Present:
Professor David Latchman (chair), Mr John Biggs, Professor Philip Dewe, Professor Hilary Fraser,
Ms Victoria Hunt, Professor Philip Powell, Mr Sean Rillo Razcka, Professor Miriam Zukas

Apologies for absence:
Professor Nicholas Keep.

In attendance:
Mr Keith Harrison - Secretary and Clerk to the Governors, Mr Philip Cowling - Director of Estates
and Facilities, Mr Nawaf Ibrahim (Students’ Union Manager), Mr David McGhie - Director of
Planning, Mr Peter Westley – Director of Finance, Mr Martin Gummer - Operational Estates
Manager, Mr Malcolm Pearson – Estates Project Manager, Ms Elizabeth Whitehead - Facilities
Manager, Mr Tom McCartney - Safety Officer, Mr Mike Devereux – Management Accountant, Mr
Mark Pimm - Disability Co-ordinator, Mrs Katharine Bock - Deputy Clerk to the Governors

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF MEMBERSHIP
Received
1.1 The terms of reference and scheme of membership of the new Estates Committee. (E 2009 01)

Noted
1.2 This was the first meeting of the College Estates Committee, which had taken on the
strategic and policy remit of the former Buildings Committee.

Agreed
1.3 To invite F&GPC to confirm the appointment of Mr John Biggs as the independent
Governor member of Estates Committee.

2 MINUTES
Received
2.1 The Minutes of the final meeting of the Estates Committee’s predecessor the Buildings
Committee, held on 12 May 2009 (attached).

3 REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Noted
3.1 F&GPC’s receipt of the Buildings Committee’s final Report and the consequent decisions of
F&GPC. (E 2009 02)

4 ACTION SHEET
Noted
4.1 Action taken on decisions made by the Buildings Committee. (E 2009 03)
Executive Deans were asked to identify an Assistant Dean to act as a contact and liaison point for Stratford.

5 ESTATES AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Noted

5.1 Philip Cowling, Director of Estates and Facilities, would be retiring from the College in 2010. From 1 October 2010, David McGhie, Deputy Secretary and Director of Planning, would take on the leadership role in Estates and Facilities as part of an expanded remit, building on his existing close involvement in Estates matters. The period up until October 2010 would be used to plan and organise for this transition within the Estates team and to consider continuing support for the significant changes taking place in the Estate over the coming years.

6 ESTATES OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Considered and agreed

6.1 Estates objectives and linked performance indicators for 2009-10. (E 2009 04)

Noted

6.2 Broad objectives had been identified, intended to reflect the planned Estates activities during the year including refurbishment and relocation to provide a focal point for each of the five new Schools. These indicators would form the basis of termly monitoring of progress and performance and onward report to F&GPC.

6.3 It was confirmed that signage and identity would be part of the plan, with the intention of creating a clear home and identity for each School.

7 TEACHING SPACE

Noted

7.1 Birkbeck faced an ongoing challenge to secure sufficient space to accommodate its concentrated evening teaching programme. This issue had been particularly apparent at the beginning of the 2009-10 session due to high levels of new student recruitment. The annual spot-check space audit exercise had indicated that rooms were, largely, being fully used compared with reports of under-capacity in previous years.

7.2 To make the most efficient use of space, it would be necessary to improve the management of teaching space in terms of match of anticipated and actual class size to room size; effective communications for amendments and cancellations; and cost effective hire of appropriate quality external space.

7.3 Quality of space was also identified as an important factor in student experience and retention, particularly for programmes with higher fees.

Agreed

7.4 To convene a working group with Assistant Dean membership and a remit to examine and identify improvements to teaching space management. The remit will focus on teaching space rather than the broader scope of the previous Space Management Sub-Committee.

Noted

7.5 A Strategic Review project aiming to improve the efficiency and inter-operability of systems supporting student numbers planning, student records, teaching planning and room allocation was being scoped.

8 RUSSELL SQUARE

Noted
8.1 The College had formally completed the purchase of 27-29 Russell Square and taken possession of the property from the University of London. As part of the arrangement agreed during lease negotiations, the University had paid £120K of compensation for the delay in handing over vacant possession.

8.2 College officers were negotiating the conversion of the letters of arrangement currently in place with the University for rental of 25–26 Russell Square into a long term low cost lease at no cost to Birkbeck other than the College’s legal fees, capitalising on the University’s policy of granting long leases for contiguous properties.

8.3 Birkbeck had agreed a price of £1.325M with the Wiener Library for a 99 year lease of 29 Russell Square and the parties were considering the draft lease document. The College had made an agreement with the Pears Foundation involving a donation of 1.5M, of which £300K would transfer to the Wiener and £600K would be available for capital projects, linked to the establishment of the Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, also to be based at Russell Square.

8.4 The run of houses from 25-30 Russell Square would be the main base for the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy. Consultants had been engaged to develop a scheme for maximising the use of 25–28 through lift installation and, potentially, by linking 26 and 27. Work had commenced on interior refurbishment, a major exercise involving the provision of 100+ offices in which the appropriate balance would need to be struck, as in many areas of the estate, between office space and teaching space.

9 **GORDON SQUARE**
Noted

9.1 As reported last term, Birkbeck had agreed an exchange of space with UCL, giving more continuous space at 39-47 Gordon Square. Gordon Square would become a long-term estate asset and, as with Russell Square, long term low cost leases could be obtained from the University for the run of properties.

9.2 Gordon Square would be the base for the School of Arts and work had begun on interior refurbishment. Work requiring planning permission/listed building consent was being kept to a minimum in the short term to allow the refurbishment to be completed for use by the School. A longer term option for a covered link between Gordon Square and 32 Tavistock Square was also being evaluated.

