TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF MEMBERSHIP
Approved
1.1 The terms of reference and scheme of membership for 2014-15 *(E 2014 01)*, subject to minor changes which will be posted online.

MINUTES
Confirmed
2.1 The Minutes of the Estates Committee meeting held on 28 May 2014 (attached).

MATTERS ARISING
All-gender toilets
3.1 The Equalities Committee had written a paper in support of all-gender toilets. The Estates team had identified a toilet on the third floor of the Malet Street building that could be used as an all-gender toilet, and would be working with the Equalities Committee to provide appropriate signage.

3.2 It was agreed that consideration would be given to the best way to include a mix of all-gender and gendered toilets in future estates developments.

Leases
3.3 See minute 10.4 for discussion of Birkbeck’s approach to the length of the lease for the Toddlerlab.

Disability provision in external buildings
3.4 It was noted that there was an individual student who had been having particular issues with Friends House. The student’s School and the Estates Department were aware of the issues and were making all possible efforts to address the problems.

4 REPORT TO FGPC
Noted
4.1 F&GPC’s receipt of the Report of the Estates Committee following its last meeting (E 2014 02)

5 ACTIONS
Received
5.1 An update on progress on actions agreed at previous meetings (E 2014 03)

Noted

Drinking fountains
5.2 The Estates department had surveyed the College’s buildings and had found that the infrastructure made it difficult to put drinking fountains in outside of the toilet blocks. Dedicated drinking water taps had therefore been ordered for all of the toilets in the main building, and the Estates department would look into rolling these out to all College buildings.

Signage and digital signage strategy
5.3 The Estates Project Manager had attended the Disability Committee for a very positive discussion of the College's new signage strategy. She would meet with the Disability Services Manager for further consideration of the best way to take all students' needs into account when developing the new signage strategy, and report back to the Disability Committee.

University of London Estates strategy
5.4 The Disability Service Manager had put access issues on the University of London campus onto the agenda of the Bloomsbury Colleges disability group.

6 START OF SESSION
Received
6.1 A report on the start of the 2014-15 session (E 2014 04)

Noted

6.2 There had been a successful start to the session in terms of the organisation and location of classes, with most students arriving having seen their online timetables and fewer needing help and directions compared with previous years.

6.3 The current lecture recording and attendance monitoring projects as well as international student visa compliance regulations were putting increasing demands on Birkbeck’s classroom space. Several classrooms had been repurposed for office and research space and half of the College’s students were attending class in externally hired venues this year.

6.3 The classroom user survey indicated general satisfaction with one exception: Mary Ward House, where there had been problems with the audiovisual facilities, set up times and late notice room changes. Although potential alternative teaching venues
for next year were under consideration, College officers are working with Mary Ward staff to resolve matters because the venue had significant advantages: it was close to the College, fit with the three term learning examination pattern, had several large rooms, and had an educational use planning classification which allowed us to teach international students on Tier 4 visas there. The discussion would be escalated to the Mary Ward Trustees if necessary.

6.4 It was agreed that the issue of provision of accessibility measures such as induction loops and appropriate chairs should be raised in the initial stages of negotiations with new venues, although the Committee heard that whenever possible disabled students were accommodated in Birkbeck classrooms where there was more control over the facilities provided.

6.5 There had been some challenges in Friends House where the School of Law taught its classes. Significant delays in a major building programme had an impact on the quality of the space in the early weeks of term. Friends House were working to resolve these issues. Members discussed the way that rooms were allocated for the School of Law, and heard that when the current room allocation system was set up it was felt in Law that School administrative staff would be better placed than Room Bookings to allocate the rooms, due to their knowledge of the staff and students involved. The Deputy Dean of the School and the Director of Commercial Services and Estates Development would discuss the room allocation for next year as early as possible. The Disability Services Manager noted that particular administrative staff in the School of Law had excelled in their efforts to ensure that disabled students in the School of Law had appropriate venues for teaching.

6.6 It was noted that there had also been some administrative issues with UCL since Birkbeck’s rental agreement with them had changed.

**Action**

6.7 (JT) Send a short briefing to the Master outlining the volume of rooms that Birkbeck rented from UCL and vice versa.

7 FINANCIAL PLANNING

**Received**

7.1 A paper on financial planning, approval and reporting for estates and capital projects *(E 2014 05)*

**Noted**

7.2 Under the existing arrangement for financial planning of estates projects, the Committee approved and oversaw £1.5M-£1.7M of Estates project work annually. At the end of the financial year some of this was capitalised and some added to the revenue budget, with a potential unplanned impact on the surplus deficit position.

