THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

13 November 2023, Conference Room, Edinburgh Climate Change Institute

Minute

Present:	Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member (Convener)
	Douglas Alexander, General Council Assessor (by videocall)
	Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member
	Sharan Atwal, President, Students' Association
	Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary
	Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member (by videocall)
	Kim Graham, Provost
	Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor
	Jock Millican, General Council Assessor (by videocall)
	Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member
	Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member
In attendance:	Lewis Allan, Senior Governance Advisor to the Vice-Principal & University Secretary
	Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
	Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students (by videocall)
	Gary Jebb, Director of Place
	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services
	James Saville, Director of Human Resources
	Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning
	Jamie Tait, Governance Manager
	Dan Wedgwood, Head of Court Services
	Jo Roger, Director HR Partnering, Professional Services (item 5)
	Christina Boswell, Vice-Principal Research & Enterprise (item 7)

Apologies:

1   Minute   **Paper A**

Janet Legrand, Convener, welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and noted apologies.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 were approved.

2   Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3   Principal's Communications   **Verbal**

Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor, reported on:
- Planned University communications in relation to the conflict in Israel and Palestine, which would be focused on support for members of the University community and would be aligned with sector-level statements;

- continued engagement with the University's partner institution in Ukraine, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv;
- confirmation from the UK Government that Edinburgh was to host the Exascale computer that would constitute the next generation of UK supercomputer;
- the award to the University, announced at the UK Government Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit, of two new Doctoral Training Centres (DTCs) in fields related to AI, plus one to be run jointly with Heriot-Watt University, noting that University of Edinburgh had been the only university to be awarded more than one of the twelve DTCs announced;
- the award to Professor Jane Hillston MBE, a former Head of School of Informatics, of the British Computer Society's Lovelace Medal;
- the Principal's recent visit to the USA, attending events in a number of cities, including successful engagement with alumni communities and partner institutions, and engagement with senior State Department officials;
- the well-received involvement of Professor Shannon Vallor, Baillie Gifford Chair in the Ethics of Data and Artificial Intelligence, in a number of the above events and her appearance to give evidence to the US Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs;
- an improved industrial relations context, there being no current mandate for industrial action by the trade unions;
- a forthcoming UK Government report on research and commercialisation, in which the University's achievements were expected to feature prominently.

The following points were raised in discussion:
- PRC recorded congratulations to Professor Hillston on her receipt of the Lovelace Medal, noting the highly prestigious nature of this research award.
- The industrial relations context was considered to provide a good opportunity for positive staff engagement.
- Statements on world events brought reputational risks to universities even as universities had little ability to influence those events. A focus on supporting affected members of the University community was appropriate. The University would also carefully monitor sector-level statements and reflect them as appropriate.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Director of Finance's Report **Paper B**

The Director of Finance's Report was reviewed.

5 People [taken after item 8]

- **Grade Scale Review** **Paper C1**

A paper providing extended commentary around the University's Grade Scale Review proposals was presented, following on from previous discussions of this matter at the last meeting of Policy & Resources Committee (PRC).

The Principal thanked PRC for its previous input and colleagues for their efforts in formulating and presenting the extended commentary.

It was noted that the purpose of the proposed changes was not only to improve the University's competitiveness in recruitment markets, but also to drive positive change within the University, in return for improved recognition and reward and in conjunction with wider, ongoing initiatives to enhance the staff experience.

The Committee agreed that the proposals should be transmitted to Court to seek Court's approval.

- **People Report**   **Paper C2**

The People Report was noted.

6   Performance Measures to Support Strategy 2030: 2022-23 year-end   **Paper D** Report

The Committee received an update on the University's strategic performance measures, including a year-end progress report.

The details of some KPIs had not been concluded at the previous reporting point and proposals for doing so were presented.

7   Research & Innovation Strategy 2030   **Paper E**

A draft Research & Innovation Strategy was presented. It was noted that the University Executive was still to consider this in detail, but had had the opportunity to provide initial feedback.

It was noted that this strategy was central to the University's overall Strategy 2030. The document was written with both external and internal audiences in mind.

Helpful feedback had been received from consultation with Senate, including the importance of highlighting the interaction of research, innovation and teaching.

Members were invited to submit any further comments or suggestions in writing to the Vice-Principal Research & Enterprise.

8   Edinburgh Futures Institute   **Paper G**

The Committee received a case for additional provision to be made within the capital plan to fund the completion of the Edinburgh Futures Institute building and recommended this for Court's approval.
Committee members noted that a significant asset would be created for the University and the city, along with the preservation of a unique and historic building that had required substantial and complex restoration and renovation.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

**9   Scottish Funding Council Loan Application – Carbon Net Zero   Paper F
      Projects**

The Committee approved, in principle, the drawn-down of loans from the Scottish
Funding Council's Financial Transactions Programme to fund projects that align to the
University's journey to carbon Net Zero, should the University's applications for these
loans be successful.

10   Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11   Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 12 February 2023, 14.30-17.00