10 **SENATE HOUSE NORTH BLOCK**
Noted

10.1 Previous negotiations between Birkbeck and the University had established that Birkbeck would leave the North Block and relinquish its right of return and the University would compensate Birkbeck for moving out. The University had issued a notice of eviction for summer 2009 but had not actioned it.

10.2 The focus of discussion had since returned to the appropriate level and nature of compensation due to the College; and whether Birkbeck could be liable for any of the University’s rewiring costs. The matter was being pursued through negotiation between Birkbeck and the University as two constituent bodies of the federal University, in the first instance through a meeting between the Master and Governors and the Vice-Chancellor and members of the University Board of Trustees.
10.3 Birkbeck was planning on the basis of a move out of the North Block in July 2010 and was constructing replacement facilities for Psychology and Computer Science in the Malet Street building.

11 ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Received
11.1 A report on energy management initiatives. (E 2009 05)

Noted
11.2 The Committee’s Terms of Reference include responsibility for environmental policy. It would receive regular reports from the College’s energy management group and advise F&GPC accordingly.

11.3 Future HEFCE capital funding would be linked to achievement of carbon reduction targets. It would be necessary for the College to have a carbon management plan in place. This would be implemented through a combination of consultant input and the shared energy and environmental management posts that were being created through joint initiatives with the Bloomsbury Colleges and other University of London institutions.

11.4 Estates Committee asked to consider a further report on resources required to implement the carbon management plan, savings to be made and capital funding implications.

12 CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

Considered
12.1 A note on the resources available for Estates work, the costs of work already in progress and priorities for further work; and to receive reports on budget allocations and spending
   • for the year ended 31 July 2009.
   • as at October 2009. (E 2009 06)

12.2 A £16M programme of building work supporting Strategic Review restructuring and other College Estates initiatives was proposed. The principal sources of funding were the 2008-11 HEFCE Capital Infrastructure Funding allocation and donor funding.

12.3 In addition to the capital projects previously reported to the Buildings Committee, a £500K allocation was proposed for replacement of the main building lifts over summer 2010. The Committee noted that the success of the lift replacement would have a significant impact on the experience of students, visitors and staff and that effective communications about alternative routes during the replacement work would be essential.

12.4 The Committee heard that the Stratford building project had reached a critical phase with submission of the University of East London’s bid for further funding to the HEFCE SDF Board. Confirmation of the outcome and extent of that award was expected in December 2009, after which it would be necessary for both Birkbeck and UEL to confirm the funding package.

12.5 It was proposed that an initial £2M from the capital budget be set aside towards the next phase of the Stratford building project. The Committee also noted plans to secure further donor funding for Stratford and to maximise benefit from the Government’s matched donation funding scheme, some of which would be allocated to capital projects.

12.6 Estates Committee endorsed investigation of options for constructing a large lecture theatre, noting the resource and space issues were likely to have a limiting impact on this project.
Endorsed for approval by F&GPC

12.7 The capital programme and budget as set out in E 2009 06.

Action

12.8 The Operational Estates Manager and the Disability Services Manager to collaborate on a communication strategy for the period during which the lifts would be out of service.

13 PROGRESS REPORTS

Noted

13.1 A report of progress in Estates projects. (E 2009 07)

9.1 The Committee was satisfied with progress on Estates projects, noting in particular that the My Birkbeck Student Centre had been delivered on time and within the budget and had had a tangible difference to the building entrance. It thanked colleagues in Estates and Facilities for their work in successfully moving the building projects forward within limited resources and timescales.

14 LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

Received

14.1 The end of year report on the Long Term Maintenance programme for 2008-09. (E 2009 08)


Noted

14.3 The budgets included £200K transferred to 2008-09 from the projected 2009-10 allocation to balance the budget and to allow for preparatory work on replacing the Gordon Square heating system. There was an overspend on this work that would be offset against the 2009-10 budget.

14.4 In considering the Long Term Maintenance programme for 2009-10, the Committee noted savings made by agreeing an extended external redecoration cycle for the properties leased from the University. It asked for further details in relation to unfunded work on roof safety barriers and was assured that the area concerned was not accessible and was kept locked; and that the work required would be carried out in 2009-10 if budgets allowed.

14.5 As in previous years, additional funding would be added to the 2009-10 if appropriate and if College funds permitted.

15 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT COMPLIANCE

Received

15.1 A report on work in progress towards compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. (E 2009 10)

Noted

15.2 This would be the final Disability Discrimination Act compliance report. Continuing work to ensure compliance with the Act would be funded via the Long Term Maintenance budget.

15.3 The Committee noted that Russell Square was considered to be the least accessible of Birkbeck’s buildings and that this should be made clear in the planning application for lifts.
16 STUDENTS’ UNION

16.1 Considered
A note on future space and projected activities for the Students’ Union, including a proposal to relocate activities from the fourth floor to the ground floor (E 2009 11)

Noted

16.2 A detailed plan for the relocation of Students’ Union activities, in terms of service provision complementary to College provided services and space required to deliver those services, would be identified and agreed through discussions between Union and College officers. Once the detailed plan had been identified and agreed, a formal proposal would be made to amend Schedule 2 to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Union and the College defining the space allocated by the College to the Students’ Union.

16.3 Estates Committee endorsed the principle that the Union should in future have a presence on the ground floor of the main building.

17 DATES OF MEETINGS

Noted

17.1 Dates for the Spring and Summer term meetings of Estates Committee:
• Tuesday 19 January 2010 at 10.30am.
• Wednesday 12 May 2010 at 10.30am.

Signed…………………………….

Date……………………………..