7.3 The proposed new arrangement was to define in advance an annual Estates project revenue budget and capital budget, with the expectation that projects estimated to cost more than £200K would be allocated from the capital budget. Projects estimated to cost more than £1M would be referred to Governors for approval. Members asked for this threshold to be aligned with the definition of major projects referred to the Audit Committee for monitoring.
7.4 Members noted that, while this proposal would assist financial planning, it would not always follow that projects costing less than £200K were classed as revenue and projects costing more than this were classed as capital. There would be a need to continue to plan and prioritise the Long Term Maintenance programme as well as improvement projects; and occasions when high cost maintenance work would need to be planned for.

7.5 The Committee asked for some examples of how recent Estates work would be treated under the proposed new arrangements to be added to the document, to illustrate how this would be managed.

**Recommended to F&GPC and Governors for approval:**

7.6 A revenue project budget for 2014-15 of £700,000 on the basis that this could be included without detrimental impact to the current forecast level of surplus;

7.7 That a capital project budget of £1,000,000 is set aside to facilitate major estates projects recommended by Estates Committee. This budget will be reported regularly to and reviewed annually by F&GPC and Governors, and cannot be exceeded without prior approval;

7.8 All estates projects anticipated to cost in excess of £1,000,000 to require specific approval from F&GPC and Governors in advance;

7.9 That the Governors’ Statement of Primary Responsibilities, the terms of reference for Estates Committee and F&GPC and the Financial Regulations should be updated to accommodate these changes.

8 **ESTATES PROJECTS 2013-14**

Received


Noted

8.2 Work on Phase 1 of the Clore reception and basement refurbishment had been successfully completed and the remodelled reception area was in use. As tenders had been received indicating that Phase 2 of the project would go above the agreed budget, this work would be re-planned and presented to Estates Committee for consideration alongside other bids for 2014-15.

8.3 A new approach to delivering signage was adopted this year. A full consultation and implementation programme had been conducted in Russell Square for the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy with positive feedback. Having learned lessons from initial efforts it was agreed that each future signage project would be individually tendered to ensure best possible value. Approximately £45K would therefore be released from the £100K signage budget, to be replaced by a series of area specific projects. The signage work would include consultation with the Disability Services Manager and the Disability Committee to ensure best practice on accessibility and the use of Braille.
8.4 One approved project had been put on hold during the summer period. Design and infrastructure issues were discovered with the School of Science Petrology lab project which would have put it significantly over its budget. The College had since made a bid to HEFCE for STEM (Science, technology, engineering, mathematics) capital funding which, with College match funding, would provide the means to take forward a revised scheme in this area as part of the 2014-15 programme. The outcome of the STEM capital funding round would be announced in December.

8.5 The Deans of the Schools of Arts and Social Sciences, History and Philosophy noted that they were pleased with the quality of the external work that had been done on their buildings in Gordon Square and Russell Square, and thanked the project team for completing the work on time. The work that remained to make good on the inside of the buildings would be completed shortly.

9 **ESTATES PROJECTS 2014-15**


   Noted

9.2 The process for project development and approval for 2014-15 projects. This had been circulated to the Deans and the feedback that had been received in advance of the meeting would be taken into account.

9.3 Estates and Long Term Maintenance projects would be considered in parallel. Schools and professional services departments should submit initial proposals by 21 November. The Committee would confirm projects to proceed to full design in February and, following this, would agree budgets in May.

   **Lift replacement at 30 Russell Square**

9.4 The passenger lift at 30 Russell Square was at the end of its life and needed replacing. The lift, which was installed by the University before the building was leased to Birkbeck, had broken down continually over the last year and sourcing parts for repair had been difficult.

9.5 As the lead time for the new lift from design, tender and implementation would be 28 weeks, with the installation time taking 13 weeks from start to completion, Estates Committee would need to approve its replacement ahead of considering other proposals for summer 2015 work next term.

   **Approved**

9.6 The replacement of the lift at 30 Russell Square, which was estimated to cost £124K including professional fees and VAT.

