BIRKBECK
University of London

MINUTES OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE

19 January 2010

Present:
Mr Keith Harrison (in the chair), Professor Hilary Fraser, Ms Victoria Hunt, Professor Nick Keep, Professor Philip Powell, Mr Rob Park, Professor Patricia Tuit, Professor Miriam Zukas.

Apologies for absence:
Professor David Latchman (chair), Mr John Biggs, Professor Philip Dewe.

In attendance:
Mr Philip Cowling - Director of Estates and Facilities, Mr Malcolm Pearson – Estates Project Manager, Ms Elizabeth Whitehead - Facilities Manager, Mr Tom McCartney - Safety Officer, Mr Mike Devereux – Management Accountant, Mr Terry Andrews - Income Accountant, Mr Mark Pimm - Disability Co-ordinator, Mrs Katharine Bock - Deputy Clerk to the Governors.

18 MINUTES
Confirmed:
18.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2009.

19 REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Noted:
19.1 F&GPC’s receipt of the Estates Committee’s Report and the consequent decisions of F&GPC. (E 2009 12)

20 ACTION SHEET
Noted:
20.1 Action taken on decisions made by the Estates Committee. (E 2009 13)

20.2 The plan for main building lift replacement involved work over the summer vacation, to have the new lifts ready by the beginning of the autumn term

21 BIRKBECK STRATFORD
Considered:
21.1 An update on progress in the Stratford campus building initiative. (E 2009 14)

Noted:
21.2 In December, the University of East London (UEL), together with Birkbeck, had successfully bid for a further £4M grant from the HEFCE Strategic Development Fund.

21.3 Birkbeck’s Governors had delegated authority for the decision to proceed with the project to a group of senior Governors.
Note: The group of senior Governors subsequently confirmed that the project could proceed and this was reported to the Governors on 18 March 2010.

21.4 Subject to Governors’ approval and receipt of the formal award letter, the necessary elements were in place for the building project to go ahead. The cost of the project would be shared as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birkbeck</td>
<td>£7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEL</td>
<td>£14M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEFCE - grant</td>
<td>£7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEFCE – repayable loan</td>
<td>£1M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTGDC</td>
<td>£4M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total funds £33M

21.5 Birkbeck and UEL had agreed to divide their share of the capital cost one-third to two-thirds, reflecting the planned allocation of space in the building. It was proposed that the £1M repayable loan from HEFCE would be funded by Birkbeck and UEL in the same proportions.

21.6 Birkbeck’s contribution of £7M would be funded from a combination of sources including fundraising, capital grant and cash balances/reserves. £2M was available from the current capital programme budget and it was anticipated that a significant amount of the remaining balance would be resourced through fundraising. Discussions with two potential donor organisations were taking pace.

21.7 Noting that some of the funds earmarked for Stratford were from the HEFCE Capital Infrastructure Framework (CIF) allocation, Estates Committee discussed the risk of clawback following recent announcements of HE funding cuts. It was reported that much of the CIF funding for Birkbeck’s capital programme had already been drawn down from the funding council, making clawback unlikely.

21.8 A design brief for an 8,300 metre² building at Stratford had been developed. The next stage would be pre-construction and it had been agreed that UEL would act as lead partner, although all decisions relating to the project would be made jointly. A Project Board chaired by Birkbeck’s Director of Estates would meet on a regular basis to oversee design and construction.

21.9 Negotiations were under way to confirm the appointment of the design team led by Make architects, cost consultants Gleeds and project managers Gardiner and Theobald. The plan was to secure planning consent in August 2010 and hand over the completed building in time for the 2013-14 academic year.

21.10 Plans for Birkbeck’s dedicated space in the building included seminar rooms, IT teaching rooms and library resource areas. Schools would be consulted on the facilities and design of the building.

