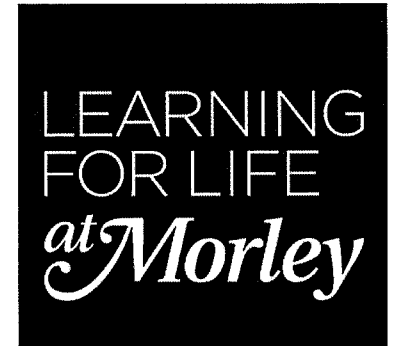


# MORLEY COLLEGE LIMITED

## PROPERTY STRATEGY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2011



#### Present:

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

#### In attendance:

Mike Lake (Governor)  
Nick Rampley (Vice Principal)

#### Clerk:

Graham Cooper (Clerk to the Governing Body)

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Martin Goffe, Student Representative.

The Chair welcomed Mike Lake, recently appointed Governor, to the meeting.

#### 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2011

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

#### 3. Matters arising other than on the Agenda

**Template for use when submitting capital projects for approval** – The Committee noted that a template had yet to be developed. Whilst no new projects were expected imminently, the Committee considered that it would be useful to have a well-developed template available, ready for use by departments when projects do arise. It was agreed that a template would be developed and presented to the next meeting of the Committee for review.

**Action:-** Template for capital project submissions to be developed and submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

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

The Vice Principal provided the Committee with a progress update on Phase 1 projects. He explained that the majority of items, some of which had now been completed, had already previously been approved by the Committee, though with a few changes that had subsequently been agreed by the Finance & Resources Committee.

As part of his report, the Vice Principal provided a schedule of costs for projects within Phase 1. The cost of completed projects amounted to £504k, with estimated costs for outstanding

projects of c.£ 675k, making a total of £1.179M. He explained that this total should be viewed against the amount of £1M that Governors had previously decided that the College could afford to spend from reserves, supplemented by the additional unexpected £267k SFA grant. The Chair recalled previous discussions that the SFA grant might provide the College with a sum of money to start Phase 2 of the Capital Development Plan. Given the current total anticipated cost of Phase 1 projects, it was clear that this would no longer be the case. There was no suggestion that any of the Phase 1 projects should not go ahead as a consequence of this, but it was important for Governors to clearly appreciate that absorbing the additional grant into the financing for Phase 1 projects meant that the commencement of Phase 2 would be wholly dependent upon alternative funding.

### **Completed Projects**

The Committee reviewed current year enrolment data against prior year data, for Jewellery, Digital Design and Music Technology, these being the three main areas where investment in new facilities had been completed during summer 2010. The Vice Principal explained that, due to timing differences, the Term 3 data for 2010/11 was as yet incomplete. Whilst the primary driver for the Jewellery project had been Health & Safety, the Committee expressed disappointment that enrolments show no increase, and were actually marginally down on prior year. Digital Design enrolments for Term 2 had been significantly up on prior year, but Term 3 figures appeared to show a decline, though the Vice Principal stressed that the timing issues associated with a late Easter and late start to Term 3 could be a factor. Further analysis would be required. He also highlighted that enrolments in Music Technology showed slight growth, but that further growth was hoped for over the longer term, with Music Technology Access provision included in next year's curriculum offering.

The Principal advised that the enrolment figures for the three areas discussed needed to be viewed in the context of the College's overall enrolments, which were also falling behind plan. She nevertheless acknowledged the importance of the College achieving a return from capital investment in new facilities, that further analysis would be undertaken, and that the marketing and enrolment processes would be reviewed. The Committee stressed the importance of ownership of targets, not just at department level, but at course/tutor level. Embedding targets within the performance management system, with clarity around accountability and the implications of targets not being achieved, was regarded as crucial to ensuring success.

The Committee emphasised the importance of the rigour of analysis behind all new proposals, including attention to course design and marketing, and an understanding of where new students were expected to come from. The Principal stressed that the College needed to ensure an awareness of changing trends in demand across the curriculum spectrum, and that success would depend upon picking up on and reacting to those trends, in developing the College's own curriculum offering.

The Committee asked that a further update be provided on these three curriculum areas at the next meeting, with the benefit of a full twelve months' activity, including a review of the results against the original business cases and, with the benefit of further analysis, to see what additional lessons might be learned.

### **Outstanding Projects**

The Vice Principal explained that the outstanding projects fell into two categories:-

- a) projects that had previously been identified and had been given approval in principle, but which there had been inadequate time to complete during the 2010 summer recess (upgrading of the telephone network, refurbishment of the Holst Room, external lighting and signage); and
- b) projects more recently identified (upgrading of the ceramics studio, replacement of LAN servers, and the refurbishment of the sculpture studio at Pelham Hall). Added to the

latter was the creation of an extended and additional fashion studio in the Nancy Seear building, but this was not included as part of the Capital Development Plan as it would be funded as a first priority against next year's annual capital budget, rather than from the development reserve.

