



**KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**27 March 2025, Meeting Room 7, Floor E, Argyle House/Microsoft Teams**

**Web Version**

**Minute**

- Present:** Richard Blythe, Court appointee  
Patrick Hadoke, Senate appointee  
Colm Harmon, Interim Convener (by videocall)  
Tina Harrison, Senate appointee (by videocall)  
Sarah McAllister, Court appointee (by videocall)  
Gavin McLachlan, Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University
- In attendance:** Jo Craiglee, Head of Knowledge Management & IS Planning (by videocall)  
Lisa Dawson, Academic Registrar (by videocall)  
Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning  
Jamie Tait, Governance Manager  
Fiona Vine, Head of IT, CSE  
Lewis Allan, Senior Governance Advisor to the Vice-Principal and University Secretary (for agenda item 5) (by videocall)  
Neil Bruce, Head of Operational Services (for agenda item 6) (by videocall)  
Alex Carter, Head of Service Management (for agenda item 7) (by videocall)  
Alistair Fenemore, Chief Information Security Officer (for agenda item 7) (by videocall)
- Apologies:** Siân Bayne, Senate appointee  
Shereen Benjamin, Court appointee  
Philip Best, CSE representative  
Nirmal Borkhataria, Interim Director of Finance  
Anne-Marie Coriat, CMVM representative  
Melissa Highton, Senate appointee  
Heather Lawrence, CAHSS representative  
Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services  
Dylan Walch, EUSA Vice-President Education

**1 Minute**

**Paper A**

Members and attendees were welcomed to the Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) meeting.

The minute of the meeting held on 30 January 2025 was approved.

**2 Matters Arising**

**Verbal**

There were no matters arising.

## SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

### 3 Information Services Group Planning 2025-2030

Verbal

The Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University, presented an overview of the Information Services Group (ISG) draft Planning Round submission for 2025-2030. It was noted that it would be a particularly challenging planning round, with the actions ISG are actively considering having an impact across the institution.

The Deputy Secretary Governance and Strategic Planning noted that in light of the current financial challenges facing the University, budget holders had been asked to prepare plans set against overall cost reductions of £140m to be delivered over the next 18 months. The scale and period for delivery of proposed savings had been approved at University Executive and shared with Court and formed the basis for Planning Round decision-making and the development of an overall budget for presentation to Court for approval at their meeting in June 2025. As a result, savings targets had been shared across budget holders and work was underway to develop and subsequently refine 2025-30 Planning Round submissions. The Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University noted he was confident that the proposed actions outlined would deliver the budget savings required by ISG in 2025/26, with these having already been costed.

The Convener thanked colleagues in ISG for the work already undertaken on this year's planning round, with a further update to be provided at the next KSC meeting.

### 4 Chief Information Officer Update

Verbal

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

- **EUCLID contract.** As reported at the last meeting, a sector negotiating committee had been working with the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA), with the aim of enabling universities to procure via the Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC) framework rather than have individual arrangements and pricing. It was reported an agreement with the current software provider had been reached, which would allow for more time and planning on the longer-term options.
- **Oracle data breach.** There had been reporting of, and the University had been informed about, a potential data breach. As a precaution pending a full assessment by Oracle, all recommended proactive steps had been taken and monitoring checks to identify any malicious activity had been carried out. None had been observed to date, and the University has continued to work with Oracle and their security offices.

### 5 Committee Governance Update

Paper B

The Senior Governance Advisor to the Vice-Principal & University Secretary and Head of Knowledge Management & IS Planning provided an update on the activities undertaken since the last KSC meeting with respect to the future of the Information Technology Committee (ITC), Library Committee (LC), and University Collections

Advisory Committee (UCAC). It was reported that workshops had taken place to explore how the thematic committees might be reconstituted once KSC has been disbanded, with a combined Library and University Collections Committee succeeding KSC as a joint standing committee of Court and Senate, and IT Committee becoming part of the University Executive management committee structure. Digital estate items would continue to progress to Estates Committee as at present, and IT and digital items relevant to Senate continuing to be considered by the Senate committees. A paper on this proposal was being drafted for submission to both Senate and Court. It was noted that with the proposed changes, the overall number of committees in this area would reduce from 10 to 8. Additions to terms of reference for Senate committees, to explicitly include educational regulation/oversight aspects of IT matters, would also be included in the paper.

The Committee welcomed the positive progress made since the last meeting. It was suggested it would be helpful to explore alternative options for the reporting lines of the proposed Library and University Collections Committee, and whether this should remain a joint Senate and Court committee. The importance of committee membership to provide adequate levels of assurance, particularly in relation to digital estate items, was also noted.

## **6 Sustainable Printing Project**

**Paper C**

The Convener noted this paper was discussed by University Executive in February 2025, with Executive approving the direction of travel and the overall goal of reducing the University printer fleet by 50% and reducing overall printing by 50%.

The Head of Operational Services then summarised the project to date, highlighting the new contract with Xerox to locally re-manufacture a proportion of existing devices, and the behavioural change requirement necessary for successful delivery.

KSC endorsed the direction of travel of the project, and noted the associated carbon and financial benefits it would bring.

## **7 Identity and Access Management Replacement Options Appraisal and Initial Business Case**

**Paper D**

The Chief Information Security Officer and Head of Service Management introduced a paper that highlighted the need to make improvements to our cyber controls, notably around how we undertake Identity and Access Management (IDAM).

KSC noted the progress being made on developing options for the future shape of IDAM controls for the University, noting the complexity of the change and recognition of the need to minimise cost. KSC discussed the options presented, and noted the current recommended option of carrying out market research on a preferred supplier. It also welcomed the further consultation with interested stakeholders that would continue throughout future phases of the work, and the inclusion of all categories of students and alumni in the initial business case.

## ITEMS FOR NOTING

It was confirmed that no items had been selected in advance by members and attendees for discussion and that they would be noted without the expectation of discussion.

### **8 Digital Estate Capital Envelope 2024-2029** **Paper E**

The Committee noted the update on Digital Estates capital expenditure projected for 2024/25 and forecast to 2029/30.

### **9 Digital Estate Status Update** **Paper F**

The Committee noted a summary of progress on the substantive Digital Estate projects and project RAG report.

### **10 Information Security Update** **Paper G**

The regular Information Security update paper, providing a summary of the current external cyber threat environment, together with details of ongoing centrally managed technical control improvements that will further enhance University cyber security controls, was noted. The Convener also noted the UK government had opened a consultation on their proposed legislation covering a targeted ban on ransomware payments for the public sector, in case committee members wished to contribute to the consultation.

### **11 University AI Innovation Platform Update** **Paper H**

The Committee noted an update on the uptake, development and related activities of ELM (Edinburgh (access to) Language Models), the University of Edinburgh's AI innovation platform.

### **12 Library Materials Budget Update** **Paper I**

The Committee noted the current budget position and the library's approach to monitoring risk and managing spend over the second half of the financial year.

### **13 Committee Reports**

• IT Committee	<b>Paper J1</b>
• Library Committee	<b>Paper J2</b>
• University Collections Advisory Committee	<b>Paper J3</b>

The reports were noted.

### **14 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **15 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 29 May 2025, 10:00 – 12:00 (hybrid meeting)