



**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**27 January 2020**

**Web Version**

**Minute**

- Present:** Anne Richards, Vice-Convener of Court (Convener)  
Sarah Cooper, Senate Assessor  
Doreen Davidson, General Council Assessor  
Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor  
Jock Millican, General Council Assessor  
Susan Rice, Co-opted Member  
Jonathan Seckl, Vice-Principal Planning, Resources & Research Policy  
Sarah Smith, Vice-Principal Strategic Change & Governance; and  
University Secretary  
Andrew Wilson, President, Students' Association
- In attendance:** Hugh Edmiston, Vice-Principal Business Development & Director of Corporate Services  
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance  
Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students  
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates  
James Saville, Director of Human Resources  
Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services  
Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services (for Items 5 & 6)  
Ashley Shannon, Director of Operations, Corporate Services Group (for Item 6)  
Mark Parsons, EPCC Director (for Item 8)
- Apologies:** Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member  
David Law, Co-opted Member  
Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning

**1 Minutes**

**Papers A1, A2**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2019 and the e-meeting concluded on 20 December 2019 were approved subject to minor amendment.

**2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log**

**Paper A3**

There were no matters arising and the action log was noted.

**3 Principal's Communications**

**Verbal**

The Principal reported on the:

- coronavirus, with no cases in Scotland as yet. The University is monitoring the situation closely and is in communication with public health bodies;
- announcement of a £20m Advanced Care Research Centre in partnership with Legal & General;

- recent visit to Brussels that included meeting with the new pan-European university grouping UNA Europa and discussion with fellow university leaders on potential joint study opportunities;
- separate visits to the University by the First Minister and by Scotland Office Minister Douglas Ross MP;
- student applications for 2020 entry.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

### **4 Finance**

#### **• Director of Finance's Report**

**Paper B1**

The Director of Finance reported on: the Quarter One forecast position; the latest iteration of the Ten Year Forecast; the early results from the 2018-19 Russell Group financial benchmarking exercise; a summary of the second report from the USS pensions scheme's Joint Expert Panel; and, performance to date of the Social Investment Fund.

It was noted in discussion that: the forthcoming Quarter Two financial position is expected to improve on Quarter One; a Government gateway review of the City Region Deal is expected later this year, with University preparations underway; and, a Universities UK consultation will follow from the Joint Expert Panel report, with the Court USS Sub-Group to be activated.

#### **• Annual TRAC Returns 2018-19**

**Paper B2**

A summary analysis of the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) and TRAC for Teaching (TRAC(T)) returns for 2018-19 were reviewed. The Committee discussed difficulties in applying average costing rates to all subjects and welcomed the University's higher full economic costing recovery rate in comparison to the sector average. It was agreed to approve the signing of the returns by the Principal for submission to the Scottish Funding Council and UK Research & Innovation.

### **5 China Merchants Group Update**

**Verbal**

A verbal update on the proposal to date was noted.

### **6 Edinburgh BioQuarter – Route to Formalising Partnership Arrangements**

**Paper C**

Following an update paper considered at the September 2019 meeting, proposals for formalising the partnership between the University, Scottish Enterprise, the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian to progress with a future joint venture arrangement with a commercial partner(s) were reviewed and the recommendations set out in the paper approved.

## 7 Estates

### • Capital Prioritisation 2019

Paper D1

An overview of a further capital prioritisation process undertaken during autumn 2019 by the Senior Leadership Team to create financial headroom to respond to changing circumstances and emerging needs was considered. The criteria used in deciding to prioritise or defer projects was discussed, noting that this included Heads of College prioritising projects within their respective Colleges and construction and financial factors. Space constraints in the Central Area were raised as a concern, with potential impacts on the student and staff experience and ability to accommodate planned growth – although it was noted that prioritised projects include those that enable significant elements within the Colleges of Science and Engineering and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine to vacate the Central Area. The use of the substantial new investment in the Edinburgh Futures Institute was also discussed. The importance of anticipating and mitigating any unintended consequences of the reprioritisation and appropriate communication of the reprioritisation outcome was agreed, particularly in areas where projects have been deferred. It was agreed to refer the report to Court for noting.

### • Usher Institute for Population Health Sciences

Paper D2

The Committee agreed to:

- recommend that Court approve funding from City Region Deal and University Resources to deliver the Usher Institute;
- note that the funding does not include an Usher allocation to University car parking to be requested as part of a separate project;
- note that this funding request is in addition to the previously approved funding from University Resources for design team fees; and,
- note the proposal to incorporate 1200sqm of shell space for future fit-out.

