



**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**5 September 2016**

**Minute**

**Present:** Ms Anne Richards (Convener)  
The Principal  
Ms Sarah Smith, University Secretary  
Mr David Bentley  
Ms Doreen Davidson  
Ms Alison Grant  
Dr Chris Masters  
Lady Susan Rice  
Mr Alec Edgecliffe-Johnson  
Professor Sarah Cooper  
Vice-Principal Professor Jonathan Seckl

**In attendance:** Senior Vice-Principal Professor Charlie Jeffery  
Mr Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services  
Ms Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning  
Ms Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources  
Mr Phil McNaull, Director of Finance  
Mr Gary Jebb, Director of Estates  
Dr Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services  
Professor Mark Parsons (for Item 7)

**Apologies:** None

**1 Minutes**

**A**

The Minute of the meeting held on 6 June 2016 was approved.

**2 Matters Arising**

**Verbal**

The Convener welcomed Professor Sarah Cooper to her first meeting of the Committee. It was noted that the refurbishment of 55 teaching rooms referred to during the previous meeting have been completed and summary information on recent Estates projects requested will be submitted to the November meeting, following review by Estates Committee.

The Director of Corporate Services provided an update on the proposed City Deal for the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region, with draft Heads of Terms in development ahead of a possible announcement at the 2017 UK Budget.

The Director of Estates provided an update on the submission of a bid approved by Exception Committee to acquire the former Fire Station at Lauriston Place adjacent to the Edinburgh College of Art.

### **3 Principal's Communications**

**Verbal**

The Principal reported on: the expected admission to the University of approximately 6,000 undergraduates and 6,500 postgraduates, including over 1,000 online students; a rise in the University's position in the QS World University Rankings 2016 from 21 to 19; the Edinburgh Festivals 2016, with 1.35 million tickets sold for performances held in University buildings; and activity following the EU Referendum vote, including engagement with the Scottish Minister for Higher Education and Science.

Members discussed media coverage of the Princess Dashkova Russian Centre and the expected timing of the Scottish Funding Council's grant letter to institutions.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

### **4 Strategic Plan Performance Measures**

**B**

Proposed measures to assess performance against the goals of the new Strategic Plan were considered, following Court agreement to a broad framework for measuring success, with strategic measures reported to Court and leading and operational measures reported to Central Management Group. Detailed communication of the Strategic Plan to staff will begin in December following agreement of the performance measures and the completed Strategic Plan website.

Members discussed:

- Including a cash generation measure to the financial measures for Court;
- The appropriate number of measures for Court (15) and lead indicators for Central Management Group (28) given the complexity of the University;
- Measuring staff engagement, sustainability and 'value-added';
- Measures that likely indicate long-term (10+ years) success, e.g. number of students becoming researchers, success of Global Academies.

It was noted that revised measures will be submitted to the November meeting prior to consideration by Court.

### **5 Planning Round Timetable**

**C**

The Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning, presented the 2017/18 Planning Round Timetable. The intention to issue detailed planning guidance to Colleges and Support Groups in January rather than September was highlighted, with the effect of focusing planning activity within Semester Two while maintaining the level of oversight provided by University committees. The Committee supported the intention to compress the period of time spent by staff on planning activity, noting that Estates capital planning will continue unaffected.

**6 Finance Director's Update** **D**

The Director of Finance summarised the financial update report, including the Period 11 Management Accounts, the launch of a formal consultation on proposed changes to the Staff Benefits Scheme, and progress with a review of financial controls across the University.

**7 Fortissimo Marketplace Ltd** **E**

The Director of the Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre presented a proposal to establish a not-for-profit joint venture company, Fortissimo Marketplace Limited, providing access to high performance computing for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), and the University's participation as the leading founder member. It was noted that all founding members of the company are expected to be represented on the Board and that no financial support is requested from the University given support from the EU-funded project budget and the intention to become self-sustaining in future years.

The Committee approved the establishment of Fortissimo Marketplace Limited and the University's participation as the leading founder member.

**8 Sunergos Innovations – Next Steps** **F**

The Director of Corporate Services provided an update on University subsidiary Sunergos Innovations Ltd, noting that the planned flotation of the company on the London Stock Exchange has been cancelled.

It was agreed that the request for approval as set out in the paper would be granted – for the Director of Corporate Services to conclude an alternative private placement or explore alternative options if the private placement should fail or take longer than expected – with the Commercialisation Sub-Group to be convened to review the strategic case for all options in the first instance with Court member Mr Alan Johnston invited to participate in the Sub-Group given relevant expertise. Sunergos Innovations will continue to provide business development services to the University in the interim.

**9 Lecture Capture Business Case** **G**

The business case for investment in a University lecture capture service was considered prior to submission to Court. It was noted that Knowledge Strategy Committee had endorsed the business case with the inclusion of a comprehensive solution including all University lecture theatres.

The strong demand from the student body over a number of years for a lecture capture service was noted in the context of the National Student Survey (NSS) 2016 results. In relation to the NSS results,

members discussed: positive feedback on course level surveys in contrast with less positive institution-level surveys; results for large institutions with multi-site campuses; improving engagement and communication to the student body of action taken by the University; and exploring alternative approaches that could achieve a step-change in performance.

The business case was welcomed and its submission to Court supported.

**10 Heads of School Appointment Process H**

A revised approach and role description for the appointment of Heads of School was reviewed. Subject to further considering the level of optional and compulsory training provided to new Heads of School and reviewing the language used in the role description for any indications of indirect gender bias, the paper was endorsed for submission to Court.

**ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

**11 Investment Committee Report I**

The report presented by the Director of Finance was noted, with the appendix containing the unit price and performance report to be circulated.

**12 Insurance Renewal J**

The University's Insurance Policy Renewal for 2016/17 was approved.

**13 People Report K**

The report presented by the Director of Human Resources was noted, with future reports to contain links to background papers as appropriate.

**14 Research and Commercialisation Statistics – Year-end Report L**

Research and commercialisation statistics for the year ending 31 July 2016 were presented. The reduction in UK Research Council income was discussed, with the expectation that UK Research Council income will rise in the following year. The rise in industry and EU research income was welcomed.

**15 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**16 Date of next meeting**

Monday 14 November 2016 at 2.30pm