

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL 2025
IN ROOM WSG20, WELLS STREET AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:	T James (Chair) J Ball A Bertone ¹	N Gururani ¹ (Up to Minute 24.49) T Toumazis
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IN ATTENDANCE:	M Chan (Secretary) T Delaitre K Kinsella E McMillan (Clerk to the Court)	C Molloy D Stubbs I Wilmot
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APOLOGIES:	Professor P Bonfield R Poole (Attendee)	T Sketchley
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24.43 ANNOUNCEMENTS

24.43.1 The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, with a particular welcome extended to the following new appointees:

- Terrance James – Chair
- Andrea Bertone, Naleena Gururani and John Ball – members

24.43.2 Members noted that Thierry Delaitre, Head of ICT Developments, attended on behalf of Russell Poole, Director of Information Systems and Support (ISS).

24.43.3 All members and attendees introduced themselves.

24.43.4 Members noted the apologies recorded above.

24.43.5 Members noted that David Hoyle, the independent (non-governor) member has resigned from the Committee and a replacement is not required as there are no current skills gaps in the Committee membership.

24.43.6 The Chair outlined the purposes of the Committee.

24.43.7 Members noted that a member and all colleague attendees have a potential interest in the family-friendly benefits enhancement (Minute 24.48), as it applies to all University employees.

24.43.8 The Chair confirmed that there were no requests to discuss the starred agenda items (Minutes 24.54 to 24.57).

24.44 SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

24.44.1 The University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO)/Co-Chair, Staying Safe: Business Continuity Group briefed members on the purpose, membership and meeting frequency of both the Staying Safe: Business Continuity Group and the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Committee.

24.44.2 In response to queries about the distinction between the responsibilities of the two committees, the USCOO highlighted the interconnected nature of business continuity, security, risk, safety and health.

¹ Attended via Teams.

24.44.2.1 **ACTION USCOO and Clerk to the Court** to share the terms of references of both committees, along with the annual report on Safety, Health and Wellbeing 2023/24, to provide new members with greater clarity on their remits and the University's work in the areas.

24.44.3 The USCOO assured members that there had been no significant operational concerns on campus and updated members on preparation for the forthcoming introduction of Martyn's Law - the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.

24.45 **ESTATES STRATEGIC UPDATE**

Mid-year physical environment KPI monitoring report

24.45.1 Ken Kinsella, Director of Estates Planning and Services (EPS) presented the mid-year physical environment key performance indicators (KPI) monitoring report (Document RES 250424Ai).

24.45.2 A member congratulated the University's sustainability achievements and queried the energy benchmarking. The Director (EPS) confirmed compliance with legal requirements and explained that the University adopted more flexible measures to accommodate growth while setting targets based on its existing baseline.

24.45.3 In response to queries about the measurement method for space utilisation, reported utilisation rate, underuse of space and the impact of the KPIs, the Director (EPS) explained that the 26% target reflects the sector norm, and the utilisation rate is calculated based on room occupancy, size and frequency of use. The Director (EPS) noted that low efficiency rooms provide capacity for extracurricular and other activities and outlined plans to triangulate WIFI data to enhance space modelling for both academic and commercial purposes. The USCOO added that the reported utilisation rate was influenced by factors including the sector-wide COVID legacy and explained that the University is encouraging greater on-campus attendance.

24.45.4 The Chair thanked members for the discussions and highlighted the need to focus on the issues of space efficiency.

24.45.4.1 **ACTION Director (EPS)** to propose an action plan to enhance space utilisation at the meeting held in June 2025.

24.45.5 A member proposed including a brief statement to serve as an epithet for each KPI, e.g., 'on course', 'catching up', 'falling behind', to help readers quickly grasp the status, challenges or gaps associated with each KPI and facilitate efforts to address challenges.

24.45.6 The USCOO noted that the University is reviewing the KPIs to adopt a more forward-looking and action-oriented approach and will share the member's suggestion with the KPI review team. The Clerk to the Court mentioned that the Court will discuss a proposal to revise strategic KPI monitoring and reporting in July 2025.

Zone29 Update

24.45.7 The Director (EPS) updated members on the progress of the Zone29 project (Document RES 250424Aii), noting a delay in completion due to power issues, which will result in a cost increase.

24.45.8 In response to a query, the Director (EPS) confirmed that utilities is now the main risk, which is being managed by a specialist company.

24.45.9 Noting that most members are new to the Committee and the project and given the project's significant impact on the University and students, a member proposed providing additional background information, including a spreadsheet summarising key approvals, budget stages, contingency fund debates and the lessons learnt.

24.45.9.1 **ACTION Clerk to the Court** to provide the project background information and **Director (EPS)** to share the lessons learnt to date in the next project update in June 2025.

