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**Local Advisory Committee annual report to the Board of Management.**

**Chair: Roddy Bailey**

**LAC: West Highland**

**Date: 18/3/2025**

## **(1) What is going well?**

The committee members exhibit a commendable dedication to their roles, actively participating and contributing during meetings. The committee is composed of a diverse array of public sector partners, elected officials, staff, local residents, and student representatives. This diversity ensures that the committee aligns with the initial membership aspirations outlined in the Terms of Reference.

The opportunities for face-to-face interactions have proven to be highly advantageous. These interactions have fostered stronger relationships and more effective communication among members. Consequently, there is a growing request from some members to maintain and possibly increase the frequency of these in-person meetings.

Furthermore, the college has embraced an inclusive approach towards the Local Advisory Committee (LAC). This approach includes extending invitations to various stakeholders such as partners, the Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA), educators, and board members. Additionally, the LAC members are encouraged to attend a variety of events, including the annual graduation ceremony. This inclusive strategy not only enhances collaboration but also ensures that the committee remains well-informed and engaged with the broader community.

## **(2) What needs the Board's attention?**

At present, there are no immediate issues necessitating the Board's intervention. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the Local Advisory Committee is in the nascent stages of its development and is currently focused on establishing a robust foundation. It is noteworthy that the frequency of meetings has been somewhat sporadic thus far, which has impeded the group's momentum.

To address this, a structured plan has been formulated to ensure regular and well-scheduled meetings moving forward. The members of the LAC are acutely aware of the complexities introduced by the recent merger and deeply appreciate the significant time and effort that the Principal has devoted to the committee.

Looking ahead, I am confident that the LAC will proactively propose a greater number of agenda items for discussion in future meetings. This proactive approach is anticipated to significantly enhance the effectiveness and productivity of our sessions, thereby contributing to the overall success of the committee's initiatives.

### **(3) What are your recommendations for what we should be doing?**

Continue to provide robust support to the LAC to ensure its sustained effectiveness and impact.

Create and promote opportunities for the LAC to engage actively with the College Board. This could include regular presentations, collaborative projects, and joint strategic planning sessions.

Foster a culture of open communication and collaboration between the LAC and the wider college community. This can be achieved through organized forums, workshops, and networking events that encourage dialogue and knowledge sharing.

Consider utilising the experience of LAC members in any future initiatives that require a co-design methodology.

### **(4) What are the developments within your community of which the Board should be aware?**

The Board will be aware of several significant developments within our community, many of which have been discussed extensively during committee meetings. These developments encompass large-scale investments proposed or currently underway in the broader Highland area. Notable examples include the Green Freeport initiative, peatland restoration projects, and the ScotWind offshore wind energy program.

The Local Advisory Committee (LAC) has expressed a keen interest in understanding how the University of the Highlands and Islands North West Highlands (UHI NWH) is engaging with and influencing the skills agenda within these major projects. The committee recognises the critical role that UHI NWH plays in shaping the local workforce and ensuring that the necessary skills are developed to support these initiatives.

Additionally, the LAC has engaged in discussions regarding the balance between virtual and face-to-face delivery of educational programs, particularly in more rural areas. These discussions have focused on how different modes of delivery impact the overall learning experience of students.