The Vice Principal's report included a full update on each of the outstanding projects. In reviewing these, the following key points were raised.

**a) Upgrading of the Telephone Network**

Already approved, this work had been scheduled to take place over the Easter vacation, but with the supplier having failed to process the equipment order in time, the work had been re-scheduled for the forthcoming half term.

**b) Refurbishment of the Holst Room**

The Committee noted that the anticipated cost had increased from c£30k to c.£ 38k, due to the scope of works being extended to include removal of the present stage in order to greatly increase the flexibility of the space.

**c) Provision of External Lighting and Signage**

The Vice Principal advised that the new external lighting to the College's main entrance and the directional lighting in the garden had been completed over the Easter vacation. However, whilst plans for illuminated signage to the western façade of the Library/Holst Room had been drawn up and provisional orders placed, Lambeth Borough Council were insisting on the College applying for 'advertising consent' before installation could proceed. A consultant had been engaged to assist the College in making the application, and it was hoped that the work would be completed by the summer.

**d) Modernising of the Ceramics and Sculpture Studio**

These projects, already agreed in principle, had now been combined into a single project in order to gain economies of scale and best value for money. As requested at the previous meeting, enrolment data was provided, indicating that these areas accounted for c.8% of the College's total enrolments, thereby illustrating the importance of the work to bring the facilities up to standard. The Vice Principal advised that tenders had been invited, and that once costs had been fully established, details, together with a timetable for the work, would be submitted to the Finance & Resources Committee for approval.

**e) Renewal of Network Server Hardware**

The Committee once again noted the very substantial planned expenditure on this item, estimated at c.£244k. The Vice Principal provided an update, explaining that the estimated costs were based on a consultation with a specialist supplier. Since then a capacity planning exercise had been commissioned and completed to ensure that the proposal and any successive proposals would provide sufficient capacity for further growth but would not over-provide and incur unnecessary expense. At the same time, JISC had been consulted regarding the approach taken. As well as giving positive feedback, JISC had put the College in touch with another college which had recently renewed their whole IT infrastructure, so that lessons could be learned from their experience, including identification of alternative suppliers. This project remained on course to be undertaken over the summer recess, although it was less time-constrained than other projects, since much of the work could be done during term time and there would need, in any case, to be a period of parallel operating to ensure that the new configuration was working as required.

During the course of the discussion, the concept of 'cloud computing' was again mentioned (having also been discussed previously), and the risk was highlighted that

new investment might over time become obsolete as a result of changes in the use of technology. The Vice Principal explained that some applications, such as Moodle, were already hosted remotely from the College, but that investment in the College's own servers was nevertheless essential. The Committee took reassurance from the advice taken from JISC, and acknowledged that investment in technology would always involve a degree of uncertainty and require an element of judgment, given the uncertain rate of advancement of new developments and concepts. They did not consider that the College should be at the forefront of such change, however, and endorsed the decision to move forward with investment in the new servers. The Vice Principal advised that once competitive bids had been received, a fully costed proposal would be submitted to the Finance & Resources Committee for approval.

#### **f) Expansion of Current Fashion Studio and Creation of Additional New Studio**

The Committee had already previously given its support to this project going ahead. Notwithstanding some of the conservative assumptions, the business case had been a strong one. The Vice Principal advised that he was still awaiting the final specification from the Head of Fashion in order to cost the project. This would go forward to the June meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee for approval, having already been agreed in principle. The project would be funded as a first call on next year's annual capital budget.

**Action:- Further update/analysis in relation to Jewellery, Digital Design and Music Technology to be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.**

### **5. Capital Development Plan – Phase 2 Strategic Developments (NR)**

The Chair summarised the background to the current position, explaining that following the presentation by Black architects at the previous meeting of the Committee, further discussion had taken place at the April meeting of the Governing Body. The Governing Body had endorsed the appointment of Black to undertake further advisory work on the scheme prior to formal tender, subject to the expenditure involved being in accordance with the College's Financial Regulations. The Committee was now asked to consider the resulting design procurement options as set out in a letter from Black dated 6 April, together with the initial scope of works derived from the architects' feasibility study report.

The Vice Principal brought the Committee's attention to the various procurement options set out in the appendix to his paper – 'RIBA Outline Plan of Work – Work Stage Sequences by Procurement Method'. He explained that, having provided advice on various alternative approaches, Black were recommending the 'traditional procurement' approach as the most appropriate given the nature of the scheme. This would involve development of the scheme to RIBA Stage A, in which:-

- the College's needs and objectives would be fully assessed;
- the business case would be documented, covering the financial constraints and impact on the day to day running of the College;
- preliminary consultation with key members of the College would be undertaken to capture its full complexities – to include identification of the relative priorities of the individual components of the scheme;
- feasibility study options prepared to date would be validated and alternatives emerging from this consultation would be tested; and
- an outline cost plan would be developed to define overall project costs.

