

UHI | NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES A TUATH, AN IAR IS INNSE GALL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 23rd August 2023 at 4.15 pm over Microsoft Teams

Present	Shona MacDougall, Committee Chair Derek Lewis, Board Chair Lydia Rohmer, Principal Designate Chris Alliston, Independent Member (items 1 to 6 only) Shannon MacCallum, HISA Depute (from item 3)
In attendance	Debbie Murray, Vice Principal – Operations Derek Bond, Director of Finance Joe MacPhee, Head of External Engagement (items 8 to 11 only) Jackie Wright, Estates Client Manager (items 1 to 5 only) Fiona Sinclair, Board Secretary and Governance Professional

Meeting minutes

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declaration of interests or connections

Members were invited to declare an interest or a connection, as appropriate, in any item on the Agenda. The Committee was reminded that the Register of Board Members' Interests was circulated with the Agenda for the Board Meeting on 1st August, and had been published on the UHI North, West and Hebrides website. There were no declarations.

3. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Withheld

3.1. Procedure for Appraisal and Approval of Projects and Funding Proposals

There had been circulated report FGP0823/3.1 by the Director of the Environmental Research Institute with support from the Vice Principal - Operations, setting out a draft procedure for appraisal and approval of projects and funding proposals. The Vice Principal advised that the proposal mirrors the procedure currently used by researchers, and noted that the delegation limits were broadly similar to those in the Financial Regulations.

The Committee agreed to recommend that the Board approve the procedure subject to confirmation that the procedure complied with and was reflected in the Financial Regulations.

Action – Director of Finance to ensure the Procedure was compatible with the Financial Regulations and thereafter to submit the Procedure to the Board for approval

4. Terms of Reference

There had been circulated report FGP0823/4 inviting the Committee to discuss and agree Terms of Reference. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter until there had been

opportunity to ensure that the Terms of Reference comply with the recently issued draft Financial Regulations.

Action - Governance Professional to ensure Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations were compatible.

5. Fort William Campus Development (number 11 on the Agenda)

There had been circulated report FGP0823/11 by the Estates Client Manager providing information on potential funding for the Fort William campus development for which a bid had been made from the Inverness City Region Deal, with funding also to come from HIE and UHI. It was expected that all projects competing for funding would be expected to make a presentation to funders during September. The Committee noted the report and agreed that the bid go forward without the inclusion of proposed funding from UHI, and come back to this Committee for scrutiny before going to the Board of Management for a final decision.

Action – Estates Client Manager to proceed with bid removing proposed UHI funding from the bid at this stage.

6. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Withheld

7. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

Withheld

8. Health and Safety Champion

There had been circulated a copy of the Health and Safety Policy which included a proposal to appoint a Board Member as a Health and Safety champion.

The Principal explained that the profile provided for the Health and Safety Champion required to be revised, explaining that the role involved promoting the culture of Health and Safety. The Committee agreed that the appointment of the Champion be deferred to a future meeting when the profile had been revised. The Committee noted that the Health and Safety policy and the Fire Safety policy, which were approved by the Board on 1st August, had been assigned to this committee to review.

Action – Principal and Governance Professional to revise the profile for the Health and Safety Champion for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

9. Islands Centre for Net Zero

There had been circulated report FGP0823/8 by the Director of External Engagement and Growth with the support of the Vice Principal - Operations on the proposal that UHI North, West and Hebrides enter in to a Memorandum of Understanding with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Community Energy Scotland for the Outer Hebrides element of the Islands Centre for Net Zero (ICNZ) project.

The Committee noted that there was no financial risk to the college although there was a concern about cashflow as outlays would be reimbursed in arrears. There was also discussion as to how performance could be measured meaningfully, and it was noted that the College could develop its own KPIs.

The Committee (a) agreed to recommend to the Board that UHI North, West and Hebrides become a formal partner in the Islands Centre for Net Zero Outer Hebrides project; and (b) agreed to recommend that the Board enter into the Memorandum of Understanding noting the specific responsibilities set out at section 3.2 of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Action – Vice Principal – Operations to arrange for proposal to be submitted to Board of Management for approval

10. Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre Project

There had been circulated report FGP0823/9 by the Director of External Affairs with support from the Vice Principal - Operations on the Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre Project.

The Committee noted that the project presented a significant opportunity and as funding had been built into the project and was to be closely managed by the Scottish Government there was minimal risk. The Principal explained that in the event that the Board decided not to get involved in the project at this stage, the project would go to another college and this opportunity which it was hoped would create a platform for bigger projects later, would be missed. The Head of External Engagement explained that the Board have the opportunity to develop an agreement with the partners which would not leave the college exposed in any way, in the event that there were difficulties attracting staff. The Committee noted the research opportunities presented by this project.

The Director of Finance advised that he would require a budget showing assumptions and timescales for the revenue streams for the project and the Head of External Engagement undertook to provide that.

The Committee agreed as recommended to:

- a) note the success of the joint bid to the Emerging Energy Technologies Fund (EETF) under the Scottish Hydrogen Innovation Scheme 2022/23 for £1.135m;
- b) recommend to the Board that UHI North, West and Hebrides become a formal partner in the Creed Hydrogen Skills and Innovation Centre Project, subject to the development of a formal partnership agreement to the satisfaction of the Principal and Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team.

Action – Vice Principal – Operations to arrange for proposal to be submitted to Board of Management for approval

11. Scottish Central Government Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme

There had been circulated report, FGP0823/10 by the Director of External Affairs with support from the Vice Principal - Operations on the Offer of Grant from the Scottish Central Government Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme.

The Committee agreed to (a) approve acceptance of the successful bid for £60,000 to the Scottish Central Government Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme; and (b) note the £15,000 match funding required from the 2023/24 Capital Programme.

The Meeting closed at 7.03 pm

