



KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

21 March 2023, Brenda Moon Boardroom, Argyle House/Videoconference

Web version

Minute

- Present:** Joyce Anderson, Court appointee (by videocall)
Shereen Benjamin, Court appointee
Richard Blythe, Court appointee
Sue Currie, Court appointee
Tina Harrison, Senate appointee (by videocall)
Melissa Highton, Senate appointee
Sam Maccallum, Student member
Sarah McAllister, Court appointee
Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University
Paul Norris, Senate appointee (by videocall)
- In attendance:** Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services (by videocall)
Anne-Marie Coriat, CMVM representative
Jo Craiglee, Head of Knowledge Management & Planning (by videocall)
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance (by videocall)
Kate Huang, Governance Apprentice (by videocall)
Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change
Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning
Jamie Tait, Governance Manager
Lee-Ann Simpson, Senior Project and Programme Manager (by videocall) (for item 5)
Tony Weir, Director of IT Infrastructure (by videocall) (for item 7)
Alistair Fenemore, Chief Information Security Officer (for item 11)
Lynda Hutchison, Head of Business Intelligence & Projects (by videocall) (for item 12)
- Apologies:** Siân Bayne, Senate appointee
Colm Harmon, Senate appointee
Liz Lovejoy, CAHSS representative
Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services
Bryne Ngwenya, CSE representative
Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services

1 Minute

Paper A

Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University, welcomed members and attendees to the meeting. It was noted that Colm Harmon, Committee Convener, was participating in an Institution of Mechanical Engineers accreditation visit to the School of Engineering and had requested that Gavin McLachlan assist with convening the meeting until the accreditation session concluded.

The minute of the meeting held on 30 January 2023 was approved.

2 Matters Arising

Verbal

There were no matters arising.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3 Chief Information Officer Update

Verbal

Key activities and updates since the last meeting were reported, including:

- **Recruitment and retention of specialist information services staff;**
- **Supply chain disruption:** the global supply chain disruptions reported at previous meetings were continuing;
- **Sustainable IT Sub-Group:** it was noted the Sub-Group would have an academic chair, to be appointed following a recommendation from the Vice-Principal & Head of College of Science and Engineering and the Committee would be updated on its work. One of the initial areas of interest for the Sub-Group is expected to be the sustainability of the University's data centres;
- **Exascale supercomputing service:** it was noted that in the UK Government's recent Spring Budget the Chancellor had announced a commitment of around £900m to implement the recommendations in the independent Future of Compute Review, including the establishment of an Exascale supercomputer service;
- **Vendor price increases:** an increase in many software vendor prices was highlighted. This is being experienced sector-wide and sector body JISC has issued a [statement](#) appealing to digital content, hardware and software vendors seeking "pricing constraint" given budgetary pressures on the Higher Education sector; and,
- **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):** significant developments in recent months were commented on, most notably ChatGPT. Numerous other systems are also being launched including one from Stanford University (Alpaca) rapidly and inexpensively developed using other generative AIs.

The University's approach to generative AI was discussed. Initial [guidance](#) had been issued to students on the use of generative AI (such as ChatGPT), noting that the technology, ethics and use of AI was a fast moving area, with the guidance to be updated as necessary. It was agreed that a link to the guidance would be made available. The Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) noted the University position was not to impose a blanket restriction the use of generative AI, but rather to:

- Emphasise the expectation that assignments should contain students' own original work;
- Highlight the limitations of generative AI and the dangers of relying on it as a source of information; and,
- Emphasise the need to acknowledge the use of generative AI where it is permitted to be used.

It was noted that further guidance may be needed in other areas, including the completion and submission of administrative forms and on research and intellectual property rights. It was also noted that Turnitin (an internet-based plagiarism detection service) will shortly launch an AI writing and ChatGPT detection capability.

It was agreed that regular updates on AI should be received by the Committee given the rapid development of this area.