9.7 Members asked if the lift could be redesigned to accommodate electric wheelchairs, but heard that it would not be possible to get planning permission for this as it would impinge on the staircase, making the building non-compliant with building regulations. The College tried to limit the impact of this by avoiding assigning classes that included students who used electric wheelchairs to rooms accessed by the lift.
Birkbeck expected to have vacant possession of the house at 7 Bedford Square by February 2015. As reported last term, the recent Long Term Maintenance survey identified a need for substantial remedial works in the house, including replacement of the passenger lift and air-conditioning system, and remedial work to the roof, basement and windows. As the building would be empty, this work could be done outside the intensive summer projects programme. The house was Grade I listed, making refurbishment a complex matter requiring expert consultant advice. It was leased from the British Museum, making it one of the small number of College properties not owned by the University of London.

Members heard that the School of Business, Economics and Informatics had proposed using the space to house a new MBA programme. Other Schools should submit any alternative proposals for the space promptly, enabling the design specification for the remedial work in the house to be developed in consultation with the end-user of the space. The Committee asked for proposals to describe the activity that would take place in the building including expected income, as it would be important to ensure that the investment in refurbishment was exceeded by income.

Approved

A budget of £15K to enable a design specification to be developed and costed and a full proposal brought to the spring term meeting setting out options and costs for this work.

Christmas 2014 Long Term Maintenance programme

Following the successful electrical upgrade work in the extension building over Easter 2014, a further phase was being planned for the Christmas break. The Committee heard that this work was essential to prevent the risk of power failure in the extension. The building, which housed several Science laboratories and facilities as well as offices and classrooms, would be closed down on 19 December.

It was confirmed that a comprehensive programme of staff communications was in train. The School of Science had sensitive equipment and experiments in the building and had been fully consulted about the shut-down, with alternative provision made for them. The budget for the work was £120K, but it was noted that the costs of labour over Christmas might have an impact on the final cost.

Action

Ensure that all staff were aware of the planned shutdown.

ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE

Received

An update on implementation of the Estates strategy (E 2014 08)

Noted

The revised space sharing arrangements with UEL in the University Square Stratford building were formally put into effect from 1 August 2014. The College had received
a capital receipt of £3.2M and, on an ongoing basis, made a saving of £250K in annual operating costs.

Toddler Lab

10.3 The Warburg Institute had confirmed support for the College’s proposal to construct a new building adjoining 32 Torrington Square, to house the Centre for Brain and Cognitive Development’s proposed ‘Toddler Lab’ research centre. Negotiations with the University on the terms, length and premium for the land lease were expected to be concluded by the end of November.

10.4 It was confirmed that Birkbeck’s starting point for negotiation would be to ask for a 125 lease on the property, although the University’s standard policy was to allocate 999 year leases to headquarter buildings and 99 year leases to all other buildings. The Estates Committee heard that the University of London’s estates policy was shifting towards an increasingly commercial approach towards leasing, although the College had pointed out that the site in question, because of its location and University use restriction, was not commercially exploitable.

10.5 Further advice had been sought on whether the building proposal could be classified as VAT exempt. The College had asked its tax advisors KPMG to confirm this with HMRC prior to making our planning application.

10.6 College management were now establishing a revised timescale for the project, in discussion with the stakeholders, and confirming the approach to procurement and project management.

Senate House North Block

10.7 The space was being refurbished by SOAS and was expected to be available from September 2016. Members noted that Birkbeck’s participation with SOAS in the bid for the space had been a significant contributor to its success, and that the case should be made to SOAS to acknowledge this by adding Birkbeck’s logo to the hoardings. Birkbeck and SOAS management were discussing adding Birkbeck branding to the site and finalising the long term arrangements for sharing space in the building, including having Birkbeck signage on the classrooms in the evenings.

Action

10.8 (KH, JT) Speak to SOAS management about signage on the hoardings around the development and long term arrangements for the space.

Combined Heat and Power Scheme

10.9 A revised structure had been put into place to consider the options for the future of CHP, involving more senior institutional representation and combining Estates knowledge with representation at Director of Finance level. This task had been separated from the day to day management of CHP and its contractor. In parallel with this, Birkbeck was identifying the full range of options available to it for meeting its energy needs, which included participation in the CHP as well as other options for purchasing energy.

18-20 Gower Street
10.10 The University had offered a three year lease on the space in these buildings used by the School of Law, which was a better arrangement than the previous one year leases. There were some renovations needed which would be included in the negotiations for the lease. Estates Committee heard that, longer term, the College was interested in acquiring the whole building if and when the GP practice currently renting the rest of the space moved out.

