



## Policy and Resources Committee

15 September 2025

Raeburn Room, Old College

### Minutes

**Members Present:**

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member  
Morag Angus, Co-opted Member  
Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary  
Ruth Girardet, Co-opted Member  
Kim Graham, Provost  
Peter Mathieson, Principal & Vice-Chancellor  
Jock Millican, General Council Assessor  
Kathryn Nash, Trade Union Academic Staff Member  
David Ovens, General Council Assessor  
Ash Scholz, Students' Association President

**Member Apologies:**

Hugh Mitchell, Co-opted Member

**In Attendance:**

James Gray, Chief Financial Officer  
Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students  
Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services  
Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary, Governance and Strategic Planning  
Damien Toner, Director of Estates  
Daniel Wedgwood, Head of Court Services (clerk)

**Attendee Apologies:**

James Saville, Director of Human Resources  
Andy Slater, Interim Deputy Director of Finance

### Welcome

Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member, welcomed members and attendees. She welcomed in particular those attending a meeting of Policy & Resources Committee (PRC) for the first time: Morag Angus, David Ovens, Ash Scholz and James Gray.

### OPENING ITEMS

#### **1 Minutes**

#### **Paper A1**

The minutes of the meeting of 2 June 2025 were approved.

**Matters Arising**

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, updated the committee on the following points:

- The University's Responsible Investment Advisory Group (RIAG), which would report to PRC, would shortly be fully established and was expected to hold its first meeting in the coming months. Its membership had been completed, subject to the appointment of a staff member. A proposed appointee was due to be communicated shortly to Governance & Nominations Committee for approval. The Convener of RIAG, Ruth Girardet, was thanked for her help in establishing the group.
- A petition had been circulating in the University community seeking further discussions at Court on matters relating to divestment. It was noted that RIAG had been created as a body with relevant expertise in such areas and that relevant communications to the community would therefore be facilitated by the existence of RIAG, once it was fully established.
- There was to be a change in the membership of Estates Committee as result of senior personnel changes: Lucy Evans would join the committee on an *ex officio* basis, as Colm Harmon was leaving the University. There would be a minor change to the committee's terms of reference in relation to this, to reflect the new job title of the incoming member.

**Action Log**

The Action Log was noted. There had been no amendments to the Action Log since the previous meeting.

**3 Principal's Communications**

Peter Mathieson, Principal, updated the committee on the following matters, noting that key developments within the University were largely dealt with elsewhere in the agenda:

- The financial situation at the University of Dundee continued to be a key concern for the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government. At the time of the meeting, no plan had been agreed between government and the interim leadership of that university to achieve its financial sustainability. Discussions were to be held at sector level regarding the necessary balance of financial support for the University of Dundee and the sector as a whole.
- The Principal had recently returned from a successful visit to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing, including very positive engagement with alumni. In addition, the Principal had joined an advisory board for Tsinghua University that was focused on greater integration of healthcare and higher education providers. Much activity at the University of Edinburgh was relevant to achieving the required kind of technology-enabled healthcare system.

In discussion, it was noted that the higher education policies of the different political parties were not all yet known ahead of the next Scottish Parliament elections and that there was not yet clarity over any party's plans for resourcing such policies.

## **SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

### **4 Finance and Planning Update Report**

### **Paper B**

James Gray, Chief Financial Officer, introduced the paper and summarised key points.

Rona Smith, Deputy Secretary Governance & Strategic Planning, summarised the available data on student recruitment in the current admissions cycle, noting the significant degree of uncertainty that was inevitable at this stage.

Kim Graham, Provost, summarised on-going work to reduce the University's expenditure in line with the two-year budget. The 'Quarter 0' process was underway, with key meetings to establish the sources of suitable savings.

PRC's discussion focused on the positive movement in reported operating surplus in the draft accounts. It was emphasised that this was driven by non-core activity and, as such, did not reflect underlying operational performance, nor could such activity be relied upon to support similar surplus figures in the future. It was recognised that this would create a communications challenge, as a reported surplus might be taken to indicate that the need to reduce expenditure had been reduced or eliminated.

The importance of succession planning was also noted, in the context of staff changes resulting from the completed Voluntary Severance scheme and the currently open voluntary redundancy and retirement offers. It was noted that the remit of the Staff Workstream encompassed such planning, within which the profile of staff grades would also be considered.

### **5 People Report**

### **Paper C**

Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services, introduced the paper, noting key points including:

- work to establish a vision for career pathways for technical staff;
- the new voluntary exit routes for certain staff;
- industrial action during Welcome Week, participation numbers for which were not yet available;
- national ballots for further industrial action; and
- the extension of the Report & Support platform to staff.

PRC noted the report.

### **6 Microsoft Software Agreement 2025-28**

### **Paper D**

Tony Weir, Director of Information Technology Infrastructure, introduced the paper.

PRC recommended to Court that the new three-year Microsoft Agreement be approved by Court, subject to conclusion of negotiations in line with expectations, noting that Court

might delegate authority to the Principal to approve the final Agreement, should negotiations not be fully concluded by the time of the Court meeting. PRC also recommended that Court delegate authority to the Vice-Principal, Chief Information Officer & Librarian to the University to sign the agreement following its approval.

## **7 Teviot Row House Compliance Works**

## **Paper E**

Damien Toner, Director of Estates, summarised the paper, noting that additional funding was being sought to complete the Teviot Row House renovation works, due to issues with the building that had come to light only during the works. While relevant surveys had been carried out before the works, these had been non-intrusive surveys in the context of on-going use of the building at the time. Levels of contingency in the project budget had been commensurate with comparable projects, but these levels would be revisited in the light of experience with this project. It was observed that the project planning process had been affected by enforced changes in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and that aspects of the approach taken in this particular case were therefore unlikely to be repeated.

The intention was to take the additional funding from underspend in other projects. The works were on course to meet the revised deadline and allow re-opening of the building early in 2026.

In discussion, it was noted that the project would deliver significant improvements to the building and the services within it, to the direct benefit of students. It was also observed that notable safety risks had been identified and removed as a result of the works carried out.

PRC recommended that Court approve additional funding to complete the project.

## **8 Updates to Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure**

## **Paper F**

Leigh Chalmers, Vice-Principal & University Secretary, introduced the revised Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy & Procedure, noting that University Executive and Audit & Risk Committee had both considered the paper, provided comments and received relevant reassurances, which centred on processes for reporting relevant incidents.

One additional change was requested, to ensure that all relevant persons were included in the list of those bound by appropriate requirements for confidentiality. Subject to this, PRC recommended that Court approve the proposed changes to the policy and procedures.

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

## **9 Estates Committee Report**

## **Paper G**

PRC noted the report.

PRC recommended that Court approve the reallocation of funding to cover additional costs for an electrical connection to the Advanced Computing Facility, noting that these costs arose from additional technical and statutory requirements identified by the

contractor and could be imposed without the University having scope for further negotiation.

**10 Anti-Fraud Policy 2025**

**Paper H**

PRC noted the policy, noting also that Audit & Risk Committee had primary responsibility for reviewing this policy and, if appropriate, recommending it to Court for approval.

**11 Research and Commercialisation Statistics: Annual Report 2024/25**

**Paper I**

PRC noted the report and discussed further information for future reports that could potentially improve members' understanding of institutional performance in research and commercialisation. It was agreed that additional commercialisation data should be supplied in the next report. The importance of both large-scale and smaller-scale research applications was discussed, recognising the need to balance these appropriately and to devote resources accordingly to supporting both.

**12 Meeting dates 2026/27**

**Paper J**

PRC approved the meeting dates.

**13 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**14 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 10 November 2025