UHI | NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES
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NWH Board of Management Meeting

Alness campus and via MS Teams

18th March 2026 at 4.15pm

Chair – Derek Lewis

Board Members Present Abby Teague, Student Board Member – HISA West, Alasdair Macleod, Student Board Member – HISA Outer Hebrides, Ally Macleod, EIS Board Member, Chris Alliston, Independent Board Member (via Teams), Dave McKay, Independent Board Member, Derek Lewis, Chairman of the Board of Management UHI NWH, Ian MacEachern, Independent Board Member, Jacqui Barclay, Professional Services Staff Board Member, Lydia Rohmer, Principal & Chief Executive UHI NWH, Michael Foxley, Independent Board Member (via Teams), Neil Hope, Vice Chair & Independent Board Member, Rupert Marshall, Independent Board Member, Shaun Escott, Teaching Staff Board Member, Shona MacDougall, Senior Independent Board Member, Willie Macdonald, Vice Chair & Independent Board Member

Also, in Attendance Debbie Miller, Vice Principal strategic developments, Derek Bond, ELT, Vice Principal – Resources & Enterprise (CFO), Ellen Campbell, Secretary to the Board of Management, Emma Roberts, SFC (Teams), Hannah Ritchie-Muir, ELT, Vice Principal Academic (HRM)

1.Establishment of quorum, welcome, apologies

Apologies were received from Struan Mackie, Independent Board Member, Alex Macdonald, Independent Board Member, Keith Coyne, SFC, Roddy Bailey, LAC West. The Chair welcomed newly appointed members Dave McKay, Independent Board Member and Jacqui Barclay, Professional Services Staff Board Member to their first meeting of the North, West, and Hebrides Board of Management.

2.Declarations of interest and connection

Rupert Marshall declared a connection, referencing his role as NWH representative on the Cnoc Soilleir board.

3.Starring

4.Minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2025

Approved

The action tracker was reviewed noting that all items outstanding were included within this meeting's reports. The UHI NWH view the quarterly Health and Safety (H&S) report at all committees, with A&RM having overall responsibility of the content. The report is available to all Board Members. Any urgent / imminent H&S issue would be reported to Neil Hope, Chair of A&RM. Having these stringent reporting measures in place had removed the requirement for a Board H&S Champion and this action was closed.

Approved

*5.LAC Reports to Board

Graham Birnie (GB), LAC North Chair was in attendance, with Joanna Peteranna (JP) joining via MS Teams. All three LAC Chairs had established a good working relationship. Similar points were identified through their reports. On the point of international students' course delivery, the

Executive team informed that a significant amount of effort had been given to nurturing green shoots to increase international numbers. Multiple projects throughout the globe were under development.

The jobs fair in Thurso had been extremely successful, GB intimated that businesses had commented course creation through the College had been slow. More sharing of good news stories throughout the geographical area would be appreciated.

The Executive advised that work-based learning through SVQs had increased, there was a proposal being developed to provide plumbing courses and the College was striving to become more agile in its delivery. Platforms were utilised over print options to share good news stories, though this point would be fed back to the Head of Marketing.

JP congratulated the College on the recent publication of the Gaelic plan. She questioned whether school engagement was an issue, as there appeared to be a barrier in what was being received by young people. JP requested that the level of engagement at Cnoc Soilleir be increased. The local employee forum (or similar body) could be formed to be effective in promoting the College. The opportunity to have been involved in the two-year post-merger evaluation report had been welcomed.

The Chair observed that the LACs were still evolving within the governance structure. The agenda was owned and led by each LAC. The Chair would respond to actions within the LAC reports in the coming weeks.

Action: NWH Chair – responses required to actions raised in the LAC annual reports.

*6. Confidential – Withheld

*7. Restricted - College recovery plan – Lydia Rohmer (The Principal) / Derek Bond (CFO)

The position of the College was highly dependent on the UTF being granted, the CTF could be used towards curriculum change as a default.

Most items on the strategic risk register (SRR) were still red in their RAG rating. The UTF was a critical factor in influencing the recovery plan.

The Members acknowledged that there would be more clarity on UTF, the top slice and the FBC by June 2026 Board of Management meeting, where the Board would take responsibility for addressing the situation. Any alternative plans would come through the next cycle of committees.

Noted

*9.ICT strategy – Kate Hannay (KH)

The Chair was questioned if NWH were at risk of losing out to other providers if the college were not leading at the forefront. KH advised that there had been a lack of investment by UHI for use on systems, the UHI IT strategy was still in draft form. Other universities had invested heavily in their digital infrastructure.

Endorsed

*10. Trading subsidiary for NSA – Debbie Miller (DM)

This item had been scrutinised at both A&RM and F&GP Committee meetings, receiving endorsement prior to requesting Board approval.

Approved

11. H&S Report

This item had been scrutinised at all four committees on the run up to the March 2026 Board meeting. No further questions were asked at today's meeting.

Noted

*12. HISA report – Abigail Teague (AT)

Having been reviewed at the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee, AT gave a brief re-cap to the Board that feedback received from students had been actioned.

Noted

*13. Principal's report – Lydia Rohmer (The Principal)

The Principal presented her report, updating on events during the last quarter since November 2025. The tertiary education and training bill had come into force, with standardisation of all student funding awards.

Community wealth building was linked to UHI, though local councils could choose to work directly with UHI NWH. Lobbing had worked well to date.

Regional developments – there were key strategic projects that the College were trying to take forward. These were still under development with a report expected to be ready for presentation to the next Board meeting.

The Rapid Response Group (RRG) was continuing. The Staff voice council had been created with Jacqui Barclay being the lead representative. A six-month curriculum structure review was in process, with outcomes expected to come through the next Human Resources committee and on to Board.

A new Gaelic Officer had been employed by the College. An expression of interest had been submitted to the Defence Deal for funding.

The College were achieving their target for FE and exceeding the target for HE students. The numbers for next year were promising. There had been a significant increase in workplace learning.

Noted

*14. Chair's report – Derek Lewis (The Chair)

Due to time constraints, the Chair reported that Mamta Patell (Observer) would be revisiting her availability for NWH Board membership next year. There had been an ongoing review of committee membership, which would be finalised over the coming weeks.

There had been a UHI meeting last week, where three working groups set up after a briefing. The groups had been focused on; - 1. Top slice scrutiny, 2. FBC option three where shared services would be used and 3. FBC option six, which had been realised as not feasible in the near future. Consideration may be given to a model somewhere between options three and six. There would be a further meeting in May 2026 in an effort to produce firm recommendations on how to proceed.

It was suggested that Financial Directors could be utilised to apply scrutiny of the financial models rather than pay KMG consultancy fees for this purpose.

Noted

15. Policies for approval

Approved

*16 - 202627 Meeting plan

Approved

17 Committee minutes

Approved

18 A.O.B. –

None