

**GOLDSMITHS**  
**University of London**

**COUNCIL**

**ESTATES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2010**

**Present:** Mr James Grierson (in the Chair), Ms Bindz Patel (substitute for Ms Rheem Al-Adhami), Mr Michael Dick, Mr Hugh Jones, Professor Alan Pickering, Mr Terry Rosenberg.

**In attendance:** Director of Finance, Head of Capital Projects, Head of Facilities, Head of Residences, Catering and Conferences, Energy and Environmental Manager, Chief Executive of the Students' Union, Head of Corporate Governance and Information Management (Acting Secretary).

**Apologies:** Dr Richard Grayson, Ms Mary Stacey.

**OPEN BUSINESS**

**1 MINUTES**

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2010 be approved, subject to the following amendments to Minute 9:

"(vi) that the College was currently investigating a cycle to work scheme and that there should be no **upfront** cost to the College if such a scheme were set up;

[.....]

(ix) that there were now several recycling and composting areas on campus, and that there was a possibility of **engaging a composting company to purchasing a composter which would be able** to compost the kitchens food waste in around 72 hours;"

**2 NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING PROJECT AND INTERNAL AUDITORS' REPORT**

Received:

- (i) Review of the New Academic Building (NAB) project by Internal Auditor (10-311);
- (ii) Summary NAB Review by the Internal Auditor (10-312);
- (iii) Statement from the Senior Management Team on the audit of the New Academic Building project (10-270),

The Committee noted that the report from the Internal Auditor (paper 10-311) had so far been given only preliminary consideration by Audit Committee at its meeting on 22 June 2010, focusing on the generic issues of investment appraisal and project governance raised by the report. A shortened version, to be agreed by Audit Committee, would be received in the Autumn

term by Finance and Resources Committee and Council. Although the Senior Management Team was accountable for the delivery of projects of this kind, Estates Committee had a strategic responsibility to oversee their work on behalf of Council. The Committee therefore needed to be informed of progress in specific projects.

In discussion the following particular problem areas were highlighted, which had wider significance for other projects of this type:

- (i) Lack of clarity about the initial specification and supporting documentation had made it difficult to assess the value for money offered by the project while it was underway: a specific attempt by the Value for Money (VFM) Group to do this had encountered difficulties.
- (ii) The scenario of becoming committed to major project in an insufficient number of steps, which inhibited the conduct of a properly-informed appraisal of costs, had occurred at Goldsmiths before, but it was observed that there were recognised workable models elsewhere in the public sector for the avoidance of this problem which should be applied in future. Such an appraisal of costs might also be needed at interim stages: in the case of the New Academic Building this ought to have occurred when changes were made in the light of the requirements of Lewisham Borough Council.
- (iii) The continuing absence of a Council-approved Estates Strategy had also contributed to the lack of a proper framework for the College's initiatives in this area, and the Committee saw this as illustrating the wider importance of finalising the development of the Estates Strategy as soon as possible now that the master planning exercise was substantially complete. The New Academic Building Project Board had had an unclear role in project governance, and this had also contributed to the problems which had arisen.

It was further noted that the overall cost of the New Academic Building included a sum of £504K for enabling works, relating to the move of the Human Resources Department.

#### **Resolved:**

- (i) to endorse in broad terms the conclusions of the audit report (10-311) and to welcome the attention drawn to key problems;
- (ii) to receive a report or reports at the next meeting on factual corrections to the audit report (to be prepared by the Head of Capital Projects), the state of the project post-occupancy and lessons learned from the project overall, together with a chart showing the progress of the audit report through the committee system;
- (iii) to give further consideration at the next meeting to appropriate structures for project governance and institutional governance in respect of major Estates projects, and to make recommendations to Council as appropriate.

### **3 MASTER PLANNING PROGRAMME**

Received:

an oral report from the Director of Estates and Facilities.

It was noted that the planned written report was not yet available because of delays due to the development of the capital programme (Minute 9 below refers).

In the meantime, a further meeting had been held with representatives of the Borough of Lewisham, whose overall response to the Master Plan had been very positive. They had suggested that its next version should include more extensive coverage on matters of sustainability (carbon management) and disabled access.

The Committee further noted that preliminary consideration was being given to the use of outside finance and providers for student residences. Estates Committee would be presented with procurement options for consideration should this seem likely to be viable; however potential difficulties included the need to commit to the chosen site for a period of fifty years, despite problems in predicting the long-term need for student accommodation giving the likelihood of changes in patterns of study. The use of an outside provider would transfer risk; however this inevitably also involved a transfer of control, and it might be useful to gather information about the experiences of other institutions with projects of this nature before coming to a decision on whether the approach under consideration was desirable. Ms Patel (President-elect of the Students' Union for 2010) agreed to contact the NUS and Unipol about sectoral experience in this area.