4 Information Services Group Planning 2023/24 to 2028/29

Paper B

An Information Services Group (ISG) planning update was presented, including the draft narrative Plan submitted as part of the Planning Round in February 2023. The following areas were highlighted:

- The expectation that Curriculum Transformation will quickly become a key priority and major IT and Library service change project within ISG; and,
- The identification of priorities for the Digital Estate, which will inform future budget planning. This will be shaped by the outcomes of the Digital Estate Prioritisation Group, chaired by the Provost.

The draft was welcomed and in discussion it was noted the following would be helpful to consider: setting out the expected future pipeline of projects more clearly; showing the relative scale of investment in comparison to peer universities; and, explaining and refining the optimism bias process used. Members were encouraged to send on any further comments and it was agreed that a presentation setting out the key projects covered within the Planning Round submission would be given at the next meeting.

The Committee also discussed risks around cyber security mentioned within the paper.

5 Learn Ultra Upgrade and Early Adopter Programme – Update on Progress

Paper C

An update on progress with the Learn Ultra (Virtual Learning Environment) Upgrade and Early Adopter Programme was presented. It was reported the programme is half-way through its envisaged three year timeframe, with training for users to be delivered from late March onwards. Progress made was welcomed and the following points were raised in discussion: encouraging buy-in and the importance of local contacts such as learning technologists and School/College Office staff; a wider conversation on accessibility would be beneficial; ensuring support areas such as the Information Services Helpline are prepared at the start of semester; the shared budget available and the additional use of student interns by some Schools to help with preparatory work; and, the importance of spreading awareness of the programme's timetable and training for users prior to implementation.

6 People and Money System Update

Paper D

An update on the implementation of the People & Money systems and processes was reviewed. It was reported that the Court has commissioned an external review of the system's implementation and will be updated on progress with this at the next meeting. It was raised that with any additional interventions that might take place, there was a need to be mindful of any impact these might have on individuals and teams. It was agreed that future updates would be taken under the "Items For Noting or Formal Approval" section of the agenda.

7 Internet of Things Service Multi-Year Procurement Framework Paper E

A paper on an Internet of Things Service Multi-Year Procurement Framework was discussed. It was noted that, in putting in place the framework, experience from previous procurements had been used, with the main learning being to build in the option of multiple potential suppliers. The Committee agreed to recommend to Estates Committee that a multi-year purchasing route be established to support construction of the Data-Driven Innovation's regional sensor network and to facilitate purchasing of suitable equipment for wider University research projects and operational Smart Campus projects, as set out in the paper.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

It was noted that Items 11 and 12 had been selected in advance by members and attendees for discussion and that the other items would be noted or approved without the expectation of discussion.

8 Information Services Group Capital Envelope 2022-2028 Paper F

A paper updating on the Information Services Group (ISG) 5-year capital envelope, 2022-28, was noted.

9 Network Replacement Programme Update Paper G

A progress update on the University's Network Replacement Programme was noted.

10 Enterprise Infrastructure Project Update Paper H

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

11 Information Security Update Paper I

The regular Information Security update paper, providing a summary of the current external threat environment, together with details of ongoing centrally managed technical control improvements, was noted. The refresh of the Information Security training course was also discussed, with some broad support expressed for extending the mandatory element to students. It was noted that a change of this type is outwith the remit of the Committee but the views expressed by Committee members would be fed into any considerations.

12 University Strategic Business Intelligence Update Paper J

An update on University Strategic Business Intelligence work was noted. The structured plan, with the 'hub and spoke' model was welcomed. Considering the varying state of readiness across the three Colleges and three Professional Services Groups was suggested and further updates will be provided to the Committee.

13 Committee Reports

- **IT Committee**
- **Library Committee**
- **University Collections Advisory Committee**

Paper K1
Paper K2
Paper K3

The reports were noted.

14 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

15 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 30 May 2023, 10:00 – 12:00