24.45.10 To support members' understanding of the project, the USCOO suggested a site visit and the Director (EPS) proposed sharing a project video to aid visualisation.

24.45.10.1 ACTION Director (EPS) to share the project video.

- 24.45.11 The Clerk to the Court noted that a post-completion report of the project will be submitted to the Committee. The Chair emphasised that the value lies not just in the report itself, but in the lessons learnt – particularly regarding the right people, the right strategic intent and approach, and the quality of advice received.

Marylebone Hall refurbishment

- 24.45.12 The Director (EPS) briefed members on the history and the current status of the Marylebone Hall building, highlighting the decision to close the building in June 2025 to allow further analysis of future use options (Document RES 250424Aii).
- 24.45.13 In response to a query on its strategic value for student accommodation, the USCOO advised that the University is revisiting its Residential Strategy, and informed members of plans for additional student beds at the Harrow campus. The USCOO also noted the estimated refurbishment cost has tripled due to updated safety and compliance requirements, and further time is required to evaluate viable options.
- 24.45.14 On a query about the expected timeframe, the USCOO indicated that approximately six months is needed to complete the review and develop a recommendation aligned with the refreshed Residential Strategy.
- 24.45.15 Following a query about the governance and approval processes, the Chair and the USCOO clarified that the University executive will evaluate the options and present recommendations to the University Executive Board (UEB) and the Resources Committee for consideration and decision.

Nursing suite

- 24.45.16 The Director (EPS) briefed members on the nursing suite project, which has been approved by the UEB to meet teaching requirements (Document RES 250424Aii).
- 24.45.17 Addressing a question on how the project aligns with the Estates and Education Strategies, the USCOO explained that the new nursing course, launching in 2025/26, is expected to attract strong student demand and contribute to the University's income and surplus targets. The USCOO noted that the project will be funded from the 2025/26 capital budget, due to be discussed at the Committee's June 2025 meeting.
- 24.45.18 Although the project is valued below £3 million and falls within the UEB's authorisation limits, the Chair welcomed its presentation to the Committee, given its relevance to the Estates Strategy.
- 24.45.19 In response to a query on whether the project provides a digital simulation of the nursing suite, the Director (EPS) confirmed that the suite is a physical resource designed to replicate a hospital ward in line with NHS (National Health Service) specifications, and the budget covers construction cost only.

Regent Street roof works

- 24.45.20 The Director (EPS) briefed members on the Regent Street roof project, noting rising costs due to the evolving project scope and the licencing issue with neighbouring properties (Document RES 250424Aii).
- 24.45.21 The Chair questioned whether the quantity surveyor is engaged on a fixed fee or percentage basis.
- 24.45.21.1 ACTION Director (EPS) to confirm the payment terms for the quantity surveyor of the Regent Street roof project.**
- 24.45.22 A member asked about the approval process for additional funding considering the projected 30% overspend. The USCOO confirmed that any such request would return to the Committee for approval.

International House

- 24.45.23 The Director (EPS) updated members on the progress of the International House disposal, noting that a Red Book valuation of the bids will be carried out to support a formal recommendation to the Committee (Document RES 240424Aii).
- 24.45.24 The Chair queried whether the bidding terms include an overage or clawback clause, given the property's location and the potential of a post-sale value uplift.
- 24.45.24.1 **ACTION Director (EPS)** to confirm whether an overage/clawback clause is included in the bidding contract.
- 24.45.25 The Chair thanked the Director (EPS) for updating members on the progress of various major capital projects.
- 24.45.26 Drawing on the project updates, the Chair noted that they raised questions on the effectiveness of governance across projects, the adequacy of financial controls in light of budget fluctuations, the University's readiness to take forward strategic decisions such as the Marylebone Hall redevelopment, and the quality of internal oversight and external advice (giving examples such as the overage clause in the bidding contract and the adequacy of contingency fund levels).

24.46 REGENT STREET EMERGENCY STAIRCASE REPLACEMENT BUSINESS CASE

- 24.46.1 The Director (EPS) presented the business case for replacing the Regent Street emergency staircases to comply with fire requirements (Document RES 250424B).
- 24.46.2 Responding to a query, the Director (EPS) confirmed that the project is fixed-priced with an inflation allowance included.
- 24.46.3 Reflecting on the lessons learnt from the Zone29 project and recognising the redevelopment nature of the work, members discussed the adequacy of the proposed 10% contingency, noting it reflects the sector norm and was advised by the external consultant.
- 24.46.4 A member expressed continued concern about whether a 10% contingency is sufficient for capital projects. The USCOO agreed to review the contingency levels for future project proposals.
- 24.46.5 **APPROVED** University to allocate a total budget of £3,592,000 (including VAT) to replace two external staircases at Regent Street campus.
- 24.46.6 Members noted that the Committee will monitor project progress.