Joint feasibility study with UCL

10.11 The focus of the joint feasibility study and collaboration with UCL had been around the provision of laboratory facilities to accommodate a proposed UCL-BBK joint Institute for the Mechanism of Molecular Machines, as well as additional teaching space including a large lecture theatre. Significant progress had been made over the summer in developing the academic and business case for the project. However, following discussions with Camden planning officers, the UCL planning team concluded that only the smallest of the development options would be feasible in planning terms. This option did not meet the space requirements of the project.

10.12 Birkbeck had suggested a broadened scope for the project, encompassing laboratory facilities and larger scale development opportunities linked to collaboration over teaching space. Birkbeck currently rented significant teaching space to UCL during the day, and space from UCL for evening teaching. A potential collaboration might involve the extension building site, the North Heating chamber location or other options in the area. The Master was meeting with the UCL Provost in November to discuss the potential of this collaboration.

10.13 Members noted that all the Schools were in need of more teaching space, and so a plan which improved and increased the teaching space would be very popular.

Estates Strategy

10.14 Birkbeck had accumulated significant cash reserves, having returned consistent levels of operating surplus recently. It was reported that, in the new university funding landscape, estates development required a major level of internal investment. Investment Committee had confirmed a preference for investment in the estate over investment in the money market in the current financial climate. Investment of the College's capital in estates would need to be centred on clear planning, in which agreed principles and priorities were established, and options and opportunities to meet these were considered and validated by appropriate business planning and financial appraisal.

10.15 It was noted that partnerships and collaborations would maximise the College's chances of receiving external funding. The College was also on the ten year run up to its 200th anniversary, which would present an extended opportunity to maximise external and philanthropic support, if the College had clear proposals to present and seek funding for.

11 ESTATES OPERATIONAL BUDGET
Noted

11.1 A report on the 2013-14 Estates and Facilities budget outturn (E 2014 09). It was agreed that this report did not need to be brought back to future meetings.
12 ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

Received
12.1 An update from the Sustainability Manager (E 2014 10).

Noted
12.2 An update on Birkbeck’s estates environmental performance figures for 2013-14 compared with the previous year. The figures showed a slight overall increase in carbon consumption from 2012-13. This was mostly attributed to increased use of electricity, as consumption of heat and natural gas was down by 15% over the same period.

12.3 The Committee discussed the Carbon Management Plan 2014-15 and the five actions that were proposed in order to ensure delivery of the objectives in the plan and embed a culture of continuous environmental improvement:

- School/departmental representation at the Environmental Management Group
- A ‘data champion’ for each department or school to monitor and update their teams on performance figures for their area.
- A key sustainability contact from each department or school to liaise with the Sustainability team.
- Departmental procedures for disposing and purchasing of furniture and other items, including via the Waste Reuse Portal (WARPiT) – https://www.warp-it.co.uk/birkbeck.
- Use of low environmental impact paper

12.4 Members discussed the low environmental impact paper and heard that the Estates department had been using it for a year. It was cheaper than the paper currently used in most departments, although the colour was not as bright white.

Actions
12.5 (OB) Circulate a list of the advantages of the low environmental impact paper and any feedback from the Estates department to the Executive Deans and heads of professional services to encourage them to adopt use of the paper.

12.6 (OB) Discuss EMG representation, data champions and sustainability contacts further with the College Secretary and the Executive Deans to ensure that the most appropriate structure of school representatives and contacts was set up.

12.7 Members noted that there would be cases where energy efficient options did not exist, or where it would not be possible or appropriate to assess energy efficiency such as with large scientific equipment where the information was not available from the manufacturers. It was confirmed that the focus of the Carbon Management Plan was on improving energy efficiency only where there were appropriate options to do so.

Approved
12.8 The Carbon Management Plan 2014-2021
13 ESTATES KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Received

13.1 Updated Key Performance Indicators amended as requested at the last meeting (E 2014 11)

Noted

13.2 An indicator on accessibility had been suggested and future versions of the report would include a measure for this, as well as noting under teaching space the paramount importance of the student experience.

13.3 The student representative asked about the allocation of rooms for classes and seminars, and heard that it was not cost that was the primary driver for this process, but the need to ensure that the maximum number of classes could be allocated rooms. There were particular pressures on the room bookings process at the moment as several external venues were no longer in use, while the required teaching space was increasing. Room bookings attempted to avoid distances between seminar and lecture rooms, but this was not always possible.

13.4 The College would continue to monitor the potential for use of space in the former University of London Union building.

14 DATES OF MEETINGS

Noted

14.1 The dates of meetings for the rest of the session:

- 23 February 2015 at 2pm
- 6 May 2015 at 2pm