21.12 Birkbeck and UEL were negotiating a formal co-operation agreement to govern the ownership and operation of the building.
As noted previously, negotiations for purchase of a long land lease from Newham Council were ongoing and a price of £0.75M had been agreed. The detailed Heads of Terms of the lease were now under development with the aim of completing the deal in the early part of this year.

**ACTION:**

21.11 Executive Deans to identify potential requirements for facilities in Stratford, including activities identified during the development of School strategic plans, and discuss them with the Director of Planning.

21.12 Updated building designs to be circulated to the Deans.

**22 ESTATES STRATEGY UPDATE**

Considered:

22.1 An update on developments in relation to Russell Square, Gordon Square and Senate House North Block. *(E 2009 15)*

**Russell Square**

Noted:

22.2 Birkbeck and the Wiener Library were in the final stages of confirming the lease agreement for the Wiener’s accommodation at 29 Russell Square.

22.3 Estates officers had been working with a quantity surveyor on options for the refurbishment of the other houses. The condition of the Georgian houses 27 and 28 made it unlikely that planning permission for a lift would be granted. Instead, a planning application for minor changes to 27 and 28 Russell Square would be made to Camden Council, to provide circa 20 offices in time for the 2010-11 academic year.

22.4 The possibility of carrying out more extensive work in 25 and 26 Russell Square was being evaluated. This could include a lift, common reception area and internal access between 26 and 27, which would increase access to large rooms in 27 suitable for teaching. The benefits of this would be weighed against the costs given that resources were limited; and against the risk that a protracted planning permission process would lead to delays in occupying the space.

22.5 Discussions with Camden's conservation officer on the potential planning application for 25-26 were also taking place. As was the case with the planning application for lift installation in the Wiener’s premises at house 29, these discussions would take in the benefits of accessibility, including wheelchair access; and the need to preserve the historical fabric of the listed building.

22.6 Options were being evaluated and costed and discussions were taking place with the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy who would be the occupants of 25-28 and 30 Russell Square. The Committee noted the need to minimise disruption for School staff and to move them into their new accommodation as soon as possible and at a time which would not disrupt teaching.
22.7 The outcome of these discussions could lead to a revision of the capital programme budget agreed last term. Any variation would be within the overall agreed envelope of £16M. A further report would be made to the next meeting.

**Gordon Square**
Noted:

22.8 Birkbeck had taken possession of the space acquired through the accommodation exchange with UCL previously reported. Over the remainder of the academic year, the heating system would be replaced and the building infrastructure refurbished and, in a sequence of moves, School of Arts staff would be brought together at Gordon Square.

22.9 The work was intended as a long term investment for the Birkbeck estate intended to resolve longstanding issues with the heating at Gordon Square and introduce a more energy efficient system.

22.10 Estates officers and the School of Arts staff were thanked for their consideration and cooperation in planning and carrying out the moves.

**Senate House North Block**
Noted:

22.11 Having given Birkbeck formal notice to vacate Senate House North Block (SHNB) in summer 2009, the University was issuing short-term ad-hoc rental extensions.

22.12 Birkbeck was planning on the basis that the departments of Computer Science and Psychological Sciences would move out of SHNB and into Malet Street accommodation by 31 July 2010. A contingency plan was in place in case electrical failure made it necessary to move out before that date.

22.13 The Master would be discussing the matter of compensation for relinquishing the SHNB space with the University’s Board of Trustees at their meeting on 27 January 2010.

22.14 As an alternative to cash, the possibility of property as compensation had been raised. Discussions related to this were currently focused on the University’s agreement to lease the house at 31 Tavistock Square to SOAS, with the possibility of an agreement for Birkbeck to secure a sub-lease.

**Malet Street**
Noted:

22.15 Discussions with the relevant Schools and Departments on Malet Street relocations were in train. This involved the departments of Geography Environment and Development Studies, Computer Science and Psychological Sciences. These moves would take place after; and were therefore contingent on; moves of Social Science, History and Philosophy staff into Russell Square.

