BIRKBECK
University of London

MINUTES OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE

1 February 2012

Present:
Professor David Latchman (Chair), Professor Philip Dewe, Professor Hilary Fraser,
Professor Nicholas Keep, Professor Philip Powell, Professor Patricia Tuit, Professor Miriam
Zukas, Mr John Biggs,

In attendance:
Mrs Katharine Bock – Head of Governance and Corporate Support, Mr Richard Evemy,
Partnerships and Project Manager, University Square Stratford, Mr Alan Fisher, Operational
Estates Manager, Mr Keith Harrison – College Secretary and Clerk to the Governors, Mr
Tom McCartney – Health and Safety Officer, Mr David McGhie – Director of Planning and
Estates, Mr Malcolm Pearson – Estates Project Manager, Mr Mark Pimm, Disability 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 Manager,

12 MINUTES
Confirmed:
12.1 The Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 31 October 2011.

13 REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Noted:
13.1 F&GPC’s receipt of the Report of the Estates Committee following its last meeting.
(E 2011 10)

14 ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE
Considered
14.1 An update on implementation of the Estates strategy. (E 2011 11)

14.2 A report on Estates capital projects (E 2011 12)

Noted

Current projects
14.3 Earth Sciences had moved into their new home on the sixth floor of the main
building, having moved out of accommodation rented from UCL.

14.4 A new project would be initiated to upgrade Crystallography facilities following
confirmation of a £2M grant from the European Commission for Professor Helen
Saibil’s work on mechanisms of disease and immunity.
14.5 The Estates team continued to evaluate options with the School of Business Economics and Informatics for their postgraduate research student facility.

14.6 A scheme for an improved front of house was being developed for the School of Arts at Gordon Square. The resource would come from a combination of core funds and donations.

14.7 The School of Law’s new Institute for Criminal Policy Research had moved into refurbished space at 18-20 Gower Street.

14.8 The initial programme of work for the School of Social Sciences History and Philosophy at Russell Square had finished. The possibility of further work funded by the next phase of capital budget would be reviewed. There were several options for relocation of staff in Gower Street and Russell Square. The Committee noted the need to co-locate department staff where feasible.

14.9 In the main building, the large basement lobby adjoining the large lecture theatres had been refurbished with a new carpet. Work to create a new library store in the basement was taking place. This would free space in the Library, increasing study space.

14.10 There had been feedback on the new main building revolving door. The door had been installed to reduce heat loss and improve energy management as well as conditions in the ground floor public areas. While the lobby and student centre were now much warmer, users had expressed frustration at slow and intermittent access.

Agreed

14.11 To ask Estates and Facilities to re-evaluate of the configuration of the door, to improve its performance.

Note
Following the meeting, the proximity sensors and base were reconfigured and the door is now performing more reliably.

Noted

Budget

14.12 There was £12.3M available for current and future projects of which £3.5M was earmarked for Stratford and £6.1M allocated to current projects. Following the Autumn term report, the budget heads for completed projects had been closed. The current projects were £138K over budget but further savings were expected to be recouped from the main building roof chiller work, where the cost of remedial work would be claimed back from the contractor.

Long term plans

14.13 Estates Committee also noted that preparations were being made for the master planning exercise intended to increase and enhance teaching and learning space. The Schools would be consulted on their aspirations and plans as part of this exercise.
14.14 Birkbeck was a partner in SOAS’ bid to acquire and redevelop Senate House North Block as a teaching and learning space. The University had named SOAS as the preferred bidder and had indicated that the intercollegiate nature of the bid was a factor in its success. SOAS and Birkbeck had agreed that Birkbeck would have exclusive use of the space in the evenings. Once the space was available, it would replace more distant and lower quality rented space that was less desirable for students.

14.15 Future new Estates development initiatives were likely to be partnership-based. Birkbeck was well placed to collaborate with organisations that wanted teaching and learning space in the daytime. The College would be emphasizing this in its exploration of further potential partnerships.

14.16 The recent expansion in student numbers had led to a need for larger teaching rooms. At Senate House North Block there would be scope for 50-60 person capacity rooms; and the College would be participating in the planning for refurbishment, seeking to ensure a good fit between the developed space and our teaching requirements.

14.17 The need for a 300+ person capacity lecture theatre space had already been identified and discussed. College officers had commenced discussions with Friends’ House on Euston Road, whose large lecture theatre was already used by the School of Law, on a potential contribution to refurbishment in exchange for input to the design and guaranteed use in the future.

14.18 Options and costings for further Estates work were being developed. There was a need to balance short term aspirations, including for teaching space and consolidated accommodation for academic teams, with long term considerations including developments from the master planning exercise; potential changes in student numbers when the new fee and funding system started in 2012-13; and the continuing impact of the economic downturn.