The Vice Principal explained that this approach, as supported by a number of Governors at the recent Governing Body meeting, was expected to deliver a clear brief for a tender for further development of the scheme. He also provided a timetable for next steps, commencing with the commissioning and completion of Stage A during summer 2011, with the Stage A report to be presented to the autumn term meeting of the Committee.

The Committee reviewed the drawings that supported the initial proposals put forward by Black. The key concepts, as previously discussed, which the Vice Principal explained and stressed would evolve further as the planning progresses, were:-

- A new entrance to the front of the main building, improving disabled access by including a ramp, and providing the College with a much greater visible profile on Westminster Bridge Road. The new entrance would be situated to the side of the current College reception area;
- A new link/corridor from the entrance, running down the side of the Emma Cons Hall, providing access to the hall and, by extending to the rear, overcoming current access problems for the drama studio and associated area behind the Emma Cons Hall. Additionally, raising the floor of the Hall could facilitate a more flexible use of the space.
- Improved access to other parts of the College buildings through the installation of new lifts, as well as physical links by way bridges between the main buildings so as to rationalise circulation and create a single point of access to the whole campus.

The Committee considered the phasing of the proposals and, whilst noting that the progression seemed a logical one, also highlighted that the availability of funding would be a crucial determinant and that, should funding become available for specific work such as improving disabled access, such work would then likely be prioritised. The extent to which each phase could be undertaken independently would become clearer as part of the Stage A work. Whilst indicating support for the general thrust of the proposals, the Committee raised the following specific points:-

- At the next stage of review, the Committee would wish to be provided with greater clarity regarding who, in terms of different groups and proportions of the College's student population, would be expected to benefit from each aspect of the proposals, and as part of that, a clear vision on future use of those parts of the College building affected.
- The CLT should give thought to the fact that, based on past experience, any funding made available by educational bodies would likely be based upon space per student, and should consider whether a segmented approach to the proposals might help to position the College to benefit from such funding.
- Given that fundraising is likely to be a key source of funding, do the proposals incorporate a sufficient 'wow factor' to attract parties who might be interested in providing sponsorship?

The Committee accepted the need for an overall scheme of work, in order to position individual phases for planning purposes, and also the importance of individual phases, which would evolve as the overall scheme progressed. However, the Committee considered that the ideas presented were very much the architects' response to tackling a number of issues that had been identified, and the Committee challenged whether these were sufficiently visionary to support the College's future ambitions. By way of example, highlighting one aspect for consideration, the Chair of Governors recalled that in the past the proposal for a new entrance had been linked with potential plans for a community/café area to attract people into the building, and she suggested that further consideration needed to be given to whether this part of the proposal was just concerned with access, or a wider remit of what the College might do for the community. The Principal acknowledged the need for further thought to be given to a vision for the College estate, and advised that consultation on this could be incorporated within the current planned consultation relating to the College's Strategic Plan.

Having provided the CLT with their input for further consideration, the Committee approved the commissioning of Black to take forward the planning to RIBA Stage A over the summer period, with the Stage A report to be presented to the autumn term meeting of the Committee.

**Action:**

- i) **Development of a clear vision for the College estate - and a breakdown, by group, showing the benefits of proposals for specific parts of the estate. Consultation to be incorporated into the consultation for the College's new Strategic Plan.**

- ii) Update, including Stage A Report, to be provided to the autumn term meeting of the Committee.

**6. Maintenance Plan Update (NR)**

The Vice Principal provided an update on the significant items of maintenance work being undertaken or planned during the present year. The Committee noted the ongoing programme of improvements, highlighting that some items, such as the replacement of the disabled stair lifts in the Nancy Seear building, might be regarded as capital improvement projects rather than pure maintenance, albeit funded from the College's annual revenue or capital budgets. The Chair of Governors queried the absence of specific reference to the refurbishment of general classrooms, although the Vice Principal explained that such refurbishment was taking place, as part of the plan relating to specific corridor areas of the building. The Committee requested that, for next year, a schedule of planned maintenance is provided, to include details of the programme for classroom refurbishment.

**Action: Schedule of planned maintenance work for 2011/12, including details of planned classroom refurbishment, to be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.**

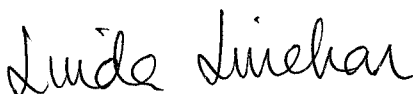
**7. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**8. Date of next meeting (GC)**

The date of the next meeting has yet to be agreed.

Graham Cooper  
Clerk to the Governing Body

Signed.....  
Linda Linehan, Chair