**ACTION:**

22.18 The Director of Planning in consultation with Executive Deans to convene planning groups for staff moving to and from Malet Street.
23   ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Considered:
23.1 A report on energy and environmental management initiatives in the College and a proposed Carbon Management Plan.

(E 2009 16)

Noted:
23.2 The College had secured a £500K interest free loan funding from Salix (a company funded by the Carbon Trust which supports public sector to reduce energy consumption) related to improving the energy-demanding electrical heating system at Russell Square and Gordon Square as well as energy saving enhancements for the new data centre being constructed in the main building basement.

23.3 The Committee discussed HEFCE’s proposed criteria for the next round of CIF funding to be linked to criteria for improvement of the condition of the estate and environmental and energy performance.

23.4 Energy use in the College had increased since 2005 and the Committee agreed that this issue must be addressed. The proposed Carbon Management Plan included carbon reduction targets against a 2006 baseline of 15% by 2012 and 50% by 2020. It was reported that the planned next phase of building work including the work described in 23.2 above should enable the College to meet the first phase of the commitment.

23.5 As well as energy, the plan covered travel, procurement and raising staff awareness of the need to reduce energy use (through use of lighting, lifts, electrical appliances etc).

23.6 This was a major challenge in view of the College’s planned expansion, requiring reductions in energy use at the same time as a planned expansion. Measures to offset this included improving efficiency of use of teaching and office space; alternative teaching patterns including blended and distance learning; and raising student as well as staff awareness of the energy implications of travel.

23.7 As reported at the last meeting, Birkbeck was working with other Bloomsbury Colleges on shared energy and environmental management posts. The Committee heard that an Energy Manager, whose core job was to manage the shared Central Heat and Power contract, had been appointed and that four Colleges had agreed to work together to appoint an environmental manager.

Endorsed and recommended to F&GPC:
23.8 The Carbon Management plan for approval by Governors.

ACTION:
23.9 The Operational Estates Manager to finalise the Sustainable Procurement Plan in consultation with Executive Deans, School Managers and the Service Improvement and Value for Money Unit and re-present it to the Committee for endorsement.

23.10 The Operational Estates Manager to develop costed implementation plans for Carbon Management and Sustainable Procurement.
24 TEACHING SPACE AND MEDIA SERVICES REVIEWS
Noted and endorsed:
24.1 The establishment of Strategic Review projects to review planning and allocation of teaching space and the provision of media services including services in teaching space. Reports on the work of these projects would be made to the Estates Committee. (E 2009 17)

Noted:
24.2 There was a need to consider levels and quality of service and space as well as costs. This was an important factor in the student experience especially as the College was also pursuing a strategy to increase tuition fees.
24.3 Effective consultation with academic staff as users of the facilities and services was also important, as was quality of space and facilities in teaching space hired from other institutions.

25 CAPITAL PROJECTS BUDGET
Received:
A report on allocations and expenditure in the capital projects budget. Work was proceeding within the agreed budgets. (E 2009 18)

26 PROGRESS REPORTS
Noted:
26.1 Estates projects were progressing according to plan and spending was within the agreed budget allocations. (E 200919)

27 LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2009-10
Received:
A report on the Long Term Maintenance programme for 2009-10. (E 2009 20)

Noted:
27.2 Replacement of safety barriers was listed as an item of unfunded high priority work. The Committee heard that the area concerned had been secured and would not accessible until the work was carried out.

28 OPERATIONAL ESTATES MANAGER
Noted:
28.1 This was the last meeting for the Operational Estates Manager, Martin Gummer, who was about to take up the post of Director of Estates at Westminster Kingsway College. The Committee thanked Mr Gummer for his work which had left a lasting positive impact, in particular in improving accessibility of the buildings.

29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Noted:
29.1 The date of the Summer term meeting of the Committee:
• Wednesday 12 May 2010 at 10.30am.