THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

11 October 2021 (Videoconference)

Web Version

Minute

Present:	Colm Harmon, Senate appointee (Interim Convener)
	Siân Bayne, Senate appointee
	Sue Currie, Court appointee
	Tara Gold, Student representative
	Tina Harrison, Senate appointee
	Melissa Highton, Senate appointee
	Sarah McAllister, Court appointee
	Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University
	Kathryn Nash, Court appointee
	Claire Phillips, Court appointee
In attendance:	Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services
	Leigh Chalmers, Deputy Secretary Governance & Legal
	Jo Craiglee, Head of Knowledge Management & Planning
	Sheila Fraser, CMVM representative
	Iain Gordon, CSE representative
	Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change
	Melissa Terras, CAHSS representative
	Dominic Tate, Head of Library Research Support (for Item 9)
	Dave Berry, Enterprise Architect (for Item 13)
Apologies:	Paul Norris, Senate appointee
	Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
	Sue MacGregor, Director of Academic Services
	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services

1   Minute   Paper A

Colm Harmon, Interim Convener, noted apologies and welcomed all members and attendees and new members Kathryn Nash and Tara Gold on the occasion of their first meeting. It was confirmed that a new approach to the meeting will be trialled with items listed under the 'Items for Noting or Formal Approval' section taken as noted or approved as appropriate without introduction or discussion unless a member or attendee has selected these in advance for discussion. Items 6, 9 11 and 13 were selected by members and attendees in advance for discussion alongside the substantive items.

The Minute of the meeting held on 25 May 2021 was approved.

2   Matters Arising   Verbal

There were no matters arising.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3   Chief Information Officer Update, including People & Money Update   Verbal

Key activities and updates since the last meeting were reported, including:
- The continued consolidation of companies in the educational technology sphere, which has given the sector concern for future software pricing. A sector-wide software negotiation group has been formed in response with Universities UK and Jisc (a not-for-profit company that provides network, IT services and digital resources for UK higher education institutions), with the Chief Information Officer a member of the group;
- A revised approach to the implementation of the People & Money System (the programme delivering the core IT system for HR, Finance, Payroll and Procurement) has been agreed by the University Court, with a new Enactment Group to oversee implementation for the remainder of the duration of the programme, which will now operate to fixed implementation dates for the second and third phases;
- The Estates Facilities Management System was due for replacement this year but has been updated to extend its operation for a further two to three years so that it is not replaced at the same time as the People & Money System is implemented for risk management reasons;
- The hybrid and home working programme will shortly conclude and hand over its outputs to Human Resources to aid in a developing a policy on the subject. Work is also underway to equip a number of hybrid meeting rooms in different University buildings;
- Over 1,000 Library tours were taken by students during Welcome Week and these were offered to all students as many continuing students are also new to the campus;
- The global IT supply chain remains challenging and a buffer stock of laptops is being maintained to aid consistency of supply to users; and,
- There have been outages of the residential accommodation network and the printing system caused by security updates which necessitated immediate implementation – these were pro-active measures to improve security and not in response to a cyber attack.

The People & Money update was discussed, noting that the system will have a wide impact on different aspects of the University and ensuring appropriate accountability to different stakeholders outside of the Enactment Group. It was noted that the Enactment Group reports to the University Executive, which has University-wide membership and responsibilities and that any professional services role changes linked to the new system will involve consultation with the Joint Union Liaison Committee, following usual practice. The Committee's desire to ensure that consultation takes place for any wider People & Money-related changes was noted.

4   Digital Strategy   Paper B

An update on the work to develop a Digital Strategy was reviewed. A first full draft is expected by the end of October and this will be subject to consultation before submission to Knowledge Strategy Committee and other committees. As part of the Digital Strategy, a Digital Estate workstream is underway and is developing outline

business cases for eight digital estate projects. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The importance of expectation setting before the digital estate projects are prioritised to reduce any disappointment from those keen to see certain projects progress. The outline business cases are high-level at this stage and will not move to a more detailed stage until prioritised;
- Using digital estate projects to improve sustainability in the University was encouraged;
- The timing of the Digital Strategy consultation should be considered with any other planned consultations to avoid overlap where possible and the consultation could be extended if so; and,
- Whether the Digital Strategy consultation will be digital only or involve in-person events. In-person consultation meetings will be held, with digital disenfranchisement being a key concern. It is recognised that not all staff have access to University devices to engage with a digital-only consultation.

