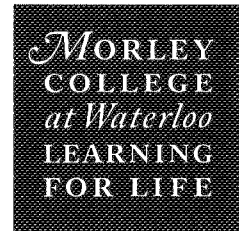


MORLEY COLLEGE LIMITED

PROPERTY STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2010



Present:

Linda Linehan (Chair)
Stuart Edwards
Martin Goffe (Student Representative)
Kathy McLauchlan (Staff Governor)
Jenny Scribbins (Chair of Governors)
Ela Piotrowska (Principal)

In attendance:

Nick Rampley (Vice Principal)

Clerk:

Graham Cooper

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

The Chair welcomed Martin Goffe, recently elected student representative, to his first meeting.

2. Minutes of the joint meeting held on 26 April 2010

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising other than on the Agenda

The Student Representative enquired whether the recent Building Condition Survey had included consideration of potential energy saving measures, and the Vice Principal confirmed that these matters had been addressed by means of a specific Carbon Trust Survey.

4. Capital Development Plan – Phase 1 Progress Update (NR)

The Vice Principal confirmed the Phase 1 projects that had been completed over the summer period, and accompanied Governors on a tour of the College building to review the completed works, as follows:-

- The Music Technology Suite – improvements included completion of the fit-out of the live, control and electronic music classrooms created in 2006, which the Vice Principal noted now enabled the Music Department to update its curriculum and to provide the facilities which Morley's musical heritage and standing implied.
- The new Digital Arts Studio – created to enable the College to modernise its Visual Arts curriculum and to attract learners to a range of new courses.
- IT Classrooms – rationalised to provide greater capacity and better zoning of rooms.
- The Jewellery Studio – relocated, mainly for Health and Safety reasons, and the facility modernised to enable the College to continue to attract learners and not to lose out to other providers.

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Governors remarked on the high standard of the work that had been completed and noted the importance of these projects in supporting the modernisation of the College's curriculum. The Chair questioned whether the height of workstations in the jewellery studio was appropriate to accommodate wheelchair users, and asked that the Committee be provided with feedback on this point.

The Vice Principal advised that the other Phase 1 project that had been completed was the upgrading of the Local Area Network, necessary to replace out-dated equipment and software, to allow additional capacity and to provide better reliability and performance. In expenditure terms, this was the most significant item in Phase 1. Completion of the work had enabled an additional 100 items of equipment (PCs, projectors, printers etc) to be connected to the Network, representing an increase of around 30%, and also provided similar further capacity to support future development.

The Vice Principal confirmed that Wifi had now been installed in the College, as a separate project completed at the end of the last academic year, though this facility had not yet been switched on. Consultation with a focus group of potential users was taking place, to ensure that wi-fi access was provided in as clear and user-friendly way as possible. This might mean that it would be made available on an 'open access' basis. The areas in which wi-fi would be available initially were the common areas, comprising the foyer, library, refectory and gallery. Inevitably, access would also be possible from some classrooms, but whether, in due course, wi-fi would be intentionally made available in all classrooms was something that needed to be considered as part of the College's ILT strategy. The Vice Principal confirmed that wi-fi would be switched on prior to the forthcoming half term.

The Committee noted that the costs of completing some projects had been greater than originally anticipated. Whilst noting that approval of the expenditure was a matter for the Finance and Resources Committee, members commented that it would be useful to be provided with a schedule of actual costs compared to previous estimates, in order that the Committee could fully appreciate the value for money from expenditure and the extent to which any overspend had implications on other aspects of the property strategy. The Vice Principal undertook to provide such a schedule, to be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

Whilst noting the impressive new learning facilities that had been created, the Committee questioned how success in delivering the benefits, as set out in the original business cases, would be measured. The Chair also highlighted the importance of reviewing in due course whether the projects had met the aims set out at the previous meeting, as reiterated in the Vice Principal's paper, namely:-

- i) All expenditure should aim to maximise the quality of the students' experience and the potential for increasing revenue.
- ii) The capacity for flexible utilisation of space should be retained as far as possible in all redevelopment.

