



## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Chair – Shona MacDougall

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 4.15 pm via Microsoft Teams

### Committee Members

Chris Alliston, Independent Board Member

Derek Lewis, Chair of the Board of Management

Lydia Rohmer, Principal & CEO

Shona MacDougall, Committee Chair & Senior Independent Board Member

### Also, Present

Debbie Miller,

Derek Bond, Derek Bond, Vice Principal – Resources & Enterprise (CFO)

Doug Rattray,

Ellen MacLean, Board Secretary

Stuart Gibb

### 1. QUORUM & APOLOGIES

Apologies: Alex Macdonald, Independent Board Member

**The meeting was quorate.**

### 2. Declarations of interest

**No declarations of interest were made.**

### 3. Minutes from previous meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Approved**

### 4. Action Tracker

**Reviewed**

Confidential item

Withheld

Confidential item

Withheld

#### Financial policies for review – Kevin Mallet (KM)

The T&E policy had been to committee in September 2023, shortly after the merger. There were no changes to rates or allowances, however wording had been changed to be more prescriptive. A change to the overnight rate for accommodation was requested from the £110 fixed rate to a sliding scale during high tourist season to a maximum of £150 during peak season. The second change would require incidentals up to £5 daily would now be receipted where it previously had not been. The third change would be to people staying overnight with friends £15 allowance (NWH are only college providing this option). The fourth change allowed first class rail travel in line with UHI policy.

The Committee requested that TU engagement be sought on these policies, that there be no first-class travel permitted by any NWH staff, the incidentals rate of £5 per day be removed entirely and that authorisation be required for any lunches or dinners held out with the college.

#### **Approved subject to changes**

The Procurement policy was a Scottish Government requirement, and it was good practice to have the policy in place and published publicly. The policy was not drafted internally. There had been work completed by APAC (Amanda Mackenzie), then it was reviewed by KM and Julie Fraser.

#### **Approved**

*1732 Doug Rattray joined the meeting*

#### Confidential item

Withheld

*1739 Doug Rattray left the meeting*

#### Harris & Barra unearthed grants approval – Debbie Miller (DM)

The committee reviewed the grant given to this project by SSEN and agreed that it should be accepted under the gov.guidance that “Trustees must carry out due diligence checks on donors, beneficiaries and local partners and can also monitor end use of funds”.

#### **approved**

#### International overview on Malaga project – Debbie Miller (DM)

NWH had been approached by the university golf project to provide courses for persons who were internationally active, to work with other partners. There was work ongoing to enroll eight students in 2026/27. The project targets students coming back to Europe who would benefit from the third year of NWH's online degree.

**Noted**

Quarterly report on research – Stuart Gibb (SG)

The report covered the period December 2024- February 2025. SG advised that the format would be revised to align with the strategy and would include dashboard KPIs for the next meeting. The key risk was to sustaining research. There was research excellence framework funding available for delivering world class research.

**Noted**

Research Strategy – Stuart Gibb (SG)

SG presented the draft strategies on research for NWH. The previous version had come through committees in August 2023 and there had been significant changes since then. Reporting was benchmarked against UHI, then onto the Scottish Government, and in turn to the UN for reportable sustainable goals. The strategy would be deliverable with institutional commitment. SG presented two scenarios for the KPIs over ambitious as he informed that NWH was operating in a challenging environment. The strategy addressed potential barriers as set out around staff conducting research. Another paper was being drafted REF for ELT consideration before being brought to this committee.

**Endorsed – the strategy would also be presented to LT&R Committee, prior to June Board.**

Terms of Reference

**Update to titles (Kevin & Derek). Also change to descriptor “Infrastructure” from “Estates” strategy.**

Questions to the Chair for response

**Responded to via separate email.**

AOB

**None**

Meeting closed 1814