5   Digital Estate Business Cases   Paper C

Two of the eight outline business cases developed as part of the Digital Estate workstream of the Digital Strategy were considered: Timetabling; and, Managing User Access to Systems and Data, with the remaining cases under development. The Timetabling business case proposes to replace the existing software, which is reaching end-of-life, with a new software as a service cloud solution. The Managing User Access to Systems and Data project proposes replacing the current EASE system with a new identity and access management toolset, including multi-factor authentication to improve security. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Both projects were supported;
- Introducing a new timetabling system in summer 2022 alongside a major upgrade to the main Virtual Learning Environment may need backfilling of 'business as usual' roles in these areas to allow staff to prepare for the new systems in what is a particularly busy and critical area – this is recognised and will be considered further as the business case is developed. Given the risks of introducing a new timetabling system mid-year the preference is to introduce a new system in the summer period; and,
- Whether the Managing User Access to Systems and Data project will consider the integration of the current EASE system with other University systems and potential knock-on effects on these from replacing the current system. Inter-relationships with other systems can be mapped out as the project develops, with identity and access management systems being well understood and are less technically complicated to implement than many other new systems, giving relatively low risk from a technical perspective.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

6   IT Committee Terms of Reference – Proposed change   Paper D

The Committee approved:
- A minor change to the terms of reference for IT Committee; and,

- The appointment of Michael Rovatsos, Professor of Artificial Intelligence, as Convener of IT Committee for a four year term from November 2021 to October 2025 inclusive.

A further minor revision was suggested to the IT Committee Terms of Reference. This will be included within a wider set of proposed revisions to be submitted to a subsequent meeting.

7 IT and Library Spends in Excess of £500k   Paper E

One planned expenditure within the Committee's delegated authority approval level of £500k to £2m was reviewed and approved for academic journal subscriptions.

8 Digital Research Services Service Investment 2021/22   Paper F

Proposed Digital Research Services investments for 2021/22 were approved as set out in the paper.

9 Research Publications and Copyright Policy (2021)   Paper G

An updated Research Publications and Copyright Policy to ensure that grant holders comply with new open access requirements for a number of major research funders and to allow authors to reuse their own content in teaching and future scholarship was reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:
- The approach taken is similar to that of peer institutions in the UK and follows that of earlier pioneers in the US;
- The potential impact on early career or casualised staff undertaking unfunded research in their own time and those working on self-funded PhD theses with the intention to publish monographs, including those who are students and also staff members. It was noted that: students own their own copyright and the policy will not apply to students and staff can opt out of the policy for any publication should they wish (but if the publication has been supported by funding from an external funder that requires open access this may be in breach of funding conditions and will need to be considered). The policy will not apply to monographs, although it should be noted that monographs supported by UK Research & Innovation funding are required to be open access from 2024 and there is an expectation (to be confirmed) that the next UK Research Excellence Framework will require submitted monographs to be open access. The University's Doctoral College was suggested as a forum for considering any other complexities for PhD students who are also staff members. When open access requirements are extended to many monographs, internal support for publishing costs will need to be considered for monographs not funded by external grants;
- The great majority of research undertaken in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences is not grant funded and therefore does not have financial support for 'pay to publish' open access publication. There is also the complexity of publications co-authored by multiple authors in different universities with different publication policies. It was noted that staff can opt-out of the policy for any publication at their discretion; and,

- Including a reference to clarify that the policy applies to research that is not funded by external grants, such as by adding the phrase "internally funded" while acknowledging that staff can opt-out of the policy at their discretion – it was agreed that this was best highlighted in communication of the policy and it was requested that the draft communications be shared with the Committee before they issue.

10   Review of the Open Educational Resources Policy   Paper H

A revised Open Educational Resources Policy was noted.

11   Information Security Update   Paper I

The regular Information Security update was reviewed. The continuing relatively low completion rate of the mandatory Information Security Essentials training course for all staff was raised, with the Chief Information Officer agreeing to discuss this with the University Executive along with the take-up of the other mandatory staff training courses. It was queried whether staff on guaranteed hours contracts are expected to complete the mandatory training courses and, if so, if time taken to complete the courses is included within calculations of hours worked. It was noted that information supplied to managers on completion rates is often not detailed enough to enable follow-up with individuals who have not completed the courses and this was requested.

12   Student Study Spaces Update   Paper J

An update on student study space provision on campus for the new academic year was noted.

13   Core Systems Strategies   Paper K

An update on the development and implementation of the Core Systems Strategies was noted. A reference to cloud-based systems in the document was requested to aid clarity.

14   Network Replacement Programme Update   Paper L

A progress report on the deployment of the new University data network was noted.

15   Enterprise Infrastructure Procurement Update   Paper M

A progress report on the replacement of the University's Enterprise Infrastructure was noted.

16   Information Services Group Capital Expenditure 2020 - 2026   Paper N

An update on the ten-year forecast for the Information Services Group capital plan was noted.

17   Committee Reports
- **IT Committee**   **Paper O1**
- **Digital Research Services Steering Group**   **Paper O2**

The reports were noted.

18   Any Other Business

There was no other business.

19   Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 1 February 2022, 10.00-12.00