1 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF MEMBERSHIP
Approved
1.1 The Committee’s terms of reference and scheme of membership for 2013-14 (E 2013 01)

Noted
1.2 The Chair noted that two new members had joined the Committee, John Lindner the student representative and Daniel Peltz, a co-opted external member.

2 MINUTES
Confirmed
2.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 23 May 2013
3 REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Noted
3.1 F&GPC’s receipt of the Report of the Estates Committee following its last meeting (E 2013 02)

4 START OF SESSION
Received
4.1 A report on the start of the 2013-14 session (E 2013 03)

Noted
4.1 Arrangements for the start of term had gone well. New class timetable reports were enabling students who had not fully completed enrolment, and so did not yet have access to personal timetables, to find their classes.

4.2 The Committee commended the space planning, systems and front of house teams for this smooth start to the term. There had been minimal complaints from colleagues about the arrangements for the start of the session.

4.3 A new system had been purchased to monitor the use of library study desk seats in the Main building library, with the aim of indicating to students where there were free study spaces.

4.4 The most recent teaching venue user survey indicated that users were generally happy with internal and external venues. ULU was less popular in terms of space and service quality but would be retained in the short term because it had rooms with a capacity of 30-50, which met Birkbeck’s requirements. Members heard that in the longer term, Birkbeck would share space with SOAS in the redeveloped Senate House North Block, reducing reliance on external venues. It was confirmed that the North Block specification included large classrooms meeting Birkbeck’s requirements. The North Block was expected to be ready for use for the 2015-16 session.

5 ESTATES PROJECTS UPDATE
Received
5.1 A report on progress in the Estates capital projects programme (E 2013 04)

5.2 The Estates planning schedule for 2013-14 (E 2013 05)

5.3 An update on implementation of the Estates strategy (E 2013 06)

Noted
Estates capital projects programme

5.4 Most work on the 2013 programme had been completed according to plan and within budget. The Committee commended the Estates Project Manager for the very productive work, in particular on the Russell Square project. Members noted the importance of publicising the new café in Russell Square to promote use.

Approved

5.5 Overspends on the project to provide additional psychology basement testing booths; the refurbishment of the 30 Russell Square entrance and café; the ITS moves and refurbishment of rooms 110 and 402; and the provision of a catering prep kitchen in B06/07. Including these overspends, the total expenditure for the programme was expected to come in £17K under budget.

5.6 It was noted that the initial reaction of users to the draught screen inside the front entrance of the Clore building had been mixed. An architect had been commissioned to assess whether further modifications could be made and if work on this moved forward it would be reported as a separate cost. The Committee heard that there would be a review of the issues that had arisen during this project.

5.6 In October 2012 it had been agreed that work should be undertaken to relocate research staff based at Emerald Street as part of the joint Birkbeck-IoE London Knowledge Lab initiative once the REF submission was complete. Discussions were now being held with the Department and School with a view to agreeing the relocation plan. The Committee noted that funds would need to be allocated to this work, and that the provisional estimate of costs was in the range of £60K-£80K. The firm figures would be approved by Chair’s action.

Estates planning schedule 2013-14

5.7 Members noted the new schedule for approving the capital projects programme for 2014-15 which aimed to ensure that planning, scoping, costing and obtaining planning consent for the summer projects could happen in good time, as the main period for carrying out the work was concentrated in the few weeks between the summer examinations and the start of the autumn term.

Estates strategy update

Toddlerlab

5.8 Negotiations were continuing on the design of the proposed new Toddlerlab building on Torrington Square. £0.8M of funding from the Wolfson Foundation and £1.3M from the Maurice Wohl Charitable Trust had been confirmed. The balance of funds needed to complete the project would be contributed by the College; this was expected to be at least £0.9M.
5.9 Before reaching a decision on lease of the site to Birkbeck, the University’s Trustees were considering an objection raised by the Warburg Institute, that the new building would reduce the natural light available to their building. It was noted that conclusion of this matter might be delayed because the University and the Warburg were also in negotiations over a separate issue. Definition was needed on the impact to Birkbeck of reducing the floorspace in the planned building and the extent to which the Warburg’s own sun shades were obscuring the light.

5.10 The Committee asked the Estates team to compile a full analysis of the information on the light issue and the planning options available, before further discussion at the University of London Trustees meetings. Peter Zinkin would also look at the site and the plans and give his advice.

**Joint feasibility study with UCL**

5.11 This was taking place to assess options for a building to accommodate joint Structural Biology activities on the North Heating Chamber site on Torrington Square, a possibility identified in the Birkbeck estates Master plan produced last session. Deloitte had been appointed to act as consultants. The building was strategically attractive as a joint venture with UCL, had the potential for including a large lecture theatre and would be both a platform for fundraising and for College investment in developing the estate and opening up possibilities in relation to any future replacement of the main building extension.

5.12 The University, following its usual procedures, had asked other Colleges to express any interest in using the site before entering into lease discussions. It had received two expressions of interest.