24.47 PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

- 24.47.1 Caragh Molloy, Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing (PCW), presented the mid-year people KPI monitoring report (Document RES 250424C), highlighting overall good progress, except for the KPI on personal development for career progression.
- 24.47.2 The Director (PCW) outlined recent initiatives to support career development, including the revised Professional Development Review (PDR) process, PDR training for managers and colleagues, the Westminster Professional Development Academy, workstreams on academic career pathways and ongoing trade union engagement.
- 24.47.3 The Director (PCW) also informed members about the upcoming launch of a new tool for the colleague engagement and wellbeing survey that will enhance data reporting and analysis, and reported that the People Strategy and KPIs will be reviewed in 2025/26.
- 24.47.4 Addressing a question on the low wellbeing score among academic colleagues, the Director (PCW) cited the low turnover of academic colleagues and the findings from the Fewest Things Matter programme, which identified that administrative burden and duplication of tasks due to system inefficiencies are key concerns. The Director (PCW) noted that PCW is addressing these issues, including advancing the PDR cycle to support earlier workload planning.

- 24.47.5 On a query regarding artificial intelligence (AI) and workplace technology, the Director (PCW) noted that one of the Fewest Things Matter workstreams focuses on enabling colleagues to adopt AI to streamline tasks.
- 24.47.6 In relation to a question on linking performance and development KPIs, the Director (PCW) acknowledged the connection but clarified that individual performance measures are not reported at the University level. The Director (PCW) noted that individual performance is assessed through the PDR process, with academic colleagues also drawing on inputs such as student feedback, research and knowledge exchange outputs.
- 24.47.7 The Chair noted that the people KPIs start from a low baseline and suggested including a diagram of annual trend data to track progress over time and inviting Colleague Network representatives to share their views on the progress, achievements and gaps of the people KPIs with the Committee annually.

24.48 FAMILY FRIENDLY BENEFITS ENHANCEMENT

- 24.48.1 The Director (PCW) presented the family friendly benefits enhancement proposal (Document RES 250424D), noting that the Remuneration Committee had agreed to adopt the proposal for UEB members subject to the recommendation of the Resources Committee and the decision of the Court of Governors for other colleagues.
- 24.48.2 A member welcomed the proposal as both assuring and reflective of best practice, grounded in the principle of equity, noting that the common assumption in many organisations is that the mother is the default primary carer.
- 24.48.3 Another member raised concern about the significant gap between enhanced paternity and maternity benefits, suggesting that narrowing this gap would better reflect shared parental responsibilities.
- 24.48.4 The Director (PCW) encouraged a holistic view of the leave package, which includes enhanced paternity leave, extended shared parental leave and the University's generous annual leave entitlement.
- 24.48.5 The Director (PCW) also shared mixed feedback – some female colleagues at a university offering eight-week full pay paternity leave felt their physical and maternity needs were overlooked, while the union consultation feedback was generally positive to the proposal.
- 24.48.6 A member acknowledged the parity concern but commended the proposal as a clear and pragmatic strategy to position the University in the sector's top quartile and recommended its approval.
- 24.48.7 A member suggested bringing the gaps between benefits closer in the next review and proposed that the review should be scheduled in two years, although policies are typically reviewed on a three-year cycle.
- 24.48.8 **AGREED** Members recommend the proposed family friendly occupational pay and leave benefits to the Court of Governors, with a review after two years of implementation.

24.49 DIGITAL STRATEGIC UPDATE

- 24.49.1 Thierry Delaitre, Head of ICT Developments presented the mid-year digital KPI monitoring report (Document RES 250424Ei) and a strategic update on the Digital Strategy (Document RES 250424Eii).
- 24.49.2 In response to a question on phishing simulations, the Head of ICT Developments explained that the first campaign covered all users, including part-time visiting lecturers and governors; the second targeted those who failed in the first round; and the third included repeat failures plus a random sample. The Head of ICT Developments noted that phishing simulations are now conducted quarterly.
- 24.49.3 A member shared experience from another organisation, highlighting the need for the Head of Cyber Security role to have direct access to the University leadership during cyber incidents, and

queried the reporting line of the new role. The Head of ICT Developments confirmed that the new Head of Cyber Security is part of the ISS senior leadership team, reporting to the Director (ISS) through the Head of ICT Developments and serves on several ISS and cyber security-related committees.

- 24.49.4 Regarding a question on the University's whistleblowing policy, the Clerk to the Court explained that the USCOO is the Designated Officer, while concerns involving the USCOO would be escalated to the Vice-Chancellor, and if both are involved, the matter would be referred to the Chair of the Court of Governors.
- 24.49.5 The Chair recommended introducing a colour-coding scheme in future progress reports to highlight progress, achievements and areas of concerns, supporting more strategic discussions at the Committee.