Whilst noting that it was still very early to assess the extent of the positive impact of the improved facilities, the Vice Principal agreed to provide a progress update to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Principal and Vice Principal were asked whether there were any learnings from the projects undertaken over the summer that might be relevant to future projects. The Principal commented that planned outcomes had been more quickly achieved in those cases where there had been greatest engagement and consultation with curriculum areas and students. The College did not have the resources to engage consultants to advise on design issues, and very often relied on the expertise of individuals within the curriculum areas. Regrettably, even though opportunities had been provided for students to contribute, in some cases no significant input had been forthcoming. The Principal noted that some difficulties had arisen where changes had been required by curriculum areas during the course of work being undertaken, and the Staff Governor highlighted the benefits that would be achieved from each project manager having a checklist of items to be agreed with curriculum areas at the outset of each project.

Noting all the improvement work that had been completed, both in terms of the speed with which it had been carried out and the quality of the finished work, the Committee congratulated the CLT and staff on what had been achieved.

Actions:-

- i) **Committee to be advised of the suitability of height of workstations in the new jewellery studio to accommodate wheelchair users.**
- ii) **Vice Principal to provide schedule of expenditure compared to original estimates, to be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.**
- iii) **Vice Principal to provide the next meeting of the Committee with an assessment of how the improved facilities are delivering against agreed objectives and targets.**

5. Capital Development Plan – Next Steps (NR)

Outstanding Projects from Phase 1

The Vice Principal updated the Committee on progress relating to the three outstanding projects of Phase 1 that had yet to be undertaken.

a) Upgrading of Telephone Network – An exercise to determine the optimum configuration of a new system would be undertaken during the current term, with a view to the upgrade being completed during the Spring term.

b) Refurbishment of Holst Room – The intention of the planned refurbishment is to improve both the acoustics and aesthetics of the room, which it is considered has the capability to contribute more fully towards the College's curriculum and external profile. The work would need to be undertaken during next summer's recess since it is likely to take longer to complete than the time available at either Christmas or Easter.

c) Provision of External Lighting and Signage – The Committee had previously requested further information regarding the design and specifications of proposed external lighting and signage. Since then, a branding review had been commissioned, the outcome of which would inform the design of any signage. In the meantime, consideration was being given to issues that might arise from the need for lighting to comply with requirements set out by Lambeth Council. The most significant consideration was the potential impact on third parties (e.g. those in adjacent residential flats) arising from the important aim of increasing visibility from the direction of Lambeth North and Waterloo.

The Committee reaffirmed its approval of the above projects, albeit subject to further approval of the detailed specification relating to the external lighting and signage.

Actions:

- i) **Detailed specification and design for external lighting and signage to come to the next meeting of the Committee, along with any planning issues arising.**

New Projects to be added to Phase 1

a) Modernisation of the Ceramics Studio

The Vice Principal advised that in the course of the College's Health and Safety Reviews over recent months, it had become clear that work was necessary to improve the ceramics studio facilities, particularly re-siting of the kilns and the glazing materials, both of which presently constituted significant hazards. The re-organisation of various classroom and office space during the summer 2010 period had provided a solution to the additional space required to address these hazards. Whilst it would not be possible to undertake the improvements until summer 2011, work was already underway to scope the project, with the benefit of tutor

involvement. It was possible that an initial estimate of the scope and the level of expense involved might be available for the Finance & Resources Committee meeting in November, but in any event, a full proposal and business case would be put to the spring term meeting of this Committee. The Committee urged the CLT, in considering changes to the studio, to think not just in terms of accommodating the current curriculum offering, but also how this might develop in the future in order to attract new students, and meeting the two aims mentioned above.

The Committee commended the work being undertaken on this proposal.

b) Renewal of Network Server Hardware.