**Agreed**

14.19 To revisit the Estates strategy and confirm the next phase of the programme at the Summer term meeting.

15 **TEACHING SPACE**

**Considered**

15.1 Feedback on Autumn term teaching space. *(E 2011 13)*

**Noted**

15.2 Estates and Facilities had conducted a survey to gather staff and students’ feedback on teaching space provision during the Autumn term. This had confirmed that some venues were less popular than others, mainly on the basis of distance from the College and facilities in the venues. The least popular venues would not be used in 2012-13; instead, space would be hired at Senate House South Block, the adjoining Stewart House and ULU on Malet Street.

**Agreed**
15.3 Future surveys should ask about accessibility of venues and about the accommodation at Stratford rented from the University of East London. It would be helpful to aim for co-ordination between this and other student experience surveys.

16 **BIRKBECK STRATFORD**

**Considered**

16.1 An update on the University Square Stratford building project. *(E 2011 14)*

16.2 The Birkbeck Stratford cashflow report *(E 2011 15)*

**Noted**

16.3 It had been confirmed that the building would be called University Square Stratford. The first stages of construction had commenced with the most obvious sign of development, a crane, appearing on site. The new partnership project manager, Richard Evemy, had taken up his post.

16.4 One of the funding partners, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation, was being wound up. It was confirmed that 2011-12 was the last planned year of funding from LTGDC and that much of its funding had already been drawn down.

16.5 The Committee also noted the opportunity to publicise the new building to the increased numbers of visitors to Stratford during the Olympics. Advertising was being prepared for the building site hoardings.

17 **ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

**Considered**

17.1 A report on energy and environmental management initiatives. *(E 2011 16)*

**Noted**

17.2 The report covered energy emissions, travel, waste, procurement, recycling and biodiversity indicators. The overall picture compared with the previous year was positive, including ten improved, four static and two deteriorated indications.

17.3 Although energy emissions per student were following a downward trajectory overall, there was a relative increase in the per student indicator between 2008-09 and 2009-10. This reflected the temporary drop in student numbers that followed the Government’s ELQ policy, from which the College had since recovered, rather than an energy management issue.

17.4 Water consumption had increased and the environment team was working on improving the data on consumption so that measures to reduce it could be identified.

**Agreed**

17.5 To make the Environmental Management Group a formal working group reporting to the Estates Committee.

18 **OPERATIONAL ESTATES BUDGET**

**Noted**
18.1 A report on budget allocations and expenditure for the operational Estates and Facilities budget (E 2011 17)

18.2 The Committee was satisfied with the report.

19 ESTATES MANAGEMENT PROJECTS
Considered
19.1 A note on the development of management information on space and enhancement of the process of defining and agreeing Estates projects (E 2011 18)

Noted
19.2 An initiative to improve information on space and the definition and management of space projects had commenced. This would include creation of a space and occupancy database, with dimensions, CAD drawings and occupancy information derived from an informal space audit.

19.3 This work had been complemented by a process improvement workshop on the definition and agreement of new Estates projects. The new process would draw on the space and occupancy database and introduce protocols for proposing and agreeing projects.

19.4 Many HE institutions had a space management policy in place, covering teaching space allocation and office provision. Members discussed the interplay between expectations about space provision and the impact of the relative cost of different types of space on the Income Distribution Model (IDM).

19.5 The information in the space and occupancy database would provide more accurate basis for the space charging logic in the IDM. Further development of space charging was being undertaken by the IDM Working Group reporting to the Strategic Planning Committee

20 LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME
Noted
20.1 Progress on implementing the Long Term Maintenance programme 2011-12. (E 2011 19)

20.2 Good progress had been made on the 2011-12 long term maintenance plan. Further work in the plan would be done after the summer term teaching and examinations were concluded.

20.3 Estates and Facilities were preparing to commission a new Estates condition survey. The last full survey was carried out six years previously. Data from the new survey would be used to re-plan the long term maintenance programme for 2012-13 and beyond. Large budget projects would be included in the ongoing capital programme.

21 2012 OLYMPICS
Received
21.1 An update on preparation for the Olympics in July and August 2012.

Noted
21.2 Russell Square would be the base for the global media hub during the Games and media workers would be transported between Russell Square and the Olympics sites by coaches. While this would not cut off the College buildings, it would make access more challenging with increased security, crowding and local daytime road closures expected.

21.3 Schools and central services were making and sharing plans to address both this and the general travel and access disruption expected all over London. This included planning for staff presence and absence, offsite working and technology to support it, alternative working hours; and rescheduling of deliveries, interviews and visits.

22 DATES OF MEETINGS
Noted
22.1 The date of the Summer term meeting:
Tuesday 15 May 2012 at 10.30am.