**Bloomsbury Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system**

5.13 The joint Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system, run with SOAS, the Institute of Education and Senate House, was at the end of its useful life. The partners had been evaluating different options for replacement, assisted by consultants, with a view to identifying a cost- and carbon- effective way forward that would ensure flexibility to expand capacity in the future if more buildings needed to be added. Members noted that the University of London was also interested in whether this issue could fit into its shared services agenda.

5.14 The committee heard that at present Birkbeck did not draw electricity from the CHP. Doing so might be a more energy efficient option for the future, as could including satellite buildings such as the Russell Square terrace into the next system.

5.14 Estates Committee asked for further information on Birkbeck’s options for replacement, in and out of the CHP model, to be considered at the next meeting.

6 **ESTATES BUDGET**
6.1 A report on the 2012-13 Estates and Facilities budget outturn (E 2013 07)

Noted

6.2 There was an overall saving of £0.6M compared to the budget. Room bookings income was £400K higher than anticipated and a rates revaluation, together with income from the shop and catering outlets, also contributed to the good outcome. The Committee commended the Conference and Space Planning Manager for the positive outcome for room bookings income.

7 LONG TERM MAINTENANCE

Received

7.1 The Long Term Maintenance programme for 2013-14 and the Long Term Maintenance plan for 2014-15 onward (E 2013 08)

Endorsed

7.2 The Long Term Maintenance programme for 2013-14.

Noted

7.3 The recent condition survey had identified the required work on the estate and broken it down by building and timescale to produce an outline plan of work and costs over the next five years.

7.4 Members noted that a large amount of the high priority work identified was on the main building extension. There was a need to consider how much investment it was sensible to make in the extension, where the electrical and other infrastructure was now seriously aged, when the College was also contemplating the possibility that in the long term the extension would need to be replaced.

7.5 The Committee asked to see an options appraisal at the next meeting, making a distinction between work required for safety and to ensure continuation of services and facilities and work representing a longer term investment. The options appraisal should include consideration of disaster management plans.

7.6 Members asked how the outcome of the condition survey would integrate with the normal projects schedule, and heard that there were several areas of overlap. Decisions on Long Term Maintenance proposals and bids for capital funded projects would continue to be driven by value for money concerns.

8 BIRKBECK STRATFORD

Received
8.1 A report on the University Square Stratford building project (E 2013 09)

Noted

8.2 The building was now occupied and had opened to the public on schedule with relatively few teething problems. There had been small issues with the lifts and building signage which had now been addressed.

8.3 The project was currently £1M under budget. The contractor had issued a claim for additional costs after project ran over time. The project’s cost consultants were negotiating a settlement and there was contingency provision set aside for this. The land lease with Newham Council was finalised and ready to be signed.

8.4 Governance arrangements had changed to reflect the start of regular operations in the building. The Joint Management Group, New Build and Operations, Facilities Management and Student Experience groups would be replaced by a Management Board and an Operational Management Group.

8.5 The Committee discussed how Birkbeck should now formulate its long term academic strategy for operating at Stratford, with the involvement of the Schools. This would require ongoing negotiation with UEL. The Committee asked the Executive Deans to discuss the issue with the space planning team and to review and re-present lists of courses that could be delivered at Stratford. Colleagues were also encouraged to hold meetings at University Square Stratford as appropriate.

9 ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Received

9.1 A report on energy and environmental management (E 2013 10)

Noted

9.2 The report focused on energy consumption data. The primary measure was carbon emission. The College's carbon footprint had increased by 20% over the last five years, largely accounted for by an increase in the number of buildings, including movement of activities from Senate House North Block where the energy consumption was attributed to the University, to Birkbeck-owned buildings where the energy consumption was attributed to the College. Over this period student numbers had increased by 14% and the number of students and visitors using the buildings in the daytime had increased dramatically. Members asked for more detailed analysis of the causes of the changes to carbon footprint in the commentary to the report.
9.3 HEFCE had confirmed that the College was within the parameters for carbon emission, waste production and water consumption defined in the Capital Investment Framework funding scheme.

9.4 There was nevertheless a need to accelerate the College’s efforts to reduce carbon emissions, and a new Carbon Management plan was being developed to achieve this. It was noted that the targets going forward should be both inspirational and achievable. The Committee would continue to monitor progress in this area.

10 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
Noted
10.1 Birkbeck had joined a group of institutions expressing an interest in a shared Facilities Management service co-ordinated by the University of London which could make significant cost-savings.

10.2 The College would carry out its own risk assessments and appraisals before moving forward with this group.

10.3 It was confirmed that Birkbeck’s involvement was on the understanding that the staff involved would be paid the London Living Wage, and that there would be scope for devoting some of the savings generated from VAT offset towards improving terms and conditions for staff.

11 DATES OF MEETING
Noted
11.1 The dates of the Spring and Summer term meetings:
- Tuesday 25th February 2014 at 10am
- Wednesday 28th May 2014 at 2pm