAL ESTATES BUDGET

Received

10.1 A report on the 2011-12 operational estates budget outturn and the 2012-13 budget to September 2012 (E 2012 11A and 11B)

Noted
10.2 The 2012-13 budget would be updated regularly. Thus far it was as expected and showed that the Estates department was well within budget. Estates spending was frontloaded and the current rate of spending would therefore not continue throughout the year.

10.3 Members noted that pay costs had dropped. There was a need to ensure that maintenance staff who could respond to problems were available on a day to day basis, and that knowledge and expertise was not concentrated in a small number of staff. It was noted that work was already underway to reduce reliance on single people for key tasks: a new senior technician was being recruited, and a procedures manual was being compiled.

**Action**

10.4 Carry out a review of resilience within the Estates Department, identifying where knowledge was located with single people.

11 **LONG TERM MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME**

Received


Noted

11.2 A number of fire alarm systems had been replaced as they had deteriorated faster than had been expected and originally budgeted for.

11.3 Members noted that the Conditions Survey accounted for a large percentage of the budget. It was noted that, as well as being a HEFCE requirement, the survey was necessary in order to provide forewarning of large upcoming expenses. The survey was being put out to tender, and it was expected that the costs would come in below the budgeted £100,000.

11.4 Estates and ITS had opted for a card based system to replace keys and manual locks. This would be a cost saving as existing staff identity cards would be used. Some members felt that there should be further consultation on this; it was noted that cards were being trialled in one area at the moment and that there would then be further reports. It was suggested that a paper should be taken to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

12 **DATES OF MEETINGS**

Noted

12.1 Dates of the Spring and Summer term meetings:
- Thursday 31 January 2013 at 2.00pm
- Thursday 23 May 2013 at 2.00pm