24.49.5.1 ACTION Head of ICT Developments to share the Chair's suggestion with the Director (ISS) for consideration in future reports.

24.50 UNIVERSITY FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS REPORT – FEBRUARY 2025

- 24.50.1 David Stubbs, Director of Finance and Commercial Services (FCS) presented the mid-year financial sustainability KPI monitoring report (Document RES 250424Fi) and the management accounts report for February 2025 (Document RES 250424Fii), noting that the income over the past seven months was in line with the budget forecast, the balance sheet remained robust and capital expenditure was on track.
- 24.50.2 In response to a suggestion to include sector ratios alongside the University accounts, the Director (FCS) referred to the KPMG Higher Education Financial Statement Benchmarking report 2023/24 recently reviewed at the Audit and Risk Committee. The Clerk to the Court added that the Office of Students report on Financial Sustainability of HE Providers in England 2024, available in the Reading Room, also provides further sector-level context.
- 24.50.2.1 ACTION Director (FCS)** to share the KPMG Higher Education Financial Statement Benchmarking report 2023/24.
- 24.50.3 A member queried the data presented on page 17 of the management accounts report. The Director (FCS) clarified that the table shows capital project progress and in-year spend, acknowledged that the format mixes in-year operational cash projects with multiple-year project expenditure, and confirmed that work is underway to improve clarity.
- 24.50.4 Responding to a query on the key financial risks, the Director (FCS) noted ongoing financial pressures, with a projected surplus of 1.1%, which is below the 6% target, and outlined some internal cost management measures and efforts to identify supply chain savings. The Director (FCS) cautioned that a deficit is possible in the next financial year.
- 24.50.5 On a follow-up question about capital spending, the Director (FCS) expressed no major concerns but emphasised the focus on value for money through supplier consolidation and improved procurement.
- 24.50.6 A member emphasised that while student numbers are key to revenue, it is important to balance this focus with the broader financial plan and strategic investments.
- 24.50.7 In response to a query about student enrolment, the Director (FCS) and the USCOO outlined the University's annual planning cycle, which runs from November through to the summer clearing period and involves the University Planning Committee and multiple departments. The USCOO noted sector-wide recruitment challenges last year but reported strong demand for some University courses, with resources and space being allocated to meet this growth.
- 24.50.8 The Chair asked the Director (FCS) to provide insights on income resilience, treasury, pensions and fraud in the next meeting.

24.50.8.1 ACTION Director (FCS) to include income resilience, treasury, pensions and fraud in the financial strategic update for the meeting in June 2025.

24.51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 24.51.1 Members noted that the draft minutes from the 13 February 2025 meeting had been circulated with former members attended that meeting and no comments were received.
- 24.51.2 **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2025 (Document RES 250424G) were an accurate record.
- 24.51.3 Members noted that there are no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

24.52 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 24.52.1 Members did not raise any other items of business.

24.53 MEETING EVALUATION

- 24.53.1 Members shared the following feedback regarding the meeting:
- Positive, open and constructive discussion.
 - Paper deck was manageable and informative, more contextual background information would be helpful for new members.
 - Strong and effective chairing with clear and succinct summary of each discussion item.
 - Suggested site visits to major project properties for new members.
 - Chair's brief from the secretariate was useful.
- 24.53.2 The Clerk to the Court encouraged members to submit requests in advance for any background information or clarification to support effective discussions at the meetings.

24.54 POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT FEE PROPOSAL 2026/27

- 24.54.1 In response to a query regarding the student fee pricing, the USCOO explained that the University considers a range of factors, including market demand, sector and competitor benchmarking and recruitment challenges.
- 24.54.2 **APPROVED** The proposed fee structure for the postgraduate research students (Document RES 250424H) to be implemented for the academic year 2026/27.

24.55 EDI ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 – DATA MONITORING AND BENCHMARKING EXTRACT

- 24.55.1 Members noted the data monitoring and benchmarking extract of the EDI annual report 2023/24 (Document RES 250424I).

24.56 SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY – STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 24.56.1 Members noted the Safety, Health and Wellbeing policy – statement of intent (Document RES 250424J).

24.57 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 19 June 2025 at 4:00pm
Thursday 18 September 2025 at 4:00pm
Monday 17 November 2025 at 5.30pm*
*Thursday 15 January 2026 at 4:00pm ***
Thursday 12 February 2026 at 4:00pm
Thursday 23 April 2026 at 4:00pm
Thursday 18 June 2026 at 4:00pm

* Late start time as preceded by attendance at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting from 4.30pm. ** Provisional – only goes ahead if required to consider urgent major project proposals.

Members may participate in meetings via Microsoft Teams or onsite.