![The University of Edinburgh logo]

KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

26 January 2021 (Videoconference)

Minute

Present:	Doreen Davidson, Court appointee (Convener)
	Siân Bayne, Senate appointee
	Sue Currie, Court appointee
	Colm Harmon, Senate appointee
	Tina Harrison, Senate appointee
	Melissa Highton, Senate appointee
	Fizzy Aboah Jawad, Student representative
	Sarah McAllister, Court appointee
	Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University
	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
	Catherine Elliott, CMVM representative
	Simon Kelley, CSE representative
	Barry Neilson, Director of Strategic Change
	Mark Ritchie, Deputy Director of Applications & Head of Project Services (for Item 9)
	Zoe Stephens, Head of Organisational Development and Change, Estates (for Item 9)
	Alastair Fenemore, Chief Information Security Officer (for Item 10)
Apologies:	Alan Murray, Senate appointee
	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal (Interim) Corporate Services
	Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
	Melissa Terras, CAHSS representative
	Sue MacGregor, Director of Academic Services

1   Minute   **Paper A**

The Minute of the meeting held on 20 October 2020 was approved.

2   Matters Arising   **Verbal**

There were no matters arising.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3   Digital Strategy for Adaptation & Renewal   Paper B

A presentation updating on the development of a new digital strategy linking to Strategy 2030 and the University's adaptation and renewal work in response to the pandemic was received. The following points were raised in discussion:

- The provision of training resources for staff who wish to improve their digital skills – the existing suite of digital skills courses have increased in popularity over the course of the pandemic and the team now intend to identify any gaps in take-up in different parts of the University and engage with those areas;
- Links with the Scottish Government's forthcoming Digital Strategy for Scotland – University staff were involved in advising on the Scottish Government draft strategy and the intention is for the University's digital strategy and the Scottish Government's digital strategy to be complementary;
- The importance of aligning with the work of the Near Future Teaching project and its emphasis of a culture-driven approach to digital learning;
- Ensuring that there is no 'digital divide' for the University's students in accessing digital services if they require equipment purchases and more advanced digital skills (it should not be assumed that all students are highly skilled digital users) – some of the responses to the pandemic such as the student laptop loan service and the increased provision of digital support have helped in this regard; and,
- Continuing to take a consultative and open approach in the strategy's development, including connecting with a broad range of staff through Town Halls and other methods that can help reach those who would not regard themselves as digital enthusiasts.

4   Chief Information Officer Update   Verbal

The Chief Information reported on key activities and events since the last meeting, including new public health restrictions that have meant that the majority of student study spaces cannot be utilised although there is limited provision in the Main Library and in locations convenient for medical and veterinary students as in-person teaching is continuing in these subjects. The reduction in study spaces has led to some complaints from students in other disciplines who have remained in Edinburgh but the University is following public health requirements and is instead assisting students through a scan and deliver service for printed texts, to be complemented by a click and collect service from next week as demand increases from those working on dissertations. Two measures introduced last semester to help remote learning have been expanded: the student laptop loan scheme; and, the bandwidth for the Virtual Private Network established for students in countries subject to local firewalls to allow access to remote learning. IT helpline and helpdesk support has also been expanded in response to greater demand and, where possible, IT equipment has been purchased at earlier dates and stored in the UK to help mitigate against delays in global IT supply chains as a result of the pandemic.

5   Information Services Group Planning Round 2021/22   Paper C

Priorities for the Information Services Group within the University-wide planning round for 2021/22 were considered. It was noted that the key priority is reshaping the

Group to better manage the increased demands on technology, ensuring as much value as possible is leveraged from existing investments while continuing to provide valued services and keeping pace with peer institutions. The move to predominantly remote learning has led to increased costs, such as video storage costs, and there is a concern that many software suppliers will seek to take advantage of the greater reliance on their software by increasing licensing costs. Members discussed the global shortage of IT equipment such as laptops as a result of the pandemic, with a stock of laptops purchased by the University for loans to students and potential for any unused laptops within this stock to help with any short term shortages for staff given supply chain delays. The four videoconferencing and collaboration tools (MS Teams, Collaborate, Skype and Zoom) currently provided were discussed, with an advantage in providing four platforms for load sharing and avoiding 'lock-in' to one vendor when it is uncertain if one or more platforms will eventually become dominant globally and if others will be discontinued.

6   People & Money Update   Paper D

An update on the People and Money system programme to deliver core IT systems for HR, Finance, Payroll and Procurement was reviewed.

7   Sustainable IT – Printing   Paper E

A discussion paper outlining the proposed direction for managing the central service for printing on campus to enable a reduction in environmental impact and costs was considered. The intention is achieve a reduction in the number of leased printers and associated printing costs, before proceeding with a full re-tender of printing and print management software in 2024. The following points were raised in discussion:
- There was support from a sustainability and financial perspective but concern that this may increase printing at home on less environmentally and cost friendly devices – to help counteract this improvements in digital document signing and a move to fully digital University processes are being introduced;
- Reductions should be assessed on a building-by-building basis in consultation with building managers and local computing managers rather than applying a blanket reduction to all buildings although there will be an overall target; and,
- Many external stakeholders (e.g. regulators, overseas partner universities) will continue to require scanned forms so multi-functional devices with scanning capabilities will continue to be needed.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

8   Network Replacement Programme Update   Paper F

Progress on the deployment of the new University data network, approved by Court in December 2018, was reviewed. The programme remains within budget and has a 'green' status using the red/amber/green rating. The new network is currently being installed in University halls of residence, having been given increased priority as a result of the pandemic, beginning with Pollock Halls in January 2021. The re-prioritisation was welcomed and communications to students returning or moving into halls of residence on the benefits of the new network proposed.

9   Space and Facilities Management System Update   Paper G

An update on the project to replace the current space and facilities management system was reviewed.

10   Information Security Update   Paper H

A regular update from the Chief Information Security Officer was reviewed.

11   Information Services Group Adaptation & Renewal Update   Paper I

An update on the provision of Covid secure study spaces for students on campus and an update on a working group established to consider longer-term home and hybrid working was noted.

12   The Contract for the Web   Paper J

The University's endorsement of the Contract for the Web, "a global plan of action, created by experts and citizens from across the world to make sure our online world is safe, empowering and genuinely for everyone", established by the World Wide Web Foundation, was noted.

13   Core Systems Cloud Computing Strategy   Paper K

Following initial review of a draft strategy at the Committee's meeting in May 2020, the final draft Core Systems Cloud Computing Strategy was considered and approved. The following points were raised in discussion:
- While the advantages of cloud computing are recognised in many areas, it typically allows for less customisation than users will be used to. Given this, the intention is only to use cloud computing in those areas where there are clear benefits rather than a wholesale move to cloud computing; and,
- Connected to this, the importance of offering expert advice and guidance to colleagues across the University on when cloud computing may be an suitable option.

14   Committee Reports
- **University Collections Advisory Committee   Paper L**

The report was noted.

15   Any Other Business

There was no other business.

16   Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 22 March 2021, 14.00-16.00