

NWH Board of Management Meeting  
Fort William campus and via MS Teams  
26<sup>th</sup> November at 2025 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 (from 1659 via Teams), Derek Lewis, Chairman of the Board of Management UHI NWH, Diana Macleod, Support Staff Board Member, Ian MacEachern, Independent Board Member, Lydia Rohmer, Principal & Chief Executive UHI NWH, Michael Foxley, Independent Board Member, 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 (via telecall – comms dropped soon after), Derek Bond, ELT, Vice Principal – Resources & Enterprise (CFO), Ellen Campbell, Secretary to the Board of Management, John Finn, SFC (Teams), Hannah Ritchie-Muir, ELT, Vice Principal Academic (HRM), Mamta Patel, Observer

Apologies: Struan Mackie, Independent Board Member, Alex Macdonald, Independent board member, Keith Coyne, SFC

1. Establishment of quorum, welcome and apologies – Derek Lewis (Chair)

The meeting was recognised as being quorate. The Chair thanked Diana Macleod for her dedicated service to the NWH Board of Management. Congratulations were extended to Diana for being promoted to Director of Curriculum, while acknowledging that she would be stepping down from the support services staff member role due to her newly promoted position.

2. Declarations of interest (Chair) - **No declarations were made.**

3. Starring (Chair) - **Item 9.1 was requested to be starred.**

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2025 (Chair) - **Agreed**

The Chair opened discussions with a focus on the positives observed in UHI NWH. Student satisfaction results, increased numbers in FE recruitment, the building improvements at both Fort William and Stornoway campus' together with what had been an impressive afternoon engaging with the staff and students today, who provided positive feedback on improvements since merger. One action arose for further investigation - Lecturers, particularly within the maritime environment, requested that local decision making be revisited instead of having to go through layers of management for authorisation. It was reported that the current processes were hindering progression of companies willing to invest in maritime and aquaculture courses. HRM would investigate this point at the earliest opportunity.

**Action:** HRM investigate processes reported to be hindering company investment from maritime and aquaculture industries and suggest a more streamlined approach where practicable.

5. Confidential item – Withheld

6. Confidential item – withheld

7.0 Confidential item – withheld

8.0 Restricted – UHI NWH Anchor institution update – (Principal)

The Principal was mindful to ensure that this work tied in with the estates infrastructure delivery plan. There would be a requirement to employ an external resource to manage this type of assessment going forward. It was hoped that a full report would be ready for F&GP committee and the Board of

Management by March 2026. Staff had asked for confirmation of the vision and mission of the college. Decisions made should not be purely based on the financial element.

**Points one to six of this report were agreed by the Board. The RRG was approved.**

**Approved**

#### 9.0 Confidential item – withheld

1830 – Shaun Escott left the meeting

#### 10.0 Health and safety report

**Noted**

#### 11.0 HISA report – Abigail Teague (AT)

Reports of delays in students receiving grant funding were flagged. HRM assured that full support was being given to students, with one-to-one support available. The reported delays were attributed to late funding applications by students. Individuals had since been provided with assistance and support. It was suggested the process may be strengthened at the time of induction.

**Noted**

**Action: HRM - Investigate whether grant funding assistance could be strengthened at time of student induction.**

1837 CA left the meeting

#### 12.0 Principal's report (The Principal)

The College had made good progress on merger targets despite the 20% reduction in real terms of funding from the SFC. The two-year post-merger report would be discussed tomorrow, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

The HSE work related stress (WRS) survey had been followed by an IIP survey. Results had prompted the formulation of a rapid response group (RRG) to address the issues identified. Some clear themes were emerging. The Principal had sent out a communication to all staff today, addressing the results of the reports, and explaining the action plans put in place in conjunction with the RRG. Board support would be required to deliver the message. The IIP report results were not untypical of colleges having gone through merger.

A six-month structure review had been agreed with unions, and this would be actioned accordingly. The Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) had been approved by Bord na Gaidhlig (BnG) and the college were currently recruiting for a Gaelic Officer. There had also been good news to report for student recruitment numbers. The Board welcomed the news that an email had gone out to all staff from the Principal referencing the IIP, RRG and action plan. The report had been valuable to understand how staff were feeling. It was encouraging to see that unions, staff and management wanted to work together.

Strategic projects would be discussed tomorrow, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

**Noted**

**Action: Gaelic officer to be appointed as soon as is practicable.**

**Action: Board to send a message to staff re IIP/RRG.**

#### 13.0 Chair's report (Chair)

The Chair gave a brief on expectations for tomorrow's strategy meeting, starting with a two-hour CDN session presented by Gordon Hunt at 0800.

**Noted**

**Action: Board Secretary to send out contact details for all centres out to the Board Members. The Board Members were encouraged to visit centres and feedback any issues or reasons to celebrate to the ELT.**

15.0 Committee meeting minutes

**Noted**

16.0 A.O.B.

**None**

**Meeting closed at 1849**