### • Queen's Medical Research Institute (QMRI) – including Bio-Research and Veterinary Services (BVS) Estates Strategy

Paper D3

The Committee agreed to:

- note the interdependency of the QMRI refurbishment project with the Institute for Regeneration & Repair Expansion as part of the overarching co-location strategy;
- recommend to Court funding approval from University Resources to deliver the QMRI Biomedical Research Facility refurbishment project at the BioQuarter campus;
- note that this funding is in addition to the previously approved funding from University Resources for design team fees; and,
- note the outline BVS Estates Strategy and that the Full BVS Estates Strategy will be presented to Estates Committee in March 2020.

The level of complexity generated by the number of developments at the BioQuarter site was discussed, with complexity levels likely to grow at a non-linear rate as additional developments are undertaken. Mitigation can involve additional detailed planning and funding for staff moves and careful management of the transition from

contractor to University occupation. For the QMRI development, it was noted that consultation with the Home Office is vital and is underway.

• **Peffermill Sports Village: Student Accommodation**

**Paper D4**

A funding request for the second phase of the Peffermill Sports Village project consisting of student accommodation was reviewed. It was noted that that this followed funding approval by Court in June 2019 of a first phase consisting of a new sports pavilion and indoor tennis centre. The Students' Association President noted that, while not opposed to this development, he did not support recently agreed rent increases that may not have been reflected in the paper and the planned mixture of accommodation by price band more generally. The wider issue of provision of student accommodation in different price bands and the extent to which it reflects current or anticipated future demand given possible changes in student cohorts was discussed. It was agreed that the Vice-Principal Students would consider this further in consultation with relevant colleagues.

It was agreed to:

- recommend that Court approve funding from University Resources to deliver new student accommodation as a key component of the Peffermill Sports Village;
- note that this in addition to previously approved funding; and,
- recommend that Court approve a request to the University of Edinburgh Estates Services Company to deliver the Peffermill Sports Village.

• **41-45 Gilmore Place Student Accommodation**

**Paper D5**

A proposal to enter into a 20 year lease agreement for student accommodation at 41-45 Gilmore Place was considered. The Students' Association President reiterated his position regarding rental pricing stated under the previous item. While planning permission has not been sought as yet and any agreement would be contingent on achieving planning permission, the suitability of the location for University student accommodation was noted and welcomed.

It was agreed to:

- note the refurbishment and new build opportunities on the site of a former nunnery and care home to form new student accommodation;
- recommend that Court approve the corporate investment appraisal model set out in the paper; and,
- recommend to Court to proceed with the finalisation of Heads of Terms and Agreement to Lease documentation for entering into a 20 year lease an initial rental level of £1.16m per annum.

**8 World Class Data Infrastructure IT Equipment Procurement**

**Paper E**

Planned procurement of Information Technology equipment for the City Region Deal's World Class Data Infrastructure hub was reviewed following recommendation by Knowledge Strategy Committee. The pricing equipment process was discussed, noting that the procurement will guarantee a fixed discount on list price, with advantages for both parties. The Committee agreed to recommend to Court that the

University procure the IT equipment for the City Deal's World Class Data Infrastructure using an open procedure through the Official Journal of the European Union, with the option for additional expenditure by EPCC (formerly the Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre) and Information Services Group. It was further agreed to recommend to Court that, following the successful conclusion of the procurement process, contract signature (for an initial period of 5 years) is delegated to Professor Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor and subsequent to contract signature, authority is delegated to Professor Mark Parsons, EPCC Director and WCDI Senior Responsible Officer, under the governance of City Deal Executive Governance Group (CDEGG), to issue Purchase Orders against the IT Building Block price list.

## **9 People Report**

**Paper F**

An update on industrial action was reviewed, noting that a calculation error in one statistic will be corrected in the file copy of the paper. Sector level discussions are continuing, focussing on non-pay components of the dispute and the Committee will be kept apprised of developments.

### **ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL**

## **10 Estates Committee Report**

**Paper G**

The report was noted.

## **11 Investment Committee Report**

**Paper H**

The report was noted.

## **12 Research & Commercialisation Statistics**

**Paper I**

The report was noted and the positive movement in reported figures welcomed.

## **13 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **14 Date of Next Meeting & Proposed 2020/21 Meeting Dates**

Friday, 3 April 2020, 2.30pm-5pm.

The proposed 2020/21 meeting dates were approved:

- Thursday 10 September 2020, 2.30pm-5pm
- Monday 16 November 2020, 2.30pm-5pm
- Monday 1 February 2021, 2.30pm-5pm
- Monday 12 April 2021, 2.30pm-5pm
- Monday 31 May 2021, 2.30pm-5pm