**Resolved:**

to consider, in the Autumn term 2010, a list of options for the potential partnership for student residences.

#### **4 SPACE ALLOCATIONS**

Received:

an oral report from the Director of Estates and Facilities, including the intention was noted to rationalise the space allocated to the Departments of Design, History and Visual Cultures so that all parts of these departments were in the same part of the campus.

#### **5 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

Received:

a report from the Head of Facilities (10-329).

In relation to the cleaning contract, the Committee expressed some concern about the anticipation within the paper that costs should be expected to increase, and drew attention to the importance of the terms of the contract being output-based.

#### **6 CAPITAL PROJECTS AND MINOR WORKS**

Received:

- (i) a report from the Head of Capital projects on progress achieved against capital and minor works projects for the last quarter (10-330);
- (ii) provisional capital budget for 2010-11, from the budget proposal considered by Finance and Resources Committee on 24 June 2010 (10-331);
- (iii) The draft *Policy on Sustainability in Construction and Refurbishment* (10-217R);

- (iv) The draft plan for the Richard Hoggart building forecourt (tabled paper: 10-337).

The Committee noted from paper 10-331 that the Senior Management Team had already made its budgetary proposal to Council for capital projects in 2010-11, which had been approved at the meeting of Council on 29 June 2010. The Committee was concerned that it had not been consulted on priorities for capital expenditure at an earlier stage in the process, and also that there was a lack of background information on the proposals now before it. It was felt that both these factors limited the capacity of Estates Committee to fulfil its strategic role, and that a degree of ambiguity seemed to have emerged in the relative roles of the Senior Management Team and Estates Committee.

The Committee noted that the Senior Management Team intended to facilitate a two-year planning horizon for the approval of capital projects from October 2010 onwards. Members of the Committee supported this in principle, but emphasised the importance of Estates Committee involvement at an early stage.

In terms of the specific proposals before them at the present meeting (paper 10-330), the Committee asked for more information to be provided at the next meeting about the following specific aspects of the topic:

- (i) the need for expensive disability-related adjustments to existing buildings, including an explanation of the scope for reducing the need for these by different management of space usage, while still meeting the needs of people with disabilities;
- (ii) the extent to which works proposed were statutory;
- (iii) the process by which different departments had been invited to make proposals for projects to be included in the plan, and whether they had had equal opportunity to do so.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the *Policy on Sustainability in Construction and Refurbishment* be approved (10-217R).
- (ii) that a special meeting of Estates Committee be held in October 2010, should the meeting scheduled for 26 October 2010 prove inappropriate for the timely consideration of the two-year plan for capital funding.

**7 BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

Received:

a report on the progress achieved in drafting the Biodiversity Action Plan (10-332R);

**Recommended:**

**that the Action Plan be approved by Council, noting that the Plan would be presented to Council for approval as part of a wider package of related measures in the Autumn term.**

## **8 CENTRAL TIMETABLING AND ACCOMMODATION**

Received:

a report from the Administrative Assistant (Accommodation and Timetabling) (10-333).

The Committee noted that a number of improvements had been achieved in this area recently, including an increase in the proportion of requests which could be met, and better predictions of timetable clashes for joint degree students.

It was noted that the Students' Union could usefully contribute the outcomes of their own surveys so that action could be taken by the Estates and Facilities Department on relevant issues; student representatives should also view the sample chairs in the Estates Department.

The Committee asked that papers on this topic submitted to future meetings should include more factual information about the needs of space users where these were known.

## **9 SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING PROJECT**

Received:

an oral report from the Director of Estates and Facilities, from which progress in relation to the signage for the New Academic Building and the Richard Hoggart Building was noted.

## **10 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SUB-COMMITTEE**

Received:

the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Sub-Committee held on 29 April 2010, on which an oral report was received at the Committee's last meeting (10-334).

## **11 FUTURE MEETINGS**

Noted:

that meetings of the Estates Committee in 2010-11 would be held at the following dates and times in Room 110, Deptford Town Hall Building:

Tuesday 26 October 2010, at 10.30am

Tuesday, 8 March 2011, at 10.30am

Tuesday, 17 May 2011, at 2.30pm

Tuesday, 5 July 2011, at 2.30pm

RMH  
June 2010