**RESEARCH DATA SCOTLAND** (the “**Company**”)

Minutes of an additional meeting of Research Data Scotland (RDS) held online on 05 July 2024 at 8.30.

1. **Quorum**

**1.1** It was noted that a quorum was present in accordance with the Articles of Association of the Company (the “Articles”).

## **1.2** There was produced to the meeting a notice (“Notice”) convening the meeting and, with the consent of all members present, the Notice was taken as read.

## **Present Name Position**

## Paul Boyle Chair

## Roger Halliday Director / Trustee

## Scott Heald Director / Trustee

## Martin Sinclair Director / Trustee

## Jill Pell Director / Trustee

## Julie Fitzpatrick Director / Trustee

## Sapna Marwaha Director / Trustee

## Emma Gordon Board Advisor

## Allan Johnstone

## Ruth Flannery Minute Taker

## **Apologies**

## Mark Parsons Director / Trustee

## Janet Egdell Board Advisor

## Andrew Morris Board Advisor

1. **Agenda Items**

**2.1 Scottish Government efficiency challenge**

The Chair introduced the paper on the Scottish Government efficiency challenge and handed over to the CEO for discussion. RDS are expecting to get a maximum of 100K income from the Researcher Access Service this financial year, with plans of increasing efficiencies in the service and to start scaling up the service by widening the range of datasets available.

SH noted that the areas around savings the paper outlines are sensible and that ensuring the Researcher Access Service is not impacted is essential to maintain the reputation of RDS. SH noted that understanding the effect this will have on partners and the scale of this ask, would be helpful.

The Chair agreed with the points made by SH highlighting that knowing if this going to be a one off ask by the government or if this will be a year-by-year issue is essential. The Chair suggested going back with a figure less than the asking and not to include the rent unless there is push back on this.

Martin Sinclair (MS) noted that their commitment rests on the memorandum of understanding between RDS and Public Health Scotland, which includes in it an obligation on RDS to contribute towards those rent payments. This is not open-ended because the precise level of the contribution is specified in the in the MOU.

Julie Fitzpatrick (JF) agreed with sticking to investing in the core mission, the Researcher Access Service, but also the role that RDS has established itself as a central administrative route for publicly funded data for Scotland.

MS highlighted under paragraph 11 in the paper, it mentions secondment to Scottish Government. MS suggested using this as an addition to savings, asking Scottish Government to pay for it or strongly underline it as a contribution back to Scottish Government to the savings tally. In doing this, combined with the other savings listed, it would amount to over 50% of their ask.

The Chair strongly agreed with the point made by MS and summarised the key points of the meeting:

* The core mission of the Researcher Access Service needs to be protected.
* It needs to be highlighted that the reserves are very important as it stabilises the organisation.
* No new staff should be appointed at this point.
* The Chair highlighted it is important to make an impression on the newly appointed government to highlight that RDS’ mission is very valuable.
* Better engagement may be needed not only with civil servants but with ministers and others to inform them of the work carried out at RDS. The Chair suggested RDS and Public Health Scotland produce a joint explanation of what they do and why they should be valued.
* Negotiate with Scottish Government on the secondment to ask Scottish Government to pay for it or strongly underline its contribution.

The chair asked EG to explain further on the Labour manifesto commitment around a National Data Library. EG explained they are excited about what ADR UK are doing and therefore what RDS are doing, and they see both as part of the National Data Library. The short-term vision is that there would be coordination across the top of a range of data infrastructure investments to start with building on what is already working. Therefore, RDS should pitch themselves as part of that to the new UK Government.

SH and The Chair agreed.

JF noted that there was a recent review of RDS which was undertaken by an external consultant which was very positive and suggested it might be worth stating this to Scottish Government in their response.

The Chair asked MS to clarify Mark Parson’s (MP) previous comments on costs due to EPCC. The Chair suggested for the CEO to have a discussion with MP around this. The CEO clarified that discussions have started with MP and National Records of Scotland who also provide a service. Currently that is not accounted for as part of the income what will be generated.

The Chair thanked the CEO and colleagues for preparing the paper. The Chair stated there will be a follow up meeting to continue discussions in the coming weeks.

## There being no further business, the chair declared the meeting closed at 9:12.

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Chairperson

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(Date)