

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

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Chair – Shona MacDougall

Wednesday 21st August at 4.15 pm via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members

Shona MacDougall, Committee Chair & Senior Independent Board Member

Lydia Rohmer, Principal & CEO (leaving at 5pm to join another meeting)

Alex Macdonald, Independent Board Member

Chris Alliston, Independent Board Member

Derek Lewis, Chair of the Board of Management

Also, Present

Debbie Miller, Vice Principal (Operations) & SRO North Highland

Derek Bond, Director of Finance (NWH FD)

Ellen MacLean, Board Secretary

Doug Rattray, Head of Facilities

Jackie Wright,

1. QUORUM & APOLOGIES

The meeting is quorate

Apologies - David Campbell, Director of Business Enterprise & Development

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Minutes approved from previous meeting, 19th & 24th June 2024

Approved

4. Action Tracker

Committee agree to tracker to be updated by Ellen & Shona

Action - Board Secretary & Committee Chair to review and update the Tracker

5. Finance – Insurance Renewal

NWH FD explained the documents presented in the Board pack were for the second year of a 2 year fixed price deal, therefore any policy cost increases are due to increased levels of cover rather than inflationary increases.

The renewal of all insurance policies took effect from on 1st August, though amendments could still be made to any of the policies for 24/25 if required. There has been a 4% increase in the premium to almost £120k. There had been an insurance claim for roof damage at Dornoch, this precluded allowing a no-claims insurance rebate to be claimed this year. It is important that we notify the insurers of any major capital projects to ensure adequate insurance is in place for them, this applies to the current Stornoway campus development project potentially 2 large projects in 24/25 (Stornoway roof & Fort William windows with the caveat that this is subject to both projects being approved/not yet approved). We also have a few additional assets i.e. drones.

The Equine insurance policy covers up to 18 horses.

CA questioning “England/Wales” no mention of Scotland in legals. This is because the insurance brokers are based in England.

The committee wants further assurance re equine cover, sporting activities, ALA (liaise with Carl Haberl) & maritime activities.

If there was a cyber-attack, would this fall under the wider UHI umbrella?

Action - Clarifications to be taken back to this committee by NWH FD.

The committee agree in principle subject to clarifications.

Map insurance cover against risk register

Someone on the team read finer detail-mechanism in place.

Action – NWH FD to provide clarifications on above via email to Committee.

6. Confidential item

Withheld

6.1 External Audit Update

Based on paper presented, the NWH FD proposed that the Committee agree on 2023/24 audit fees and get planning for this audit started without further delays. The 2022/23 fees will be challenged robustly but separately.

The 2023/24 fee is to be accepted only on condition that we get a clear timetable for completing the audit within an acceptable timeline.

To come through A&RM for endorsement of this decision

The Committee agreed to 2023/24 fee with the condition attached that auditors must deliver on time.

Question – Will this condition be acceptable to auditors?

Action – NWH FD to report back on auditors accepting conditional agreement.

7. Confidential item

Withheld

8. Capital Projects

Stornoway roof – The contractor is looking at scope of work required. He will conduct his survey, then provide costings. We are also working on mitigating measures for over the winter.

Capex 2024/25 - 7 projects are planned for 2024/25. We are looking for approval of the first 4 listed in the document attached to this pack. The three projects below are estates capital spend; -

1. The Stornoway roof is already approved.
2. Replacement windows for Fortwilliam campus require approval based on survey work done last year. We are awaiting an update on an estimated cost of £96k.
3. Stornoway Boiler replacement due to a backlog maintenance order and already causing a high-cost burden.

DL requested energy saving numbers. He also asked for qualification for approval for this expenditure based on maintenance costs.

Doug advised that the boiler is well beyond its useful life expectancy and has been identified as imminent to fail and has high maintenance costs already.

4. ROV funding, this will need to be ring fenced in the capital budget, subject to a separate report, noting that this project has not yet been approved.

These items have been prioritised as necessary or recognized as opportunity.

NWH FD advised that discussions between UHI and the SFC were still ongoing regards the use of capital grants in 2024/25 and if flexibility was given to enable the grants to be used for repairs & maintenance then we would minimise capital spend and use as much of the grants on RDEL as possible. This may mean that we would push back some of the capital projects to 2025/26.

The committee approved the top 3 prioritised capital items based on caveats.

9. Confidential item

Withheld

10. Health & Safety

Risk Assessments are in place throughout the UHI NWH.

Fire Safety training is being rolled out throughout the NWH Campus.

The number of incidents are coming down year on year.

Staff members have been informed that it is not acceptable to bring their own electrical equipment to the site for PAT testing.

H&S Champion – This could be promoted in September at the Board/Strategy session days? It may be an idea to recruit someone to the Board with the skills & experience to fill the role of H&S Champion.

Debbie will revisit as a H&S Champion was purely a feature of legacy West College.

11. AOB

None

Meeting closed at 1820

DRAFT