The Vice Principal reminded the Committee that this cyclical renewal of equipment was included in the Capital Development Plan since it constituted a significant capital outlay, though it did not constitute a property strategy matter. A detailed financial appraisal would therefore be submitted for consideration by the Finance & Resources Committee in due course. The Committee noted progress, whilst urging the CLT to keep at the centre of its planning consideration of how technology is developing.

Action:-

i) Full proposal and business case for modernisation of the Ceramics Studio to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Capital Grant Funding

The Vice Principal confirmed that the College had been successful in its bid for the SFA's Renewal Grant and had received an allocation of £225k. A condition of the funding was that the College would contribute at least two thirds of project costs from its own resources, meaning that to ensure none of the grant is subsequently clawed back, the College would need to have spent a total of £675k on relevant projects by September 2011. In addition to Phase 1 projects already finished, provided that the two outstanding projects are completed, this requirement would be met and the funding secure. Finance & Resources Committee approval for the two outstanding projects was therefore important.

The Chair of Governors highlighted the Committee's difficulty in assessing new projects without being in a position to evaluate the required expenditure alongside other calls on resources from ongoing refurbishment and maintenance of the College estate. She also advised that it would be useful for the Committee to be provided with some indication of the proportion of general classrooms that were considered to be of an acceptable standard and an indication of what the total cost might be to bring all others up to the same standard. The Vice Principal was asked to provide the Spring term meeting of the Committee with an overview, bringing together maintenance expenditure with costs for general refurbishment, new projects such as the Ceramics Studio modernisation and other longer term development initiatives.

Phase 2 Projects

a) Remodelling of the Emma Cons Hall and Drama Studio

The Committee noted that receipt of the Capital Grant funding, whilst allocated to other projects, effectively left the College £225k better off than it would otherwise have been, creating an opportunity to start to look at other projects such as the remodelling of the Emma Cons Hall and Drama Studio, both potential sources of revenue and increased student numbers.

The Vice Principal noted that a provision had already been made in the 2010/11 budget to engage advisers to consider how this area of the College might be upgraded and re-modelled, exploring options and helping the College to define its needs. Planning for improvements was not just a matter of creative and effective use of the space, some fundamental questions had to

be answered first, such as:- Does the College wish to retain a hall of this size? Does this best meet the College's future needs? Is a stage essential? etc. How to improve access to the Drama Studio was also a challenging issue. The Vice Principal advised that a locally based firm of architects had been identified who the CLT believed would be ideal for such a scoping exercise, and that it was planned to approach them during the coming weeks. The Committee endorsed this approach and was keen to see progress. Whilst stressing that the scoping would take some time, the Vice Principal expected this to be completed by the summer term. The Chair and the Committee asked for an update at the spring term meeting, emphasising in the current financial climate that it was essential to move as quickly as possible on this. The Chair of Governors urged the CLT, as part of their planning, to also review ideas put forward by other firms of architects engaged in the recent past.

b) Possible provision of Health & Beauty Suite

In view of time constraints, discussion on this item was deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

c) Improved Access to Art Block

The Vice Principal advised the Committee that options for providing disabled access to the Art Block were being considered, and that this too would be the subject of external advice. The Committee suggested that such advice might be combined with that to be obtained in relation to the Emma Cons Hall. The Committee also noted the College's legal obligations with regard to providing disabled access, and whilst the College was considered to be in a position to demonstrate 'reasonableness' in terms of adjustments it currently makes, all agreed that the College's underlying mission was a fundamental driver for the provision of disabled access.

Actions:-

- i) **Spring term meeting of the Committee to be provided with an overview of proposed expenditure on maintenance, refurbishment, identified projects and longer term initiatives.**
- ii) **Spring term meeting to be provided with an update on scoping work for remodelling of the Emma Cons Hall and Drama Studio, including disabled access for these spaces and the Art Block.**

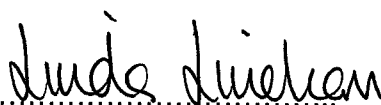
6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Date of next meeting (GC)

The date of the next meeting is 28 February 2011.

Graham Cooper
Clerk to the Governing Body

Signed.....
Linda Linehan, Chair