

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY COURT

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2025 (via MS TEAMS)**

**Present:** Julie Ashworth (in the Chair)  
Martin Barker  
Lesley Birse  
George Boyne (for Mins 1 to 11)  
Ewan Cameron  
Owen Cox  
Iona Fyfe  
Iain Grant  
Ayten Hajiyeva  
Luke Halliday  
Richard Hepworth-Young  
Karim Hurtig  
Fiona Islam (except for Mins 12 to 19)  
Gary McRae (except for Mins 12 to 19)  
Helen Martin  
Caryn Miller  
Alison Rankin (for Minutes 1-19)  
Joachim Schaper  
Christina Schmid  
Diane Skåtun  
Ilia Xypolia

**In attendance:** *Senior Management Team Members/University Officers*  
Fraser Bell (for Mins 1 to 15)  
Nick Edwards (for Mins 16-19)  
Peter Edwards (for Mins 1 to 11)  
Hulda Sveinsdottir  
Mark White (for Mins 1 to 15)

**Clerk:** Bruce Purdon

**Apologies:** Lorenzo Moretti  
Adaku Ufere

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REMINDER OF COURT  
AND MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 The Court noted the standing reminder of the responsibilities of Court and members as charity trustees. It was noted that Diane Skatun had a standing item in the register of interests regarding the Business School. Pete Edwards and Hulda Svenisdottir noted interests in the agenda as Directors of RRI Ltd.

## MINUTES

### *Meeting of 25 June 2025*

- 2 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2025 were received and approved subject to an amendment to minute 325 being made to reflect that the Court had agreed to retain clause 6.4 of the potential agreement.

### *Meeting of 9 July 2025*

- 3 The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2025 were received and approved subject to the following amendments:
- Minute 4 – an addition to be made to reflect the Court's had discussed the risk of there not being a second appointable candidate and the Selection Committee's consideration of that same risk.
  - Minute 11 – an addition to be made note that the Court had discussed the wider community interest and public scrutiny regarding senior staff remuneration.

## VERBAL REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL

- 4 The Principal provided short updates on:
- The progression of the proposed TNE India Mumbai project.
  - The North-East Scotland Investment Zone within which the University was a leading partner. The King's Innovation Quarter was a key project within the scope of the Zone.
- 5 The Principal then reported on the University's financial position noting that:
- While the VS/ER scheme was ongoing, the University had identified £5m of the £5.5M 2025/26 budget gap and was confident the remaining £500k would be identified.
  - The University was cautiously projecting that it would achieve its revenue target for student recruitment September 2025 entrants.
  - The forecast year-end out-turn position for the financial year just ended (31 July 2025) was a £4.3M deficit against a budget target of £6.5M deficit.
- 6 The Court discussed a number of points arising from the update, including the extent to which savings/new income had been achieved by all Schools and whether the University would be in a position to implement any nationally agreed pay award in 2025/26, where the challenge was balancing addressing the University's year on year operational deficit with staff morale/retention considerations.

## ROWETT LAND SALE

- 7 The Court received a paper on the proposed disposal/sale of all the remaining residential development land at Rowett South in a single transaction to a commercial developer (Redacted). The proposal entailed the developer contracting to purchase after an agreed period of 5-7 months of due diligence during which they undertake research to address defined conditional factors. Should the developer be satisfied on the agreed conditional factors, the proposed sale would be anticipated to be finalised in March/ April 2026
- 8 The Court was reminded that the land was specifically identified as an asset for disposal as part of the Financial Recovery Plan submitted to Court in November 2023. The Court had at that time approved in principle the approach to the sale of a group of assets, including the land at Rowett South, on the basis that specific sales would be agreed in accordance with the institutional Delegated Authority Schedule. The option of the sale as a single transaction was noted as worthy of exploring, with University Court requiring that advice was sought on that option. That advice had been sought and the option explored, and the conclusion reached, as recommended within the report.
- 9 The Court discussed and scrutinised extensively the details of the proposed sale and the professional advice which had been sought resulting in the recommended proposed basis for the sale. [REDACTED]

- 10 Given the potential risk of the value of the sale changing, the Court requested that the proposed delegation of authority within the paper be amended to instead require that the final terms of sale be brought back to Court either for information if unchanged or, if changed, for approval.
- 11 Following an extended discussion, the Court:
  - 1) approved the proposed sale of land at Rowett South to the commercial developer as detailed in the report and at a sum of [redacted].

- 2) delegated authority jointly to the Chair of the Board of RRI Ltd, the Chair of Estates Committee and the University Chief Financial Officer to consider and approve any amendments to the details of the proposal which may transpire in completing the legal documentation.
- 3) noted that following the purchaser's due diligence period the final terms of the sale would be brought back to Court for information if unchanged or, if changed, for approval.

**Action: Director of Estates and Chief Financial Officer**

CLOSED BUSINESS

*Minutes 12 to 15 are confidential*

REPORT FROM THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

*Minutes 16 to 19 are confidential*

CLOSED BUSINESS: PRINCIPAL'S ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

- 20 The Court received a report on the progress made against the objectives set for the Principal by Court for academic year 2024/25.

*Minutes 21 to 23 are confidential*

AOCB

- 24 The Senior Governor expressed thanks to all members for their flexibility and commitment of time in attending additional meetings of Court and sub-committees that had been required over the summer.