THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

22 May 2020 (Videoconference)

Web Version

Minute

Present:	Doreen Davidson, Court appointee (Convener)
	Elizabeth Bomberg, Court appointee
	Sue Currie, Court appointee
	Melissa Highton, Senate appointee
	Tina Harrison, Senate appointee
	Alan Murray, Senate appointee
	Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University
	Claire Phillips, Court appointee
	Stephanie Vallancey, Student representative
In attendance:	Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
	Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
	Jo Craiglee, Head of Knowledge Management & Planning
	Catherine Elliott, CMVM representative
	Simon Kelley, CSE representative
	Melissa Terras, CAHSS representative
	Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services
	Dave Berry, Enterprise Architect (for Item 6)
	Alistair Fenemore, Chief Information Security Officer (for Items 7 & 8)
	Tony Weir, Director, IT Infrastructure (for Item 9)
Apologies:	Siân Bayne, Senate appointee
	Colm Harmon, Senate appointee
	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal (Interim) Corporate Services
	Sue MacGregor, Director of Academic Services

1   Minute   Paper A

The Minute of the meeting by correspondence concluded on 24 March 2020 was approved.

2   Matters Arising   Verbal

The Vice-Principal & Chief Information Officer noted that a cyberattack on the UK national supercomputer ARCHER hosted at the University had occurred and would be considered under Item 7 (Information Security Update).

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3   Information Services Group and Covid-19   **Verbal**

A pre-recorded presentation from the Vice-Principal & Chief Information Officer on the initial response of the Information Service Group to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the University had been circulated to the Committee in advance, with questions considered under Item 4 below.

**4   Information Services Group Planning Round: Covid-19 Addendum   Paper B
        2020/21**

A list of accelerated or proposed new projects and initiatives to support and underpin the University's plans to restart research and to prepare for teaching at the start of the new academic year was reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Support for an accessibility project on the subtitling of recorded teaching material – students could be employed to assist with the project, such as checking the work of automated subtitling tools, with additional funding required;
- As well as projects to support hybrid teaching, projects to support hybrid research are proposed or underway, including large-scale virtual conferencing tools, an institutional subscription to videoconferencing service Zoom to aid collaboration with researchers in other universities using Zoom and training tools for researchers now home working. For those conducting research on items in the University's heritage collections, it may be possible to offer remote access, such as high definition videos or photographs of items;
- While many publishers have provided universities with increased access to electronic journals at lower cost than usual it is anticipated that this will be on a temporary basis and future price rises are to be expected, likely linked to 'Plan S' open access changes;
- The 'Learn Foundations' project to upgrade the Virtual Learning Environment 'Learn' platform to provide a consistent template for over 5,000 courses was supported;
- Creating an e-exams platform to allow for proctored exams is important for many courses in the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine, and enabling the presentation of visual information as well as written text in e-exams will also be important for many parts of the University;
- Concerns that a reduction in exam assessment may be encouraged without full consideration of the academic merits – it was noted that assessment pedagogy is outwith the remit of the Committee *[post-meeting note: Senate Education Committee has confirmed that remote exams should be used in the December diet – unless in-person exams are unavoidable – with alternative assessments to be considered where appropriate]*; and,
- Remote working guidance to aid wellbeing and mental health was supported.

The paper was welcomed and a high level summary of the projects to be taken forward was requested.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL

5   Makerspace Ecosystem   **Paper C**

Following the successful introduction of a makerspace in the Main Library, a paper setting out the concept of a makerspace ecosystem for the University as a whole was considered. Individual makerspaces can be established under a funding model appropriate to their context and be assessed on a case by case basis by the Committee to avoid duplication. The concept of a makerspace ecosystem was supported and approved.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

6   Core Systems Cloud Computing Strategy   **Paper D**

A draft cloud computing strategy was reviewed, to support the move towards cloud computing at the University. The clear articulation of benefits and risks in the strategy was welcomed and the risk of higher charges from vendors once customers are 'locked in' to the use of a particular cloud system noted. In mitigation, it is proposed that a public cloud service is provided by the University for research groups and other users to protect data and reduce the risk of vendor 'lock-in'. It was confirmed that a recharging procedure for a public cloud to avoid the raising of purchase orders by individual units will allow for splitting of charging. Noting that the required external review had concluded successfully, it was anticipated that the draft strategy would return for formal approval.

7   Information Security Update   **Paper E**

A recent cyberattack on the UK national supercomputer ARCHER hosted at the University of Edinburgh was discussed, noting that a number of different accounts with log-in rights had been compromised, with the system temporarily suspended by administrators for protection while all access was re-certified. No research data had been compromised. A 'lessons learned' summary on the attack was requested within the regular report for the next meeting. Additionally, members encouraged a roll-out of the password manager system, work on which had been scaled back given other activity, and is anticipated by the end of June.

8   University Computing Regulations   **Paper F**

Minor revisions to the University Computing Regulations were recommended for approval by Court as set out in the paper. Members discussed the risks of using personal devices to access University information and communicating these risks and the requirements set out in the regulations. Staff are can use personal devices for work purposes but any portable device used to access University information must be encrypted, responsibility for which sits with the staff member (with iPhones and iPads that have password protection automatically encrypting data).

9   Enterprise IT Infrastructure   **Paper G**

A proposed investment in University enterprise infrastructure that provides a consolidated platform for most central on-premises IT services was discussed. It was noted that the investment had been anticipated for a number of years, with the optimal timing of expenditure being considered given expected pressure on capital budgets in the coming year. Some elements could be purchased in the current financial year and if so, would progress to the Committee over the summer period. It was agreed that a business case with options costing should continue to be developed and submitted when complete, with the project's priority to be considered within the University-wide Planning Round capital prioritisation discussion.

10   People and Money System Programme Update   **Paper H**

An update on the People and Money Systems Programme (the programme delivering core IT systems for HR, Finance, Payroll and Procurement) was reviewed. It was noted that the HR element is on schedule as per the revised plan, with the Payroll element having fallen behind the revised schedule. A portion of the additional time contingency that has been delegated to the Principal may be requested in the following academic year. Regular reporting on progress outside of the Committee's meeting cycle was requested and it was agreed to provide monthly updates to the Committee.

11   Information Services Group Capital Envelope   **Paper I**

Actions being taken to assess the Information Services Group's capital programme against the University's Adaption and Renewal plan and continuation of essential operations were noted.

12   Committee Reports
- **IT Committee**   **Paper J1**

The report was noted.

- **Library Committee**   **Paper J2**

The report was noted.

- **University Collections Advisory Committee**   **Paper J3**

The report was noted.

- **Digital Research Services Steering Group**   **Paper J4**

The report was noted.

13   Terms of Reference Update   **Paper K**

It was agreed to recommend for approval by Court and Senate updates to the Terms of Reference to make explicit the Committee's ability to meet virtually by videoconference and teleconference and a minor update to the title of one member.

14   Any Other Business

There was no other business.

15   Meeting Dates 2020/21

The proposed meeting dates for 2020/21 were approved as follows:
- Tuesday 13 October 2020, 10.00-12.00
- Tuesday 26 January 2021, 10.00-12.00
- Monday 22 March 2021, 14.00-16.00
- Tuesday 25 May 2021, 10.00-12.00